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Anglais (civilisation américaine)

Yann DESCAMPS

« *Am I Black Enough for You?* »
Basket-ball, médias et culture afro-américaine
aux États-Unis (1950-2015)

VOLUME 2 : Annexes

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Annexe n°1 : Entretiens

Entretien avec Tariq Abdul-Wahad

Ancien joueur universitaire (Michigan State) et NBA (Sacramento, Orlando, Denver, Dallas).
Entraîneur d'une équipe de lycée à San José.

Propos recueillis le 24 février 2014 en marge d'une conférence à USC.

« It was like you had black kids from New York in the 1960s being coached by white men from Mississippi. The cultural disconnect was that drastic. France, because of its colonies, half the team is black. There was a serious disconnect between the players and the staff.

When I was a rookie, we had 3 meetings: one to manage your money, one for security matters, one to handle lovers. All this was meant to protect the NBA brand, the corporate brand.

We're athletes, but we're more than athletes. I would love to see these corporations consider athletes as individuals, just as they consider themselves.

The French media treat athletes the way the American media treated black athletes years ago. Black players are playing like a panther while the white players think and can shoot.

You have a responsibility as an athlete, and there are still a lot of issues that need to be tackled. We can be trying to change the landscape of society. In France, rarely are athletes socially conscious.

In France, there is an urgent need to talk about the Muslim community.

You had guys who had social message and responsibility, like Bill Russell, Muhammad Ali.

Journalists have a huge responsibility to tackle these grey areas.

The American game is about military precision, proper language and approach, super-enthusiastic... but there's also the NBA's corporate side of sport. Everything's not that pink. The sport aspect is great, but the media aspect and the corporate aspect still have to be infused with people with a better approach.

Richard Sherman showed that it's okay to function in Compton and in Stanford. »

Entretien avec Sébastien Audoux

Journaliste sportif omnisport à Canal Plus.

Propos recueillis le 18 décembre 2008 à Canal Plus.

« J'ai découvert le basket sur Antenne 2, avec la Pro A, puis la NBA sur Canal Plus à la fin des années 1980. C'était l'époque des duels entre les Bulls et les Pistons. C'était aussi les années fastes de Jordan.

Il développait un jeu ultra esthétique. Il était fluide comme dense.

Les basketteurs NBA sont des athlètes hors-normes, au-dessus des autres. Ils sont à la fois grands et rapides. Kevin Garnett est un athlète inouï.

Dans les années 1970, la NBA était considérée comme un repère de drogués. Les NBA Finals étaient retransmises en différé. C'est une ligue qui vient de nulle part. David Stern a su parfaitement surfer sur la vague du duel Magic/Bird, puis sur celle de l'émergence de Michael Jordan. Entre le duel Noir vs. Blanc, et le duel Los Angeles vs. Boston, la NBA tenait là un casting parfait. De plus, Jordan est arrivé à Chicago dans un autre gros marché.

Le public est essentiellement composé de familles blanches aisées, à cause du prix des places. Elles sont également les cibles du marketing NBA, beaucoup plus que dans le baseball, qui est sur cet aspect plus populaire, avec des tarifs bas.

La période Chamberlain/Russell appartient aux seuls fans, car la NBA était peu diffusée. La période 1967-1976, avant la fusion avec la ABA, est une période floue. Ensuite, il y a eu Magic/Bird. C'est le duel entre la vieille Amérique et la nouvelle Amérique, au niveau universitaire, puis en NBA. Le scénario est parfait jusqu'en 1984 et leur première rencontre en Finale.

La question de la représentation est travaillée aux États-Unis, comme le lien entre les Pittsburgh Steelers et leur public. Les Pistons sont liés à l'Amérique besogneuse, et les Lakers à Hollywood. Les Celtics sont l'équipe des WASP, l'équipe blanche. Pourtant, Red Auerbach a participé à l'intégration des Noirs. Mais la présence de stars blanches, comme Cousy, ou Bird, colle parfaitement à la population. Quant à Magic, il ne pouvait pas jouer ailleurs qu'à Los Angeles...

Michael Jordan est une idole pour tout le monde. Avec lui, on dépasse le cadre du basket. Il a eu un tel impact qu'il est devenu plus grand que le basket lui-même. Il a essayé de se donner une image lisse. L'histoire de Jordan est une véritable *success story*.

La NBA joue là-dessus, sur le duel entre les bons et les méchants (Bad Boys...). La NBA, c'est du business. On ne s'intéresse pas à l'âme du jeu, on vend du basket. Si en France, il y a l'aspect fédéral et associatif à prendre en compte, aux États-Unis, c'est différent. Le sport est une entreprise commerciale, qui ne travaille pas pour la promotion du sport.

La NCAA, c'est beaucoup plus que du business. Il y a des bourses accordées, on insiste sur l'intégration... La NCAA gagne de l'argent sur des joueurs non payés, ce qui entraîne des dérives logiques.

En ce qui concerne *He Got Game*, je pense que l'histoire de base est bancale, mais dans l'ensemble, c'est bien vu, notamment lorsque le joueur visite la fac US. L'arrière-plan est très important. Lee critique le système dans son ensemble. La grande question est : est-ce qu'il exagère ? Je ne pense pas, car il y a bien pire que ce que vit Jesus Shuttlesworth.

Il y a un lien entre le basket et les zones urbaines. Les joueurs sont des exemples de réussite, des modèles. C'est le cas de Magic Johnson. C'est terrible, mais pour les jeunes Noirs américains, Michael Jordan est devenu plus important que Malcolm X ou Martin Luther King Jr. Aujourd'hui, LeBron James est un modèle pour eux, bien plus qu'un PDG noir.

Les États-Unis forment une société de l'image. La NBA vit par la télévision. Les matchs sont diffusés en direct sur les grandes chaînes nationales. Et les souvenirs du duel Magic/Bird ou des exploits de Jordan sont liés à la télévision.

C'est très américain de rappeler les moments de l'histoire. On resitue sans cesse la performance dans un cadre historique plus large. C'est très important là-bas.

La Dream Team et la Redeem Team sont le symbole de la puissance US.

Pour beaucoup de jeunes afro-américains, le rêve américain passe par le basket-ball.

Le spectacle est très important dans la réussite du sport. On donne l'avantage à l'attaque et on adapte les règles dans ce sens. Malgré cela, les Pistons ont remporté le titre face aux Lakers en 2004.

La grande question est la suivante : « est-ce que la NBA a dénaturé, fait du mal au basket ? N'ont-ils pas transformé le basket en jeu du cirque ? »

Entretien avec Todd Boyd

Professeur de *critical studies*, School of Cinematic Arts, USC. Spécialiste de la question raciale et de la culture populaire.

Propos recueillis le 16 novembre 2009 à USC.

« I think basketball has played a part in the history of the African-American community. I think sports, for a long time, have played an important role in terms of African-Americans' ability to move into mainstream American society. And many of the most important moments in Black history are tied to sporting events, going on right back to Jack Johnson in boxing and certainly Jackie Robinson in baseball, breaking the color line. And these were all events that took place before the Civil Rights Movement even started. So, I would say in the post-Civil Rights era, basketball has been a sport that has been the most connected to African-American culture – urban culture, particularly, beginning in the 70s and increasing in importance with each decade. Basketball became a way for young black men from generally urban environments, it's an urban sport, even though players come from all background, basketball was a sport different than baseball, which was always more conservative and traditional, very much rooted in its own history. I think of baseball as a Republican sport, and football also, which is, I think, quite influenced by the military, very militaristic and a different sort of context. Basketball, I think, is an urban sport, to the extent that you have a large percentage of the African-American population moving from rural areas to urbanized areas, starting in the 1920s. Going forward, basketball, by the 70s, 80s, 90s, came to be the most predominant sport relative to those issues.

Basketball, as I say, has a different history than baseball and football. Basketball was originally a sport in America. In the history of the game, it was really Jews and African-Americans, which is sort of the urban history of America in a same way. So basketball came up differently than the other sports. In the 70s, what you had was the ABA, which is more sort of a street, playground-style of basketball, versus the NBA, which is more traditional, textbook. But in the 70s, people were caught up in baseball and football, and basketball really only had an urban audience. And so they were showing NBA Finals games on tape delay because they were not considered so important. But that started to change in the 80s.

The ABA was not as financially strong as the NBA, they didn't have the television contract the NBA had, and the NBA's contract wasn't that good. I think basketball in the 70s was becoming popular, it wasn't popular, so I don't know whether we can say it was racism in the lack of coverage towards the ABA, it was that that sport wasn't considered that popular relative to television, and by having two leagues, and one not being as strong as the other, that second league just wouldn't get that same kind of attention.

You have Magic and Bird, and you need both of them, because it's the racial and geographical complex, Boston/LA, East coast/West coast, older America, LA representing, sort of came to age in the 70s, Boston is a more traditional city, Magic African-American, Bird white... It's that complex. That rivalry started in college, that Indiana State/Michigan State championship game is still the most watched college game. It was a rivalry that had all these unique ingredients that were specific to the time period.

I think in each era, the NBA has its own set of politics, and it changes. In the 80s, you had, you know, increasingly, the NBA had become a sport that was dominated by Black players, but Kevin McHale, Larry Bird, John Stockton to a lesser extent, more so later, but really Bird, there was this controversy about whether or not people in the media were giving Bird more credit. The Isiah Thomas controversy became a huge controversy. I think that controversy has dogged Isiah throughout his career, because he was willing to say something that African-Americans were talking about quite openly during this time. But in television in the 80s, you didn't have the same sort of African-American presence in the media that you have now, so these concerns were not brought up, so when Isiah said it, for people outside the African-American community, maybe it sounded inappropriate, but it was a conversation that people were having all the time. Here was

Larry Bird, who was clearly a great player, but relative to the rest of the NBA and its legacy, the concern was whether or not Bird was being shown favoritism, because he was a white player and he fit into this American mythology of the two-fisted, hard-working, up-by-one's boot-straps, ethnic white American Rocky in essence, the Great White Hope, taking back to Jack Johnson. In that era, I think that was sort of racial politics around that. In the 90s, though, increasingly, there were fewer and fewer white American players in the NBA. The white players tend to be European, in most cases, Eastern European, Western European. The racial component, I think, was less an issue, because you had an issue of, say, nationality, as opposed to race. I think by this point, many white American fans were comfortable embracing certain African-American players. But what you got in the 90s was this whole class thing around hip-hop really, younger players coming into the league, different generation, different style, they brought a lot of hip-hop energy into the game. And there were controversy around players and the length of their shorts, tattoos, cornrows. The Dress Code came about later. And Allen Iverson would be the sort of controversial face of this era. But there were other hip-hop players. Rasheed Wallace, I think, is sort of underrated as a political figure. He's always been really sort of interesting. And then, in the 90s, there was a point where the NBA embraced the hip-hop culture, because they saw the connection that it was making, and then there's another point where they tried to pull back. So I would say the politics are specific to each era, and they change.

In the 60s, there were Bill Russell, Wilt Chamberlain, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, that's when the NBA was coming of age and people were concerned in the 70s whether or not the game was too black.

I think if you talk about Jordan's visibility as an icon and his ability to sort of transcend sport, add his success as a product endorser, there is something political about that. But on the same token, Jordan made a decision not to be overtly political, and there's this famous situation in 1990, in the North Carolina Senate Race, when he said "Republicans buy Nikes too." He didn't want to take a stand. You could say it's apolitical. You could also say it is consciously political, that instead of taking a stand that might offend a segment of his audience, he just decided to remain neutral, but by remaining neutral he was really making a statement. But I think Jordan is more accurately described as a cultural figure than a political figure.

? Jordan embodying the fusion of the formal and the vernacular

I think if you go back to the days of jazz, particularly in the 50s and 60s, you had African-American jazz musicians who were engaging sort of European modernism, engaging classical music to some extent, but reinterpreting this through jazz. There was a certain formality, but there was also this vernacular, this culturally specific approach. So it's interpreting European modernism through the vantage point of an African-American at mid-century. What you get in Jordan, I think, is the same thing relative to the game of basketball. Jordan learnt the game at North Carolina, playing for one of the legendary college coaches, Dean Smith. They played a very formal style of basketball, a very traditional approach to the game. But when Jordan got to the NBA, he began playing sort of streetball, more improvisational, which is vernacular like jazz, and he merged those two. So he was fundamentally sound, he knew how to play the game the textbook way, the fundamental way. But he also had this incredible flair and improvisation, a vernacular style. So in that way, you could say it's like jazz or even the hip-hop culture. He merged those. He is negotiating between those spaces.

I think we can draw a link in terms of message between basketball, jazz and hip-hop, because the rule is the same. The rule is the sort of African-American oral tradition. So when a jazz musician gets on the bandstand, the play is, the job of the jazz musician is to make an original statement. You don't just get up and imitate what somebody else does. If you do that, you're considered insignificant. You have to make an original statement. And it's improvised, which is not just spur of the moment, but it's like you're drawing all these references you have, but you're dealing with a formal text. You just interpret it by drawing all the references from a number of different places, yet you're still playing in relationship to the original. In hip-hop, people sample. They sample sounds, music from a variety of sources and creating one, so the whole sound is

reinterpretation. So I think the rule of it is, in the game of basketball, if you look at, for instance, breaking somebody down off the dribble is taking the basketball and sort of using the ball as a way to neutralize your opponent momentarily, so you can get your shot off. It's like you need a move. What are you going to do? It's like improvisation. I always talk about when Jordan changed hands in mid-air against the Lakers, it's like, "OK, here's Sam Perkins, he might block my shot, but if I switch hands..." It's like being on the bandstand freestyling, in hip-hop, when you're in the moment. So I think there are a lot of parallels.

? influence of black players in terms of aesthetics. Improvisation+?

It's really just bringing the style of streetball, playground basketball to the more formal structures of the game itself being college or the NBA. Streetball is very improvisational. You don't have referees, you call your own fouls, and calling fouls is really frowned upon. People don't understand, like they look at certain NBA players who have problems shooting free throws, but they don't understand the way basketball is played in the black community, you don't shoot free throws, it's not part of the culture, it's a different style of game. So if you're not doing that... When I got to college, I remember for the first time playing basketball with a wide variety of people, and they had rules, and they shot free throws, it was very different. The way I grew up, it was just man-up, just real straightforward. If you called too many fouls, you would get bullied, because it was considered you weren't hard enough. It's a different game, and a lot is placed on creativity, a lot is placed on improvisational ability. So when you take that and you merged it with this real sort of straightforward, formal structure of basketball, it's a really unique expression, so it's like physical creativity. I think also in some ways, in addition to the physical aspect, it is performative.

? Basketball as an African-American dream or nightmare?

You know, not everybody has been able to live after dreams. But the game of basketball is a uniquely African-American experience. So I would say to that extent, it's been successful. If you even take a look at the NBA now, I point out the fact that, for instance, you look at a guy like Yao Ming, who immigrates to America to play basketball. His relationship to America is through the prism of the majority of the black players in the NBA. And if you listen to Yao Ming when he does interviews now, you can tell he's been influenced by the cadence of the black players that he's around all the time. I think that is very different from the typical immigrant experience coming to America. For Yao Ming, the center of America is blackness, black culture. And you can extrapolate this across the board, that you have this unique entity where blackness is at the center, not on the margins, it's in the middle, in the culture, in the creativity, in the conversation around the sport, the success that so many people have had and the role they've played in the culture, I think, says it's been an incredible success. There are some people who haven't made it for a variety of reasons, but that's to be expected. You don't fault basketball, you fault the perhaps limited opportunities of other sectors of American society, not the game itself.

The game is for sure a business. Most of the guys learn this when they get to the NBA: it's a business. But you know, people take a lot of pride in their teams, players from their area. That's very much a part of any sport. It's no different in basketball. Players represent their communities. I mean, Cleveland, a franchise that has never had any distinction, just happens to have LeBron James growing up just outside of Cleveland, and now he is the face of the NBA, playing for his home team, which I think would be a shame if he left, but you know, I mean, that's great. He basically put Cleveland on the map as a basketball city. So you could go around the league and talk about different guys representing different places in the country, for those teams that they represent, for sure, it's as very much connected to their community.

In a capitalist society like America, where everything is based on competition, sports, of course, is the ultimate competition. And so there's a way in sports where you're judged by merit. If you can't play the game, you can't play the game. If you can, then your play speaks for itself. The success that you have been able to see people have all the time, the championships, this is incredibly significant, and I think a major part of public memory that talk about the place that basketball assumed in the culture, the highs, lows, successes and failures that these people had

over time, Kareem, Bill Russell, Wilt Chamberlain, Oscar Robertson, Julius Erving, Magic and Jordan, Allen Iverson, Isiah Thomas, Bernard King, George Gervin, David Thompson... We could go all day. When you think about these guys, what they did, it assumes a real prominent place in the memory, I think, their greatness and creativity, the teams they played with, how often times you can read history at a larger level through what's taken place amongst this type of players. »

Entretien avec Lionel Button

Ancien quarterback de l'équipe de France de foot US, journaliste sportif omnisport à Canal Plus, spécialiste de la NFL.

Propos recueillis le 14 décembre 2008 à Canal Plus.

« Avant, j'étais un grand fan de football. Mais tous les trucages qui sont apparus sur les pelouses m'ont invité à me tourner vers la NFL. Dans le foot US, l'important, c'est l'affrontement, le « gagne terrain ». C'est un sport de confrontation et de responsabilités. Même face à plus fort, tu te présentes d'homme à homme. C'est un sport qui attache beaucoup d'importance aux responsabilités, à la communication et à l'exécution.

Les Américains sont très attachés à leur histoire. En général, ils se réfèrent très souvent au passé, sans pour autant tomber dans la comparaison entre le passé et le présent, qui sont présentés comme deux choses distinctes.

Aujourd'hui, tout va plus vite et plus fort. Il y a nettement plus de schémas défensifs et offensifs. Dans les légendes du jeu, il y a « the best game » de 1958 entre les Baltimore Colts et les New York Giants, ou encore « the catch », et les exploits de Joe Montana.

Tom Brady, c'est le mythe du self-made man. C'est un véritable « produit » qui n'est pas sale. On vend un joueur et la ligue comme on vend un produit « clean », propre, un véritable modèle. Bien souvent, il s'agit d'un joueur qui vient d'un milieu défavorisé, et qui parvient à s'en extirper via le foot US. Mais il y a toujours des liens avec le passé, même aujourd'hui encore.

Il y a aussi un côté opulence, et abondance de biens. La NFL, c'est l'Amérique.

En ce qui concerne le racisme, on peut dire qu'il n'existe plus dans la NFL. Les équipes choisissent les meilleurs athlètes, point barre. En revanche, il y a encore de gros clivages dans les vestiaires. Chez les pros, les origines n'ont jamais eu trop d'importance, comme l'identité WASP, par exemple. Les origines ont bien plus d'importance au niveau universitaire. On voit cependant cela autour des Dallas Cowboys, « l'équipe de l'Amérique », les Packers, dont les fans sont les actionnaires, les 49ers ou encore les Steelers, l'équipe la plus titrée. Tous ces noms sont liés à des bases historiques. Cela se ressent en particulier autour des derbys, qui se disputent dans une ambiance particulière.

Aux États-Unis, l'importance prise par le foot US et les différentes équipes est carrément dingue. Cela est cultivé par la rareté des matches dans une saison (16 matches + les Playoffs). Quand on envisage le foot universitaire, là, c'est une importance démentielle. Il y a une véritable passion pour ce sport dans le pays. Les universités sont plus représentatives de la région et de leurs fans. L'Université cultive une certaine proximité, alors qu'avec le foot pro, il y a plus de distance. Le côté régionaliste permet cet engouement autour du foot universitaire.

La NFL n'est pas internationaliste. Ce qui compte, c'est les États-Unis. Mais on observe un regain d'intérêt dans ce sens. Le monde s'intéresse davantage à la NFL, et vice versa.

La NFL et la télévision sont intimement liées. La NFL est le produit parfait pour la télévision, que ce soit au niveau esthétique (les couleurs, la lumière,...), habillage, travail autour du match (statistiques, palette...), publicité... Les stades et les terrains sont devenus des « super studios télé ». Quand la télé US filme le terrain, tout est parfait. La réalisation autour du jeu est parfaite. C'est en partie dû au côté scénarisé de ce sport. Même si parfois, il y a une part d'imprévisibilité, en général, le scénario de base est perceptible et « anticipable » pour le réalisateur. La NFL, c'est Hollywood !

Le problème du Super Bowl, c'est qu'il y a une grande excitation autour, et avant, mais après, il y a une grande frustration, même s'il y a le Pro Bowl une semaine après. De plus, cet événement échappe un peu aux fans, surtout quand on voit la répartition des billets, essentiellement réservés aux corporations.

Ce qui est remarquable dans le foot US et la NFL, c'est que sur 60 minutes, on assiste à une concurrence parfaite entre deux entraîneurs, deux équipes, deux plans de jeu. Les coaches préparent un plan, puis ils doivent gérer en direct tous les paramètres du jeu. Il y a une grande importance de la gestion. Tout est improbable, du jeu à la gestion des équipes. C'est encore plus

vrai avec le plafond salarial, qui instaure une égalité de départ entre les franchises. La différence se fait par la gestion et l'entreprise. »

Entretien avec Tim Caron

Associate Strength and Conditioning Coach

Propos recueillis le 5 mars 2013, John McKay Center, USC

« We'll look at the individual sport – football, water polo, etc., and we'll look at the means to develop the athletes at their best level. The other aspect we look at is injuries. Certain sports have certain trends injury-wise.

We're going to create a program that's designed to facilitate you being the best at your sport, but as well as how to prevent injuries.

We'll find out where we're at in terms of movement. Then we do some general things like speed, power and strength tests, then cardio-vascular tests. We'll find out from there what we need to do to improve their level and what the athletes' weaknesses are.

But the first and foremost thing we have to establish is technique adequate in the weight room, and adequate in training. So we have a certain mindset that we feel will be the most efficient getting our athletes to a peak level.

We want you on time, we want you to focus, with safety being our number one priority. We want to make sure you utilize this time as much to our advantage as possible. So no cell phones, no sitting, wearing the appropriate attire, wearing a SC tee shirt to indicate which program you're a part of, but also having your shoes tied, ready to go. We expect all these things from our athletes before they even come through. So we take them through detail orientation. Then we'll start teaching them the fundamentals of lifting. Then we get to position-specific stuff.

We have one program per student.

Our university believes in strength conditioning in the athletic department, so they provide us with all resources. We have tons of things at our disposal for our athletes. On top of that, we have 8 full-time coaches working with all our sports.

The athletes train as a team during group time. You're going out there competing as a team. We feel that the idea of training as a team, and sweating, learning about getting physically more developed and tough as a group has a lot more carry over to them being successful as a group.

Also we have a full-time nutritionist and a part-time nutritionist on staff, not to mention people studying nutrition.

We feel as though power in numbers is the best way to elicit change in habits, and nutrition is usually one of the biggest trouble-shooting areas we have to work with student-athletes. So if we can attack and address these issues as a group, we feel we'll be a lot more successful.

The aim of every program is to get the students physically ready for the pros. Whatever the highest athletic standard in that particular sport, whether it's an Olympic sports, whether it's professional sports, whatever the highest standard is for this sport, we expect and we recruit our athletes to be at those standards. And we utilize that as a process to motivate our athletes and help them achieve that goal.

We fully believe we can elicit gains and improvement for 4 straight years, and that takes a lot of work, a lot of commitment. (...) We really try to push constant improvement.

Athletes are allowed a total of 20 hours of work a week – from training to travels to games.

We strongly believe that a solid training program that encompasses strength training, conditioning, cardio-vascular training, movement training – teaching an athlete how to move appropriately through dealing with his emotions through group control, are really key fundamental aspects to reduce injury. So we feel like if you get to reach better levels at these things, you'll be less injured and you'll compete more and you'll be better. The other aspect is we strongly believe there's a significant carry-over to performance.

And it's like anything, you got to be a good salesman in what you're doing. You got to be able to sell what you're doing, it's just as much important as doing it. So a lot of times it's about selling what you're doing. You believe in it, obviously, but early on, you got to get an athlete to say, "OK, I know you're tired, I know you've practiced for 4 hours, but if you give me 30 minutes of hard work, I promise you it'll pay off." And then, at first, there's always a bit of resistance, and

eventually they start getting warm to the idea and they realize it's better for them, they perform better, they get injured less, and it sets itself. And then you got old guys telling young guys. If everything works out, it really flows nicely. It's about developing a culture, really ».

Entretien avec Michael Cooper

Ancien joueur des Los Angeles Lakers (1978-1991), alors entraîneur de l'équipe féminine de USC.

Propos recueillis le 27 novembre 2009 à USC.

« As a young man in the African-American community, most of the time, with parents not being in the financial capabilities of looking forward to a college education, most of the time, for us, it was always sports. Whether it was Major League Baseball, NFL football or NBA basketball, it's almost like you have to pick one. And for me, since I was such a skinny guy, I think basketball would be the more logical choice for me, to not only play basketball but to help further my education.

I discovered it in the neighborhood. Everybody plays it. For us, growing up in the 60s, basketball wasn't like it is today. It wasn't shown on TV all the time, so it was something that we read about in the paper. Obviously for me growing up, Jackie Robinson was a big important piece to us, being the first Major League Black baseball player. So most blacks at that age were heading toward baseball. But then basketball became, and obviously with the Celtics and watching them a lot, that's when I chose basketball.

Basketball is a game of freedom of expression. Most athletes like to run, and in football, you only run for a couple of seconds and then the play is over and you walk back. Baseball, you only ran when you hit it. Basketball was a sport that I used to like to run up and down. The other sport that I liked was track and field. Here, in basketball, I got a chance to run up and down without having to stop too much, and play with your hand.

Defense is something that gradually came. I think all athletes, when you first start, and you're thinking about basketball, everybody wants to score points like Kobe Bryant, Michael Jordan, and for me growing up, it was Doctor J and Oscar Robertson, watching players like that. Offense was the thing to do. Everybody gets glamorized. The money is toward offense. But again, my sway for defense came as I started playing more organized basketball.

Which players did influence me? John Havlicek, who played for the Celtics. He was a 6th man, a player I really enjoyed. I grew up with Clyde Walt Frazier, who used to play for the NYK, flashy guard that could just do everything. I think the biggest influence or the biggest two would have to be Earl Monroe, Earl the Pearl a flashy player playing for the Baltimore Bullets, he was doing everything, and I think the biggest ones would be Bill Russell and Wilt Chamberlain. Those are the two biggest names for us black athletes that played basketball that you kind of emulate and become like, Wilt Chamberlain being more of an offensive player, everybody wanted to be that. But then looking at Bill Russell, who was defense, he kind of made you start thinking about becoming a defensive player.

I do associate basketball with music, for sure. Jazz, as well as anything at that time. Jazz kind of like went along because of the artistic nature of jazz, and being a professional jazz musician, the great jazz players, Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Charlie Parker, players like that – I mean musicians like that – got a chance to really be creative in their music. And when you look at basketball, that's when the basketball player really becomes a basketball player, when he gets creative in his basketball game. So those two went hand in hand. And I think if you watch any kind of sports documentary, the music that they play most of the time is jazz.

P-Funk was one of our things. Magic was the one that kind of started with that rap/hip-hop stuff when he came with the Lakers, but I'm by nature, the music I listen to more is jazz, real hard-core jazz, and that was one thing I appreciated and respected about Kareem. That was all I listened to.

I had watched Kareem's whole career. I never thought I would play in the same team or on the same basketball court as him. He was an inspiration as far as young black men being kind of like. For my age group at the time was always been pointed at, admired and looked at by different people and still going on to become something good, but still being knowledgeable and academic person. And I think, again, Kareem set the standards for a lot of athletes at that time, in the 60s

and 70s. What's best for us black athletes is to come up and get a good education. So it was nice to watch him go to a very high talented university and be successful, not just on the court, but off the court.

At one point in time, I thought becoming a professional basketball player was success. But that wasn't the case as I got older. But again, the thing that it represented the most is that you made it. You were able to play among your peers, with the best at the game, and the NBA was considered, when you mention the NBA, you were 1 of the 330 players that played in the NBA, now, one of the best. That was the thing I kept wanting to be. Everybody would call themselves the best high school player, the best junior college player, the best college player, but you're not the best until you play with the best. So once I was able to make the LAL team, that, to me, right there, would be considered the best among the best.

Being from California, Pasadena, born and raised, so over the years, all I watched was the Boston Celtics beat the Lakers... Boston Celtics beat the Lakers... The Lakers never overcoming that until 1972, so once I was able to represent the city of Los Angeles, with the Laker uniform, that was my goal, or my little personal vendetta that I had is that to win as many championships as we could, and especially it means if we could against the Boston Celtics. So 1985 was a very, for me, personal, accomplishment, because it was the second time, obviously the first being 1984, when we saw the Celtics beating us, so when we were finally able to get there, it was like we vindicated and eradicated all the beatings of the past of the Celtic-Laker rivalry. And for that particular year, we have won the championship not only for our 1985 team and the city of LA at that time, but we had done it for all the teams throughout the years. Chick Hearn, Elgin Baylor, all the former Lakers, and some LaLa fans who came up, wanted the Lakers to beat the Celtics and always came up short. That's what that championship represented.

The media have to hype the game some kind of way. The Celtics were always considered the blue-collar team with guys who are gonna work, play together, play hard, and the Lakers were just some little flick team that came together and we were Showtime. But that's what we were. You can't deny the distinctions that they had. We were a fast-breaking team, a showtime team, mostly black. The Celtics were a hard-work, blue-collar team, mostly white. At that particular time, racism wasn't a big issue, that's something that we had got over the hump, and I think basketball has been a big contributor to us crossing those barriers, and again still plays an important part. People saw two good basketball teams playing. Obviously, our stars were different, but people didn't see us as race. They just saw this one good team from Boston, Bean-Town, playing against the Los Angeles Lakers from LA, the Showtime, glitz and La-La Land Lakers. It was fun. It was a lot of fun, because you had two great players in Magic Johnson and Larry Bird being the forefront of their team, and yet so many stars on the team. For us, it was Kareem, Worthy, McAdoo, for the Celtics, Robert Parrish, McHale and Bird. With those two key players playing a significant part for their team only made it fun. And people, after a while, stopped seeing black and white. I had a lot of my friends, people in the East Coast, rooting for Larry Bird, they were black, and vice versa, people out here, in the entertainment business, most of whom were white, would root for the Lakers. So I think that's one thing that came out of that: there was no color line at that particular time.

I experienced racism more as a young man. But when you got to the NBA level, I think it became prevalent only because people so vehemently rooted for their team. When we went to the Boston Celtics in 1984, wives accompanied us. We won the game, and some white guy went on to pour beer on our black wives. I wouldn't say it was a race thing. It was just that they were rooting for the Lakers and you couldn't do that. Here we are, having Jack Nicholson in the stands with us in Boston Garden, this white actor, and he mooned the people in Boston Garden. I don't think at any point of time we felt, as players, felt racism, but it was obviously prevalent there simply because of the distinction of the two teams. It was the same thing in Los Angeles.

Of course I felt like a role model when I was a player. I think every player that puts on a uniform or represents a team that young people idolize have to be considered role models. Contrary to what Charles Barkley wants to say, "I'm no role model", you are, whether you like it or not.

You'll always have kids watching you, and it doesn't matter whether you are a professional athlete. You can be an entertainer, or a musician. You are a role model, because there is one young person out there, if not many, many more, who are watching you, especially with the age of media now. Pro athletes are definitely set on a pedestal, a lot higher than school teachers and preachers and people of religion that should be put up there. And we have to be accountable for actions, because, again, what we do, other people are watching.

If you're a high school coach or a college coach, you're like an educator, because you work with young minds that are still being active and evolving and trying to learn how to handle this world as a young adult and move on. And I think, yes, I am an educator. What I try to do is pick up from my learning experience, people that I have been associated with and have relationship with and try to pass those on. On the same process, try to teach them how to play basketball, a game that they love or whatever sport it is, and mine happens to be basketball. Being a father, having 4 kids of my own, the teaching goes on to show them how to be good, productive young adults.

I try not to get too involved because, as a coach, you have to coach players, and I think, will it be a religious thing or a personal thing or character or some kind of relationship or experience that you try to pass on to young people, you have to be very cautious now by crossing the line. So I usually try to teach people by example of my way, and if a young person comes up to me and ask my opinion on things, I'm not gonna tell them "it's this way", but I'm gonna get them different solutions on how to work with situations. (...) Hopefully they pick the right choice that suits them.

The game of basketball changed when Magic Johnson and Larry Bird came aboard the NBA. They made it more of a team concept. In the 70s, the NBA basketball was very selfish, "I, I, I". The two best players on the team would monopolize the basketball and try to score all the points. And when Magic Johnson and Larry Bird came, they made it important for all people to be respected on the court. Here I was, a defensive player, and I became an important part of a team of basketball, simply because two players wanted to share the ball and made the game what Dr Naismith meant the game to be. Basketball is a 5-man sport. Obviously, it's bigger than that, because you have more players on the team, but those 5 players that are out there on the floor have to work well together in unison, whether it's offense or defense, to become a successful team.

I think now it's still a collective sport, but I still think there are big teams trying to identify with just two players doing everything. And when you look at those situations, those are teams that aren't winning championships. Teams that win championships – and this is the thing I admire about Kobe Bryant, because he finally got it. Last year he succumbed to being an individual performer that he's been. Kobe's great, but when he starts making other players around him better, that's when the Lakers really took off and won the championship. That's a proven point. Look at Michael Jordan. Michael Jordan was scoring all the points, they weren't winning. As soon as he conformed to the team, starting making Scottie Pippen, Horace Grant, Cartwright, all the players around him better, he started winning championships, and he saw his status of greatness elevated to another level. That's what's happening to Kobe.

In the 1980s, players were more conscious of their role than they are now. Definitely more conscious of their role and more committed to doing their role. But I think you start slowly, surely get back to that. I think players understand now how to make an NBA team is not about scoring all the time. The teams that are successful are the ones that can get their chemistry together, get players understanding their roles, playing their roles, and a team that plays well together.

I think players represent their community. More so than ever before. I think players are starting to make a conscious effort at giving back to their community, if not their hometown, the city that they're playing or working in. But again, I think the NBA in itself has done a great job of giving back and making players responsible and to give back to the community by the Read to Achieve, different programs that they have throughout the NBA that make players get back out there and do some things.

My advice to players would be “always remain coachable”. That’s the biggest thing that you have now. Players think they know too much or know more than the coach. Those players will not have a successful career. Always be humble, stay true to the game as well as yourself, and if you do those three things, you’ll be a successful player. »

Entretien avec Daniel Durbin

Professeur de communication au sein de l'Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism de USC.

Propos recueillis le 18 novembre 2009 à USC.

« Among the important African-American athletes in terms of what they represented and how they impacted society, Jack Johnson was key, as well as Joe Louis. Muhammad Ali changed the face of popular culture and sport in the US, so he was a key figure. Jackie Robinson in baseball. In terms of legend and the way people talk about it and how people were impacted, Jesse Owens and what he did in the 1936 Olympics. There was also ..., track and field star. So much of this is what they did, but also the stage on which they did it. It's the stage that you're on as the narrative that's been driven. (Joe Louis fought Max Schmeling when the American society was transitioning toward war)

Ernie Davis, Sam Cunningham... People who had some popular culture impact or some impact on values and people's perceptions.

Michael Jordan is a key figure in the Madison Avenueing of athletes. You could easily put Magic Johnson before him, in terms of African-American athletes, you can put Kareem Abdul-Jabbar before him, and you definitely put Wilt Chamberlain before all of them. Bill Russell was a great player. Wilt Chamberlain was a dominant figure in American sports, and he helped reinforce his own legend in a variety of ways 1/ writing books about himself in which he told tales that were Paul Bunyanesque, and playing basketball having dominating performances like any other, setting virtually every record in the NBA. He's set this huge variety of records that made him this really important figure. Kareem Abdul-Jabbar went out and made popular movies. Those helped broaden the public recognition of basketball, and helped broaden the image of the basketball athlete as a really kind of Madison Avenue-type of character. Magic Johnson and the Showtime Lakers of the '80s, who were the dominant basketball team of the 1980s, were the figure of the '80s. They represented everything Hollywood about the NBA. Johnson was the figure, with a million-dollar smile, very athletic, really smart, playing with other players' strengths. All of those things led up to Michael Jordan, who dominated the 1990s and became this public Madison Avenue face of basketball, saturating the market with his image, creating such a popular image that they created a movie Just Like Mike, with kids trying to be like Mike, creating out of a great basketball player and team, taking that and creating a much, much larger figure out of it. Muhammad Ali was an excellent boxer, but he took the heavyweight championship and blew that stage up with something that was so far more than just a championship by his personality, his personal culture, by engaging people in a way athletes seldom do. A lot of it is due to his personality, a lot of it is due to very good marketing skills. It changes the world of sports.

Michael Jordan was really important, he was so dominant in the 1990s, but also he was taking up where a lot of people had left off, and there were other people before or after who tried to do more or less the same thing, some of them successfully. Magic Johnson, Larry Bird and others were very successful at marketing themselves. Some of them are chasing Jordan's shadow. Shaquille O'Neal has forever tried to capitalize on his persona. But Michael Jordan went so far beyond. The first who's most likely to catch him is LeBron James, who has incredible popularity with the press and the media. There were so many reasons why Michael Jordan was able to accomplish it. It's difficult to pick out anybody and say it's a sure bet.

They're creating a biblical myth out of [LeBron James]. It's kind of a blending of Star Wars seemingness and New Testament biblical messianic intervention, using a terminology that is very popular in religious circles. It creates and reinforces a myth. It remains a manufactured image. It has to be taken up by the public in order for it to become real – real is probably the wrong term, it's all fictional, it's all created – but in order to be a part of the public consciousness, the public has to pick up that image and accept it. The public has to take ownership of LeBron James before he will have the potential of achieving Michael Jordan's position. The perfect illustration of that

is the Just like Mike sort of movie or the other popular culture things like “I Wanna Be like Mike”. Once the public says it, it becomes the broad public image and you’ve won.

There are 3 ways in which a rivalry works: 1/ there has to be an actual rivalry on the field, it cannot be totally fabricated. With the Lakers and Celtics, the rivalry started early (50s/60s), and in the early 80s, with the Bird/Magic situation, Magic had won a couple of championships, the Celtics come in as the hard-working, scrappy guys – which of course is all bull, I mean, they’re all basketball players, but that’s the image created for them – plus the Lakers are the Southern California Showtime, movie stars whose toughness is questionable. At the start, the Celtics won the championship, and so it seemed as the Celtics were.....from the Lakers, and of course, the Lakers came back and wiped them out. By that point, it became the main rivalry. It was reviving something that had been there, but it was put into stone now that there was this cross-country rivalry, and these were the teams that ideally should be in the championship because they’re true rivals. And every time that shows up again, you have that same sense of excitement around it, because what they really did was rivalry. The press, then, creates the name for that and starts talking about it as a rivalry as they report it. There has to be an actual, in-fact rivalry of some sort, 2/ there also has to be an imprint rivalry created by the press, because if it doesn’t get expressed as a rivalry, it’s just a basketball game. So somebody has to pick up on it. You have to have that message created by the press. 3/ It has to be picked up by the fan base as legitimate. At that point, it becomes a myth in the fans’ eyes and this becomes more important than the game itself. You could lose to another team. If you lose to that team, the world is over. It becomes a myth-like rivalry, myth in the sense that not being totally false, but in the sense of being a story that explains to people why they are the way they are. Why do you hate the NY Yankees? Because you live in Boston. That gives them a narrative that explains to them why they feel this way. It’s because this story has allowed them to express this kind of emotions, it has given them the platform.

In the upper Northeast, you have Harvard, Yale, the Ivy League schools, which have sports, but it’s gentleman’s sports. This is for the education of the people of the school, the players. It was an expression of the university atmosphere. Typical European model. Renaissance values of fully rounded educated person. Development of college football//development of media & media coverage.

That goes all the way from the classic model – you’re building fully-rounded human beings – to this isn’t about college students or athletes, this is about pulling in families and making money out of it. This is about creating Disneyland at USC. Building a baseball stadium at USC has nothing to do with the academic pursuit.

You have the intelligentsia that does academic things, and the football team that makes money and does athletic things. The problem is not so much the trivializing of one or the other, it is joining them. So if the academics want to take part in athletics, they take part as viewers, as passive observers, and if the athletes want to take part in the academics, they do so as student-athletes. So their 1st priority is athletics.

At the time of Jack Johnson, the picture made by the media of black athletes was horribly racist. And this did not end with Joe Louis or Jackie Robinson. It lasted all the way up until the late 1960s and the early 1970s. They would get rid of the extreme sort of pictures and representations, but journalists would quote athletes using all sorts of contractions and other things to make them sound as if talking ignorantly. Their excuse would be “That’s the way he talks”. They were creating a caricature of that person. That has faded to some degree, but that was a continuing form of racism in the media at least until the 1960s. Some of it was unconscious, but still. Plus there were cartoons, caricatures, and racist imagery until 30s/40s. It became much more difficult after WWII to have the overt, obvious racism that you might have had 10, 15, 20 years before. Having African image of African-American athletes, baseball players laying out in the outfield, relaxing, reinforcing bad stereotypical character of the lazy African-American. It can be unconsciously done. The image still keeps a pattern of imagery, and the public consciousness still resonates to certain characters. Because of that, it continues to reinforce the strength of these

images. There's such a backdrop of images already there, that one mistaken image can reinforce these stereotypes.

Today, race is still an issue in the relation between athletes and the media. Not in the same way as before, but there's always an issue. It's the case when the media starts talking about the NBA as a gangster league. That reinforces the negative imagery that goes back to creating something of a character, because it identifies gangster being tied to the African-American community. It puts people under one position. When you say he has gangster culture and that reflexes his African-American roots, then you imply every African-American is a gangster.

As Ken Burns and Spike Lee would agree with, it has always been part of the discourse in the US. And because of that, there will always be an issue of race in cases of communication.

Recognizing it can be the first step to recognizing when something shows up and being able to deal with it.

Sports communication is part of the common communication, and it has become a very significant part of common communication in the US. I wouldn't say more than in other cultures. It is natural and elemental to the social discourse. In the popular culture, it will be there. In politics, it will be there. In the news, it's there. You look at social problems, it's there. It touches on every part of culture, and you can close your eyes and plug your ears, it will still infiltrate. »

Propos recueillis au cours du séminaire « Sports, Communication, and Culture », du 25 août au 3 décembre 2009.

Sport is a performance activity, which implies communication. Playing the game is a performance for the fans and the media, and an activity of communication. Sports organizations and players are creating a message. They are selling the game as a product with messages. TV has been the main medium for that performance.

It is about constructing an image, and that image has to be a credible fiction, so that fans will identify. Celtics fans will identify themselves to the image of the Celtics, even though the Celtics are not Celtics.

Studying these images is like doing semiotics. You study signs and their use in creating and reinforcing cultural norms.

Sports heroes are commodities that are bought and sold through transactions

Sports icons are myths, symbols permeated with cultural meaning which draw on those social values to create culture (sports culture and culture as a whole) and sell commodities.

Various media put these symbols together to create stories that reinforce values, create values, and sell their product.

Sport is a model of life. Sports figures represent the highest ideals in work and talent. When our heroes succeed, we feel enlightened and transcendent. When they fail, we find the moral lessons of tragedy.

Sport is also an industry, as well as a social ritual and a means for creating community through identification with a team or player. It can also be a means for establishing power, manipulation or social control.

The NFL established the links between sports and the media in the 1960s and 1970s. Commissioner Pete Rozelle played a key part, and used to say "If you create the impression of a national sport, you get a national sport".

The show is built around the announcers, and the game is a story they tell you. At the time, sports on TV became part of the endemic American culture. Monday Night Football mixed sports with entertainment.

Broadcasters create images and descriptions that reinforce larger social values and the "rightness" of those values and of the culture they sustain

When journalists construct a story, they make it bigger than the event itself. Thus they create meaning and value in sports. They create actors on a stage. That way, they create fans.

The media make the athletes icons of values. That way, when Babe Ruth went to whorehouses, it wasn't reported, whereas when Jack Johnson went, it was because it was part of the story!

Boxing thrives on ethnic confrontations.

The Super Bowl is made of symbols that are meant to recreate a fantasy that is reinforced orally and visually all the time. It is constructed as the American holiday, to celebrate America and its values. The Super Bowl represents the intersection of sports and political fantasies, creating a message of how things should be.

The communication medium creates the meaning of the story.

The media is now generating part of the action through technology and the use of multiple cameras, angles and mics.

Sport can be a vehicle for change, and an example of social progress. The game can be the opportunity for a shift to take place, for different philosophies to be challenged.

Sports are promoting a certain ethnicity. Blacks were limited to certain roles, they couldn't be quarterback. They had to prove people wrong through their performances. The image shapes the perception of identity. Also, it can bear a cultural identification.

In sports films, the rhetorical strategy is different from historical reality. Sports become a platform to tell a story and send a message.

Players became mythic commodities, heroes fans could purchase by buying tickets to the game.

Sports events can be seen as heroic quests.

The season becomes a quest for the title.

Sports can be seen as social drama.

The 1970s were perceived as the "Me" decade, with individual values destroying America, whereas the 1980s symbolized a shift back to collectivist values.

The media have a huge influence in today's society: they educate, normalize and homogenize.

Is Sports Reporting Reporting? Reporters create the importance of sporting events, while trying to remain corporately correct. Storytelling is first, reporting is less important ».

26 octobre 2012, « Archetypes and Action: Narrative Construction in American Sports Cinema »

<http://epresence.univ-paris3.fr/1/Watch/207.aspx>

Consulté le 5 novembre 2012

« Sports really don't exist socially until they're on media. The narrative of sports, the impact society has created through media, whereas through television or the online presentation of sports.

The media are constructing the narrative of sports.

Ron Shelton : "Sports films create a background and a stage with archetypes that allow you the possibility to construct really powerful narratives. (...) Sports narratives are the new westerns. Westerns had a background and a stage with archetypes we could connect with. Those archetypes are gone now, because of TV and the media. We have a new theater, and that theater is sports."

The moment a sports narrative is created, it is – in the classic sense of the word – mythos: a narrative that explains our world or some part of our world and our place in it. In fact, one form of sports ritual is the formalized retelling of sports narratives, or in the classic sense, mythos, until they achieve the level of sports myth in the commonly accepted use of the word today.

This ritualized retelling makes the myth part of the shared experience of sports fans whether or not the myth happens to be true. (...) The repeated retelling of these stories invests mythic meaning into them – a meaning that remakes our corporate experience of sports.

We witness a sports mythologizing process, during which sports narratives are growing into sports myths that embody the values and beliefs of the mythmakers.

Some athletes have seen their stories changed over time because of the myth recreated for them.

Myths invest sports with a narrative logic.

As Northrup Frye wrote, "Understanding the meaning of narratives and their rhetorical intent begins with stepping back from the repetition of events and examining the mythic structure beneath." This is true in sports and Hollywood.

The mythic structure remains potent for audiences.

As sports narratives evolve into sports myth, they help construct the narrative genres that make up sports stories and infuse those genres with the social rhetorical potency of sports myth.

As heroes in the Western tradition, athletes are naturally carrying many of the qualities of the Christ figure archetype.

The athlete's real story ends up embodying the myth.

The athlete's dramatic sacrifice becomes the ritualistic sacrifice of myth. The dramatized ritual becomes our means for creating cultural justification for a set of dialectical choices. We identify with the values that are embodied in the athlete who performs these rituals for us.

When Frye underlines the impact of the mythic form on the narrative content, Burke analyzes the narrative content and its impact on our construction of mythical forms.

Athletes transcend the common human experience, raising sports competition to the level of ritual drama. Thus the athlete becomes an empowered hero, a Christ figure.

When the athletes are brothers, it purifies the drama of racial tension.

"For the structure of the ritual drama, the outcome has to be....."

In the US, there is a celebration of the athlete's individual accomplishment and he will experience damnation if he doesn't play for the team. In the American narrative construct, there is a celebration of both individualism and collectivism, which is a contradiction in itself. »

Entretien avec George Eddy

Né à Orlando, en Floride. Ancien joueur et entraîneur de basket-ball en France. Journaliste sportif à Canal Plus, spécialiste du basket-ball.

Propos recueillis le samedi 25 avril 2009 à Canal Plus.

« *L'entertainment* et le sport étaient les deux activités avec lesquelles les Noirs pouvaient arriver au sommet et bien gagner leur vie quand les autres secteurs de la société leur étaient bloqués à cause du racisme, c'est-à-dire les médecins, les avocats, les grands businessmen. Ces places étaient essentiellement réservées aux Blancs, et c'est en étant chanteurs ou sportifs que les Noirs ont eu pendant très longtemps leurs meilleures opportunités.

Le basket était un moyen de mobilité sociale, parce que les Américains acceptaient des chanteurs noirs et des basketteurs noirs avant d'accepter des médecins, des avocats et des hommes politiques noirs. Je ne sais pas si c'est une histoire de compétences ou de talent, le côté spectaculaire est attirant.

La question raciale était sensible au niveau des médias et des joueurs. Je ne pense pas que Bird lui-même voulait particulièrement jouer ce rôle. Mais il est clair qu'une partie des fans des Celtics de Bird, avec leur équipe ultra-blanche, étaient attirés par le fait qu'il y avait plus de Blancs dans cette équipe. Mais Bird et Magic avaient davantage de similitudes que de différences. Ils étaient tous les deux de grands joueurs, de grands leaders, très complets, des winners, et à travers leurs vies, ils se sont rapprochés grâce à ces similitudes. On se souvient d'Isiah Thomas qui avait dit que si Bird avait été un Noir, il serait un joueur comme un autre, ce qui était stupide.

Il y a un véritable lien identitaire entre les fans et leurs équipes. Le cas de Boston et des Celtics est très important. C'est situé dans le Nord Est, région anti-esclavagiste à l'époque de Lincoln, mais Boston est connu pour être une ville assez raciste, paradoxalement. Plus qu'à New York. Il y avait un côté « nous sommes la dernière équipe avec beaucoup de Blancs » qui n'était pas annoncé, mais c'est clair que c'était l'équipe col bleu des ouvriers blancs américains. Les Lakers, c'était le Showtime, c'était plus flamboyant. C'était un peu la différence entre le rhythm'n'blues et la country au niveau sport.

David Stern a su garder un certain équilibre entre *l'entertainment* et l'esprit du jeu. C'est à double tranchant. Ils ont compris que le fait de vendre leur produit grâce à quelques stars comme Jordan, ça ne pouvait durer qu'un temps. C'est le *star system* hollywoodien appliqué au basket. On met une tête d'affiche, Jack Nicholson, pour vendre un film, on met une tête d'affiche, Jordan, pour vendre la NBA. Mais si Jordan se blesse ou prend sa retraite, il faut trouver d'autres têtes d'affiche. Finalement, ils ont compris qu'il fallait communiquer autour des équipes, du jeu, du spectacle, tout ça dans un basket moins individualiste comparé aux années 70-80. Mais déjà à ces époques, les équipes qui gagnaient jouaient comme ça, comme les Knicks ou les Lakers de Jerry West.

Par rapport au recrutement des jeunes vedettes qui montent, *He Got Game* est une représentation fidèle de la réalité, une bonne peinture. C'est toujours aussi vrai aujourd'hui aux États-Unis. On va moins à l'Université, moins longtemps, on vient plus jeune dans la NBA. Le côté recrutement et tous les parasites autour de la jeune star et l'entourage... Jesus Shuttlesworth, c'est LeBron James. Et ça existe encore aujourd'hui.

Si le basket américain s'est fait rattraper au niveau international par l'Europe et les autres pays, c'est parce qu'il y a un gros problème de formation. Les joueurs s'entraînent moins en université américaine qu'en Europe. Ce film décrit également encore une fois comment sortir du ghetto par le sport, et comment beaucoup essaient de s'accrocher à l'étoile.

Heureusement, le sport, et le basket, représentent moins le rêve américain que par le passé, parce que les leaders et les sportifs, Jordan en tête, ont essayé de faire comprendre aux jeunes noirs qu'il y avait peu de chances de devenir basketteur pro, et qu'en revanche, en travaillant bien à l'école, il y avait de bonnes chances de réussir. Il y a moins de freins dans la société américaine aujourd'hui pour qu'un Noir devienne avocat, ou médecin, ou homme politique comme Obama.

Jordan ne s'impliquait pas beaucoup dans la politique. C'est ce que l'on pouvait reprocher à

Jordan. Il n'a pas vraiment mis sa notoriété au service des autres totalement, c'était plutôt pour gagner de l'argent. Il a fait des choses charitables, mais sans doute beaucoup moins qu'un Magic Johnson, qui a réinvestit dans beaucoup de ghettos, et qui a fait fortune en faisant cela, ce qui est assez fort de sa part. Jordan disait que même les Républicains achetaient Nike, et donc ils ne voulaient pas vexer une partie de son marché. C'était un businessman. C'est clair que Bill Russell, que j'utilise souvent dans mes commentaires, était carrément à côté de Martin Luther King sur les marches à Washington en 1963. Chamberlain était davantage businessman, il avait un night-club à New York et courrait les jupons. Il n'était pas aussi engagé que Russell, qui était toujours l'intello engagé. Après il y a eu Jabbar, qui était très engagé. Ces joueurs sont à féliciter. Jabbar, comme Ali, ont réussi à faire accepter tant bien que mal leur religion. J'adore Ali pour son combat contre le Vietnam, pour sa liberté de s'exprimer, mais le caractère positif ou non de la Nation of Islam est un autre débat...

David Stern a été un dirigeant extraordinaire. Il a réussi le côté business, mais il a également réussi à élever le peuple noir d'une certaine façon, pas seulement avec les joueurs, mais il a donné pleins de places à des coaches, des arbitres et des dirigeants, il a plein d'hommes noirs autour de lui tout en haut de la NBA, comme Stu Jackson, et d'autres. Il a créé de vrais opportunités et donné l'exemple à beaucoup de sports et d'hommes d'affaires, il a été précurseur, et également dans ses rapports avec le syndicat des joueurs. Sur les droits civiques et la situation des Noirs, Stern était un Juif New Yorkais avec une sensibilité presque un peu à gauche pour un milliardaire, ce qui est rare. Il a fait reconnaître les anciens joueurs, ainsi que les premiers Noirs de la NBA, il a fêté tout ça et su mettre tout cela en valeur. Il a fait avancer la cause noire, et pas seulement en donnant des gros salaires à quelques privilégiés. Il a fait beaucoup de bien à cette Ligue. »

Entretien avec Magdi El Shahawy

Director of Student-Athlete Academic Services

Propos recueillis le 5 mars 2013, John McKay Center, USC

« My particular role is overseeing our student Academic Services unit. What we do is we provide academic support and advising, plus personal development programming.

We want to make sure we provide help for those who need help in terms of tutoring services, and the thing that needs to be clear is it's not help that does the work for the students, but help to help them understand how to be better students.

Athletes who struggle the most are sometimes freshmen with a lower GPA and a history of academic difficulty.

What we mean by personal development is the non-academic development: your leadership, working on your character, helping you to be a better person, helping you become more aware of your responsibilities, being informed on sexual health, educating you about proper nutrition, substance abuse, drugs, alcohol, gambling, career programming, how to build a résumé, how to network with people, doing community service, going and giving back by volunteer work – that sort of thing, personal development, personal growth, how to properly navigate and portray yourself on your social media, teaching you about how to be better in what you put on Facebook, proper conduct, how to handle yourself.

So we do different workshops and classes on it. A lot of it is based on leadership and leading yourself, being a person also that, even if you live right, your responsibility to prevent someone else from doing the wrong thing, what's your responsibility as a by-stander, as a witness to something.

Our students train, so our primary focus is, sports is not a career. A career is something you do until you're 70 years old. Professional sports is a well-paid temporary job. In some cases, it's not even well paid. But football, baseball, basketball, in America, those are well-paid jobs when you can play professionally. The thing is, it's not a career if you can't make it – most of them don't make it – to 30 years old. So we prepare our students for life. We train them to go as far as they can with their sports, and at the same time prepare them for the end of their sports career.

Here at USC, because it's such a good academic institution, we definitely sell the fact that you are going to get a great degree and we have a great alumni network here at USC. So you are going to have access to, as alumni, a great worldwide network. It's not just in America; we have more international students here at USC than any college in America. You have people all over the planet who are alumni at USC. And it's a private school, so you have a group of alumni that are very connected to each other. So when you combine a great education with a great network, you can open up a lot of doors for yourself.

When the students are in season, they have very structured days, where they practice in the afternoon, and go to school in the morning.

We have a Sports Information Office that handles the media. Athletes are told not to take media requests unless it's been approved by our Sports Information Office.

The emphasis is on the message that says, if you want to come to a place where you're going to be challenged as a student, as an athlete, as a young man or woman, where we're going to develop you to be the best in all three facets of your life, to get a quality degree as well as a quality athletic experience in one of the best universities in the world, then come to USC. But it's hard work. You better be ready to work hard. If you're not ready to work hard, then don't come to us.

We will make sure that they understand that this is a great opportunity for them to come to this school. They'll get a great education, a great athletic experience and a great network.

In basketball, the international game tends to be more focused on fundamental skills, whereas the Americans tend to rely on flash and athleticism, so they don't always focus on the skills. We have to do a better job as a nation to promote skill development. In soccer, we're not as technically sound. But in baseball, we're probably more skill-oriented than other countries.

You can learn a lot about discipline, teamwork, it's a healthy life for your body. It depends on the sport, but I would definitely want my kids to follow this path, because there are a lot of social and physical benefits, and I think in the long run, you can develop some great characteristics from playing sports that can help you in your career too. »

Entretien avec Raphaël Enthoven

Professeur de philosophie.

Propos recueillis les 14 avril et 8 mai 2014 à la Sorbonne.

« On retrouve dans le sport la notion d'idéal du moi pour le meilleur et pour le pire. On peut y voir la culmination d'un individualisme tout puissant, avec l'idée de performance ou bien l'idée de dépassement de soi-même. Ce sont les modalités démocratiques de l'érection d'une individualité en seul principe viable, et du sentiment originel de l'autonomie.

On n'aurait pas le même rapport au sport ou la même conception du sport si le point de départ n'était pas la nôtre aujourd'hui, c'est-à-dire que les individus naissent seuls.

Comme le dit Isabelle Queval, avec le sport, on est passé d'un monde clos à celui d'un univers infini, ce qui signifie le basculement de l'harmonie ou du bien-être à la performance, avec des avatars, comme le dopage. Le « dopé » comme victime d'une certaine représentation du corps social. Quand on parle du système (marchand), on parle de ce qui est demandé à l'individu, c'est-à-dire de dépasser les autres. Le sport, c'est la façon qu'a la démocratie d'accepter la hiérarchie. Le sport passe pour plus digeste, puisqu'il se veut *fair play*, donc c'est une modalité acceptable de la hiérarchie en démocratie. De l'harmonie à la performance, d'Orphée à Prométhée.

Je crois qu'on peut parler du sport comme un art. C'est un art au sens que Nietzsche peut donner à l'activité artistique. La pensée de Nietzsche a donné le jour à une conception progressiste, démocratique de l'art, qui s'épuise dans le geste artistique lui-même. Au fond, ce qui compte, ce n'est pas tellement l'œuvre qu'on a produite, mais le chemin, l'ambition qui nous y conduit, le secret de son émergence. Discours basé sur la métaphore stoïco-confuséenne sportive du geste de l'archer qui compte plus que le centre de la cible. Cette métaphore permet de débarrasser l'activité du culte d'un but. En sport, on a le culte de la belle défaite, ainsi que du beau geste, le mythe d'un joueur peu efficace mais gracieux. La défaite magnifique. On peut considérer que la pratique du sport est déjà un début de victoire et que la victoire est tout à fait secondaire. On commente le geste, et peu importe l'issue. On a une conception athéologique du sport qui culmine dans une esthétique du beau geste. Cela correspond à une conception de l'art où la prime n'est pas faite à la beauté, l'œuvre finie ou au résultat, mais à la teneur en subversion du geste qui lui a donné le jour. En ce sens-là, il me semble que l'on peut parler du sport comme d'un art.

Il me semble qu'il y a une autre définition. L'artiste est une figure de la liberté, mais l'expérience qu'il fait de son propre processus de production est celle d'une soumission à une nécessité qui le dépasse. La juxtaposition d'une image de liberté avec une pratique, résultat d'une nécessité absolue. La liberté paradoxale d'un artiste va avec la destruction du sujet, donc de la conscience de soi, qui est un obstacle. Il est évident que la part d'instinct, de réflexe, de spontanéité, c'est-à-dire de nécessité inaugurale est incomparablement supérieure dans la pratique d'un sport. C'est une autre forme de liberté.

Entre la célébration du geste éventuellement au dépend de l'œuvre ou l'expérience d'une nécessité interne qui va de paire avec l'insouciance ou une forme d'inconscience de l'artiste, et enfin le fait que certains sportifs soient objectivement des artistes et accomplissent des choses qui relèvent effectivement d'une œuvre d'art, cela me laisse penser qu'effectivement, le sport est un art. Je dirais même l'un des beaux arts.

Je crois que les spectateurs sportifs font l'expérience d'une catharsis. Incontestablement. On veut une chose et son contraire. « Que le meilleur gagne ». Une société où c'est le meilleur qui gagne. L'abîme qu'il y a entre la célébration des valeurs du sport, c'est-à-dire la loi du plus fort, et ce que l'on prétend défendre dans nos sociétés, me laisse penser qu'effectivement le sport est un grand purgateur des passions démocratiques, et un grand exhausteur de ce qu'il serait honteux d'éprouver en d'autres circonstances. De même, il est très frappant de voir à quel point le sport produit des comportements grégaires. Que l'ère de l'individualisme forcené produise des foules dont le désir est de crier à l'unanimité « Marseille, on t'encule » me semble relever de l'ordre de la purgation des passions. C'est évident. Répandre le sport permet notamment aux gens d'être méchants sans l'être.

Le corps athlétique est un idéal à atteindre dans notre culture. Il y a plusieurs catégories de corps athlétiques. Le corps musculeux est à mettre en parallèle à la constitution phallique du corps. Le corps athlétique est divers. Il y a un partage entre le corps athlétique entendu comme puissant ou bien comme souple//recoupe la question de l'harmonie ou de la performance.

Dans le cas du dopage, on fait le procès de l'athlète et du système, mais quid du consommateur ? Celui-ci, pour regarder le Tour de France, a besoin d'exploits, de performances.

L'athlète (cas Armstrong) concentre dans son corps tous les méfaits de l'injonction démocratique de la performance : la loi du marché, la consommation, la quête de l'exploit, le goût d'admirer et le goût de se prendre un bouc émissaire pour se dédouaner de ses propres responsabilités. Les consommateurs que nous sommes produisent ces phénomènes, que nous pouvons ensuite exclure commodément. La critique de la société marchande ne suffit pas quand elle se fait séparément de la critique du consommateur.

Bergson et la perfection du geste qui suppose un oubli, un abandon de soi.

La question noire :

« Il est souple, le ghanéen », disait Thierry Roland

Il a physiologisé son propos. Il cumule ici racisme biologique et ethnocentrisme.

Les héros sportifs modernes ont-ils la même puissance évocatrice que les héros antiques ?

Non, car d'une part, c'est du théâtre mais aussi parce qu'il existe un devoir d'exemplarité des sportifs (ex : Zidane). Dans la *République*, Livre X, Platon file une critique de Homère. Il reproche à Homère d'avoir rendu aimable des personnages comme Achille. Avec Homère, on célèbre la colère plutôt que de célébrer les vertus dont la jeunesse a besoin, la *paideia*. On a rendu aimable quelqu'un dont les vices auraient dû inspirer la défiance, ce qui est forcément nuire à la jeunesse de la cité.

L'argument de l'exemplarité est un argument platonicien qui demandait à Zidane d'être un héros antique, non pas au sens de Homère, mais au sens que Platon voudrait qu'un héros antique fût. C'est-à-dire de concilier le beau et le bon. D'être vertueux parce qu'il est beau. Derrière cette accusation, il y avait la demande implicite d'être à la hauteur de l'image que les autres avaient de lui. C'est là qu'il y a un lien avec l'Antiquité. Dans la représentation, dans le rêve d'un héroïsme vertueux, il y a quelque chose d'essentiel. Voilà pourquoi on ne tolère pas de l'athlète qu'il triche, et qu'il n'y a pas de rédemption possible pour les athlètes pour cette raison-là. Il y a une injonction publique. Est-ce que l'athlète est un héros ? Je n'en sais rien, mais le désir que l'on a d'en faire un héros est une résurgence de la critique platonicienne de la célébration du colérique.

Ils n'ont pas du tout envie d'être des héros, ce n'est pas leur affaire, ce sont des sportifs, des artistes, ce ne sont pas des donneurs de leçons. Ils sont investis d'une mission morale qu'ils n'ont pas demandée ou réclamée. La façon que l'on a trouvé pour rendre digeste le dévoiement de cette mission morale, on a remplacé l'idée reçue du héros exemplaire par l'idée reçue du chanteur camé (dans le cas du rock). Il faut bien l'inscrire quelque part. Le discours légendaire du chanteur drogué a permis de ne pas lui demander d'être le héros qu'il n'était pas ou qu'il ne prétendait pas être. Pour le sportif, on n'a pas trouvé de discours de substitution. Il n'y a pas le sportif dopé.

J'ai tendance à penser que les signes en question (comme les maillots) perdent de leur puissance à mesure que le lieu est remplacé par le logo. Roland-Garros, c'est mieux que BNP Paribas. Lorsqu'il y a remplacement de l'appartenance ou du symbole de son appartenance à un lieu par une firme qui pourrait financer un autre club, on a un problème, les signes en l'occurrence perdent de leur force ou de leur signification à cet instant-là. On est moins sensible à ce maillot. Dans le cas des maillots nationaux, la couleur permet de surmonter cela. Les Bleus, la catachrèse. Il faut l'écrin national pour maintenir un signe qui surmonte un sponsor. Là, le signe conserve une puissance qu'il perd dans une culture de club.

La façon dont un sportif échappe à lui-même. Il ne s'appartient pas, Chabal. Il n'est pas propriétaire de lui-même. Ils ne s'appartiennent pas, ils sont identifiés. Lomu, c'était la revanche des maoris.

Dans quelle mesure cela fait-il sens de parler de la religion sportive ?

Régis Debré dit que dans nos sociétés, il y a du sacré sans religion.

Le temple sportif, je crois que c'est le contraire.

Il y a des effets d'idolâtrie, de culte. La sueur des sportifs est sacrée, un maillot jamais lavé... Qu'il y ait là quelque chose de magnifique, de sacré, c'est incontestable. Si c'est une religion, c'est une religion sans dogme, la plus polythéiste de toute, et dont les Dieux eux-mêmes doivent être soumis à des règles.

Il n'y a pas la structure pyramidale d'un système religieux, ce n'est pas un monothéisme. Il y a de la vénération et de l'idolâtrie, mais qui ne se distingue pas de celle que l'on peut porter à un acteur ou chanteur, je ne vois pas de vénération spécifique. On est dans des processus comparable, non spécifique au sport. C'est une vénération qui n'est pas affaire de transcendance.

Il y a des fanatismes, des intercesseurs, des hérétiques, des traîtres (Judas).

J'adhère à tous les arguments qui vont dans le sens d'une comparaison entre les deux et d'une religion séculaire.

L'indexation du sport sur le religion reste une réduction. Si c'est une religion, c'est un polythéisme avec des dieux divers et bigarrés, soit le sport occuperait une position plus prométhéenne où il s'agirait d'être un intermédiaire (l'affaire des titans, qui sont les intercesseurs entre les hommes et les dieux).

Il y a un côté cour des miracles dans la main de dieu.

Il y a une affaire d'incarnation, un défi d'incarnation, de coïncidence avec soi, une façon de situer l'infini dans le fini, l'éternité dans l'action. Mais on est dans le mystique. Il y a une mystique du sport, un rapport mystique aux éléments.

Le dunk comme symbole de libération, en particulier dans le rapport homme noir/homme blanc. L'étape d'après, c'est « il prend ma femme ». Le dunk est un geste totalement libérateur de ce point de vue. Avec Michael Jordan, le fait qu'il tire la langue était un truc étonnamment dangereux. Là où Jordan est intéressant, c'est qu'il n'était pas très grand, et donc qu'il permettait une certaine identification du public, plus que Shaquille O'Neal, qui appartenait à un autre monde un autre univers. Du point de vue du Klu Klux Klan, c'était le monde des grands singes, du point de vue du commun des mortels, c'est une autre dimension, un prototype, c'est l'an 3000. Jordan, avec ses lunettes, son cigare, son 1m98 qui était à peu près digeste, le fait qu'il soit en-dessous de la barre symbolique des 2m... Il y avait du gigantisme, mais c'était un gigantisme accessible, ce qui faisait de lui un athlète assez convenable et universel.

Soul Man, le personnage devient noir provisoirement et tout le monde veut l'embaucher alors qu'il joue comme un peintre. »

Entretien avec Jeff Fellenzer

Professeur de communication au sein de l'Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism de USC.

Propos recueillis le 1^{er} décembre 2009 à USC.

« Like so many kids, my first experience with sports was with my family. My mother always found time to take me to games. The advantage of growing up in Southern California is you get exposed to both college and pro sports. If you grow up in NY City? Not so much college, it's mostly pro sports.

What did I find appealing? The competition. Just being able to see athletes playing at a very high level, and the great competition and rivalries, the intensity. I was always interested, and it made me even more passionate. It fueled my passion for competition, and the color and pageantry of sports.

I very much do think sports still play an educational role in today's society. I think if you look at sports the right way, you can see a lot about life within sports striving to be the best, good work ethic, good communication, because the best teams are the teams which communicate well. In basketball, the five guys have to communicate well with each other. So you see so many examples that can translate from sports to real life, the same passion, intensity, and camaraderie and communication, all those things that help you in business and life, you find within sports. I think that's why so many people identify with their teams. And also because almost everybody played sports as a kid, and to be able to watch it at a very high level, college or professional, is really fun.

1/ I think football, far and away, is the most popular American sports. Pro football. College football is probably #2 or 3, maybe baseball is right there. Even though baseball, traditionally in this country, has been considered the National sport. At one time, it was. Now it's football. Basketball, in most parts of the country, probably is behind football and baseball. But in Southern California, the Lakers are kings. The Lakers are the #1 sports enterprise – Lakers basketball. And I've watched it just take off. It was popular when I was growing up, but the Dodgers were probably more popular. But now the Lakers passed them. It's the Lakers first, and the line starts for 2nd place after the Lakers.

I think it really resonated with the city. LA is a really diverse community, lots of countries represented, lots of languages and cultures. The Lakers seem to be one sports franchise that pulls more people together from more different cultures. Why is that? First, the level of athleticism it takes to play professional basketball is so high, it's like very few people can really relate to something they can do personally. Everybody's played baseball. But when you watch the Lakers play, they're doing things that seem like completely, like Superman! You can't do that. So I think sometimes, you're just in awe when you watch Kobe Bryant or LeBron James do things. And because the Lakers have always been winners, they have always had great talent, Magic Johnson, Shaq, Jerry West, they've always had such great talent, they've always been winners. Even the colors, purple and gold. The Lakers found an identity with the purple and gold colors. They didn't start that way, they were blue and white when they got to LA. I think it's the color and the great athleticism and the fact that they've won so much and always had the most exciting teams.

I think pro sports is more popular, but USC football is very, very high. You have the Lakers, Dodgers, and then USC football, maybe UCLA basketball after that. It's a regional thing. In the South, college sports is #1.

The NBA superstars are national figures as well as role models. Whether you want to be considered a role model or not, you are. Like Charles Barkley said, "Don't consider me a role model! Use your teachers as role models." These are the people you're watching on television and that you hear interviewed. It's not your teachers or your local police officers. For the most part, it's athletes. They're in the news, in the newspapers, in magazines. So those are the role models, whether they like it or not, they are. They are national figures. Some of them are

international figures, and their local market, like Kobe here, it's larger than life. These are like superheroes.

Among the main African-American figures in sports, there are Jack Johnson, Muhammad Ali, Michael Jordan, Jackie Robinson, for breaking the color line in baseball, when baseball was the far and away #1 sport, that was huge; Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, because he came along during a period of time in the history of this country where race relations were really bubbling, and there was a lot of turmoil, and this black basketball player, 7'2, and very intelligent, a wordy person. Wondering whether his conversion to Islam had an impact on his popularity and coverage is a very good question. It's funny because we're talking about the greatest scorer who ever played the game (like Babe Ruth before his record was broken). And yet in some discussions, he's not the first name mentioned, 2nd name, 3rd name... I think in many ways, he's been underappreciated for the impact he had on the game. Back then he was a huge deal. What's happened is he was not a media person, he was low key, quiet. I think he was seen as a little militant at a time when race was being talked about. In the minds of people, he came across as being aloof, not media-friendly. He realized that later in life and he's done a lot to try to sort of come out, like people to get to know him. He's suffered a lot, because people made fun of his height, he was sensitive. Shaquille O'Neal is like this little kid, he laughs, big smiles, he embraces everything. Kareem was just a different kind of person. I think he's been underappreciated. Everybody recognizes how great of a player he was. But they don't mention him right away when they talk about the greatest. But he's also a good example of somebody who, as a black man in a sport that's predominantly black, has shown that basketball is an important part of his identity, but not his whole identity, because of the fact that he's accomplished as a writer, as a historian, the black culture movement he's written about. He's worked basketball as just a part of his whole being.

? NBA's blackness as a disadvantage in the 70s

I think because so many black players have come along and helped the NBA, the perception of the artistry of the NBA, like when you watch these players we've just talked about, just talking about the grace and beauty you see, how they play the game, that's one of the things that's helped, like so many people in Southern California identified with the Lakers, it's because of the great athleticism. These are the qualities you see in the great black players as being the players that can jump the highest and run the fastest and make the most sensational individual moves. That's helped the NBA grow. There was a significant percentage of black players in the league back then (70s), but I think the individualism, the athleticism of the players wasn't as much on display then as it is now. Players didn't dunk the ball as much. I think the development of the greatest black players has helped grow the league. But it took also, it was Magic Johnson, Larry Bird and those players, they came along at a time when television also really helped grow the league. ESPN was created in 1979, the year Larry Bird and Magic Johnson came into the league. So there couldn't be a better timing.

The coverage by the media has increased. The amount of coverage is just off the charts. Now, everything gets covered because of the Internet and the new media, which allow to cover so many platforms. But as the league grew in popularity, due to the great players and the exposure, and ESPN can be cited as being a huge factor in this development, SportsCenter, it's been huge to help. It couldn't have worked better for the league for the media growth starting in 1979 with ESPN and developing over the last 30 years. Everything was like a perfect marriage between the players that were coming along and the NBA and television and media growth.

? balance between news coverage/storytelling

I think it started as being almost exclusively just about the games themselves, and as more media has come into the picture, and the fact that we now know the results almost instantly, now there's more an emphasis on the storytelling and things besides the score. Everybody knows the score, so everybody now is trying to think of more interesting stories to get your attention, because there's only so much you can say about the games. Now, in the newspapers, it's not strictly about the game, even in the story about the game, because they know that the story itself, the results are old

news by the time the next morning comes. So they have to figure out other interesting stories, give more of a personal side of the players...

The Celtics/Lakers rivalry is a true fact that's been enhanced by the media, because even in the 60s, when the Celtics and the Lakers were playing almost every year for the championship, there wasn't that much media coverage of the league, but yet, there was great interest in the games, because there was this natural East coast/West coast, they both had great history and tradition, and so there was a lot of interest in the games. But now, you can get to know players so much better, you have so much more information available. I can read the Boston paper, I just have to go online. So it's definitely not just a media thing, the media fuels the rivalry.

Right in Santa Monica, there's a Boston bar dedicated to Boston sports that's called Sonny McLean's. It's fun to see what it's like in there during the games. Part of that is the fans on the East coast, they're a little more intense about their teams. I think it has to do with the weather, and you don't have that many distractions, so they're a little more intense.

Sports is so tied to its own history. When the Lakers play, you're watching a Lakers game, but you might see something that will remind you of something that somebody did in the 80s with Magic's team, or in the 60s and 70s with Jerry West. You go to a Dodger game and you might be thinking about the Brooklyn Dodgers, all the history that they had. And USC, very, very strong history. So you're just aware of the tradition of the team. It's something that sports fans like, because they love to talk about this era compared to that era, this player compared to that player. Who's the best Laker player? Kobe, Magic or Jerry West? Sports fans get very passionate about their team and about certain players, so it's perfect to be able to bring in the past, because you're always comparing current teams to past teams, current players to past players. It's just as much part of sports as anything.

Today, there's not nearly as much politics as there was in the 60s. I think there's so much money into sports now, and players can make almost as much money, and sometimes a lot more on endorsements and sponsorships, things that they don't seem to have, maybe the word is courage to speak out because maybe they would lose a sponsor if they didn't like what you're saying. Back in the 60s, those guys didn't seem to be afraid to say how they felt, like Muhammad Ali. But then, again, there wasn't as much from a personal gain at stake as there were. Maybe they wouldn't matter, those guys, they would have felt just as strong, Jim Brown, they would have said something. I think it's fair to at least say, I don't know, would they have if there was this much. There are definitely not players as politically active as they were one time, but I think it's because of the fact that there's so much money at stake.

Entertainment is a great tool to sell by the media, and also to sell through. And sport is entertainment, now. The line between sports and entertainment is a blurry line now. The All-Star Game is a perfect example, you just have to look at the introduction of the players. That's exactly what sports has become. It's as much entertainment, it's about the entertainment that you get when you go, as it is the game itself, it seems like. When you go to Lakers games, and the lights go down, spotlights, and they talk about the past, and they show clips of other eras, and there's such an emphasis on Hollywood, it's entertaining. And now you see it in other cities. There's a big entertainment emphasis. I think it's as much the entertainment value that the media picks up on, and sports is a vehicle for that. It's an easy thing for the media to focus on, because it's a flashy, very stylish thing, especially here in Southern California, big media market. And I think that's just what people expect when they go to games, they expect being entertained. And you have music. You used to go to baseball games and you had an organist playing simple songs, and now it has evolved, you have to have bells and whistles, colors, highlights... I'm not sure we need to be entertained as they assume we do. In Wrigley Field, there's not so much there, they come for the game.

As a player, to be a good endorser, you have to be somebody that fans just naturally like, that they have a good feeling about. For a long time, Kobe, for as good a player as he was, wasn't the best endorser because the fans, for some reason, didn't identify with him as much, because he was a little more aloof. LeBron James is more like Shaq, they're larger-than-life personalities. I

think Kobe tended to be very serious about his job, great work ethic, and he wasn't as interested in maximizing his potential as an endorser. It did seem like finally, after so many great years and great plays, that the endorsements did come to him. And I think he's grown into that role. I don't think it's a natural role for me. He's a little bit removed from his teammates and from the spotlight. The spotlight is on him, but I don't think he seeks the spotlight.

Michael Jordan was such a good product because he could do things nobody had ever seen before. It's superhuman. The jump, his ability to stay in the air... Because he was a winner, because he had a distinctive look. He was one of the first who had a shaved head, long shorts. He had a look, and he was such a great player. He could do so many spectacular things. He was in a major media market. And frankly, his growth came because of his association with Nike, right at the beginning of the time endorsements were just starting to take off, and he signed with Nike, and then it became such a big deal, every year when the new Air Jordans were coming out. He was one of the pioneers of the endorsement business. He was a winner in a good market. It just all came together. Very popular guy because of the way he played, he was a winner and he played hard, too. It wasn't like Terrell Owens or Chad Ochocinco, guys that sometimes did things that weren't viewed well by the fans of their teams. He always took care of business first, winning.

I think that the fact that he was apolitical helped him, it's probably true. Nobody knew his politics, and he wanted it that way.

They're like superheroes, and what matters is that they make us dream. I think in some ways you don't want to know too much, in some ways. Over the years, the guys that revealed a lot about themselves weren't necessarily popular. Kareem, Muhammad Ali... Muhammad Ali became more popular really after he got out of boxing, because he became a beloved figure that you'd see meeting with politicians around the world. I think his popularity went up later. When he was fighting, you had all the poems, things like that, he came across as very cocky, he always bragged about his popularity. I think white America didn't see him as favorably. He didn't go to the war in Vietnam. It took time for him to build up positive feelings to connect with most of the country. Now, you could say he's one of the all-time most popular athletes in the world.

Sports has evolved, but the feeling is still the same. One thing that is affected is the ticket prices. I think growing up, you'd feel much passion about your teams, but you were able to go and see the game, experience them, because the prices were affordable. Now, I think fans are to some extent developing feelings that they can watch the games on TV or listen to them, but I don't think the connection would be as strong over the next 10 or 20 years maybe as they were when I was growing up because you can't go as often, it's just too expensive to go. I'm afraid another generation of kids won't have the opportunity to go. You can't go as often, and that may affect just how connected the people feel to their teams in the future. »

Entretien avec Hidéhiko Kan

Batteur professionnel et professeur de batterie en conservatoire.

Propos recueillis le 5 janvier 2009 à l'école municipale de musique de Rungis.

« Il faut s'interroger sur le rapport entre l'improvisation jazz et ces formes d'improvisations conversationnelles des musiques issues d'Afrique.

En Afrique, tu n'improvises pas n'importe comment. Tu as des mots de vocabulaire, parce que le tambour parle, parce que ça servait de téléphone de village à village, parce que c'était des rituels, parce que quand tu tapes un rythme, c'est telle divinité qui descend et pas une autre, et que ce sont des choses qui sont très précises, et qu'au bout d'un moment, ces choses-là se mélangent, et quand tu improvises, si tu veux rester dans le style, tu improvises en utilisant des éléments de ce vocabulaire-là. Sinon, tu peux te barrer, mais tu fais toujours attention à rester dans quelque chose de proche. C'est une liberté totale, mais en même temps, c'est à l'intérieur d'une communauté de cultures où les gens qui font partie de ce truc-là se reconnaissent entre eux.

L'oralité, c'est le cœur du problème quand le mec te montre un truc comme les claves cubaines et te dit « non, c'est pas ça... non, c'est pas ça... oui, c'est ça ! non, c'est plus ça... »

Comment je définirais le jazz ? La facilité, ce serait de définir des périodes et de dire, c'est la musique d'expression afro-américaine née à la Nouvelle-Orléans dans les années précédant les années 20, s'étant épanouie sur l'axe Chicago-NY dans les années 30-40, puis qui s'est étendu dans le reste des États-Unis puis dans le monde entier par la radio et les GIs. Pour paraphraser André Francis, je dirais que c'est « la plus populaire des musiques savantes et la plus savante des musiques populaires ». Pour moi, c'est le point de rencontre entre une pratique, une culture, d'une musique savante, mais qui a intégré une grande partie de transmission orale, de par ses origines africaines et populaires, puisqu'il n'y a pas que de la musique africaine dans le jazz. La musique africaine est sur un pied d'égalité avec la polka polonaise, la ballade irlandaise... C'est aussi un état d'esprit par rapport à la musique. C'est inimaginable de changer le tempo d'une œuvre classique, sauf si vraiment tu es un grand chef et que tu réussis à imposer ton interprétation. Autant quand tu changes un élément d'une œuvre en musique classique, ça devient une affaire d'état, autant en jazz, c'est un peu une pratique routinière pour chercher ce qui va le plus correspondre à ce que tu as envie d'exprimer. Tu te sers d'un matériau relativement simple (le standard ou une composition) ou volontairement pauvre, qui va te permettre d'exprimer des choses à travers une virtuosité maîtrisée.

La batterie est l'instrument principal du jazz. Tous les autres instruments en jazz jouent comme une batterie. Tout n'est que percussion. Il y a aussi ça dans les cérémonies de centeria à Cuba. Le tambour joue le rythme qui va faire descendre la divinité de son monde à celui des vivants. Le chant n'est pas l'élément principal, c'est l'accompagnement qui met en valeur la rythmique. Le soliste, c'est le tambour. Ce concept, quand tu le transposes au jazz, quand un pianiste fait des accords, la qualité qu'on recherche en premier, c'est la mise en place rythmique, le swing, et ensuite que ce mec-là fasse des couleurs harmoniques, ça va lui donner une spécificité. Tous les instruments dans un ensemble de jazz jouent chacun à sa manière de la batterie. Tout s'insère dans une trame avant tout rythmique, et après ça donne d'autres dimensions de mettre une dimension harmonique dedans. Mais l'élément primordial n'est pas la belle mélodie ou le joli accord, c'est la qualité rythmique de la mélodie. Soit elle survole le rythme, soit elle est en phase avec le rythme, tels Coltrane (survole) et Sonny Rollins (percussif). (...) Il y a toujours une rythmique, même si elle n'est pas métronomique, elle est souple, swingante, élastique, mais il faut toujours une référence de swing pour que le soliste puisse étirer le temps par-dessus et revenir au tempo.

Le jazz et la funk sont très très proches. Ce sont des expressions blacks, de toute façon. Mais le funk a renoué avec le but 1^e du jazz des années 20/30/40, c'est la danse. Le jazz moderne s'est beaucoup séparé de la danse depuis Charlie Parker. Avant, il y avait tout un circuit de salles de bal, et les orchestres se succédaient. Ils faisaient danser les gens. D'où l'importance du swing. Ce n'est pas seulement culturel, ce n'est pas parce que c'est afro-américain que ça swing, le jazz,

c'est aussi parce que ce sont des gens qui faisaient danser des foules entières dans les salles de bal du sud. (...) Pour moi, le funk est un peu un retour aux sources, car la plupart des musiciens sérieux de funk jouent le jazz grave, comme Stanley Clarke, Marcus Miller, Dennis Chambers... Ces mecs savent ce que c'est que l'histoire de leur musique. A mon avis, ils ne font même pas de différences entre ce qu'ils jouent actuellement et ce que Papa Jo Jones jouait dans les années 30 et ce qu'Elvin jouait dans les années 60, pour eux, c'est une grande continuité de la musique noire américaine.

Pour moi, le hip-hop, c'est une forme de funk radicalisée. On enlève ce qui est inutile dans Parliament, les 15 cuivres, les 27 danseuses, toutes les clinquances... C'est une expression urbaine, plus brute. C'est NY, les block parties. On fait quand même la fête malgré la crise, et avec des moyens assez restreints. Tu sors des baffles, tu mets 2 platines et c'est parti ! C'est une forme urbaine très radicale du funk. En fait, pour moi, le hip-hop renoue plus avec une certaine forme de jazz des années 60, au moment des droits civiques (Last Poets, Gil Scott-Heron...) parce que les paroles sont toujours très très importantes. Plus depuis le gangsta rap, où tout l'idéal se réduit à gagner plein de fric... ça a été récupéré par l'industrie du disque.

Quand j'ai découvert le rap, c'était à un concert des Clash, qui étaient très engagés.

Quand tu réécoutes Grandmaster Flash, ou Public Enemy, ils étaient conscients de tout cela. Et ceux-là, curieusement, ont été écartés...

Le rapport du hip-hop au jazz est moins musical que politique (Max Roach jouant lors d'une party hip-hop+Rock It hymne hip-hop d'Herbie Hancock, DJ DST)

Projets comme Jazzmatazz, Buckshot LeFonque, Us3 (accès aux fonds Blue Note) : une volonté de ces artistes afro-américains d'avoir une expression contemporaine en prenant en compte la globalité de leurs racines culturelles.

Coltrane a été une figure emblématique, il fait partie de ces quelques héros afro-américains avec Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, James Brown, ce sont des leaders spirituels. Le côté africain des afro-américains, c'est qu'ils mettent de la spiritualité un peu partout, c'est à la fois mystique même dans la contestation politique. Quand ils citent Coltrane, c'est un peu une figure fédératrice.

James Brown, son côté mégalomanie est une question de rôle qu'il a dû endosser, tel un chef d'entreprise. À force de travail et de gagner le respect de son public, le public lui a demandé d'endosser une responsabilité, d'être un leader spirituel et culturel. Quand il met sa cape et qu'il est en transe, c'est un truc totalement hérité du gospel. A ce moment-là, il devient l'agneau de Dieu qui se sacrifie pour la communauté et communique avec l'au-delà pour le reste de la foule. Il est devenu activement un leader de conscience pour une communauté qui s'est retrouvé à travers lui comme faisant partie d'une communauté globale ayant les mêmes racines, la même culture, etc...

Coltrane, c'est par sa virtuosité instrumentale.

Quand je joue de la musique, je cherche l'oubli. Me déconnecter de ce que je suis en concret, et faire de la musique dans un état de transe. Ne pas être conscient de ce que je fais et en même temps d'être hyper en contrôle pour ne pas faire n'importe quoi. On peut rapprocher ça d'une certaine pratique du zen. Ça m'est arrivé par moments. « L'ensemble est supérieur à la somme des parties. » D'un seul coup, ça prend une dimension qui va au-delà, au-dessus. »

Entretien avec Grégoire Margotton

Journaliste sportif à Canal Plus, spécialiste du football et de l'athlétisme, a commenté le basket NBA au début des années 1990.

Propos recueillis le vendredi 12 décembre 2008 à Canal Plus.

« Le basket, c'est le sport parfait. Et Michael Jordan en est pour moi au commencement. J'attache une grande importance à l'élégance dans le sport, et le basket est le sport parfait pour cela. Et qui dit élégance dit Michael Jordan.

J'ai découvert la NBA avec la fin du duel entre les Celtics et les Lakers, et le début de la dynastie des Bulls. J'admirais surtout Scottie Pippen, Joe Dumars, Isiah Thomas, Clyde Drexler, et Magic. Johnson avait toujours cette mine réjouie, ce fameux sourire. Mais son geste de shooteur était un peu bizarre. Pour cela, Michael Jordan représentait le summum. Aujourd'hui, Kobe Bryant et LeBron James font des choses extraordinaires. Mais Jordan est intemporel.

Il avait ce mélange de talent et de capacités physiques hors du commun. Il avait tout, le dribble, le shoot, la passe... En plus de cela, c'était un joueur suprêmement beau. C'était un être humain d'exception, tout en souplesse et en vitesse. Son jeu était entouré d'une grande esthétique. Mais au-delà de cela, c'était un joueur complet et intelligent. C'était un scoreur d'exception, mais aussi décideur, un meneur d'hommes et de jeu qui avait la science du jeu. C'était le winner absolu, et sans en rajouter. Il était habité par un profond respect pour le jeu.

Je n'ai pas souhaité suivre sa période « Wizard » pour ne pas casser l'image que j'avais de ce génie du basket. Jordan, c'était les Bulls de Chicago, avec Phil Jackson, BJ Armstrong, Pippen, John Paxson, Horace Grant... Et les Bulls, c'était *un moment du sport*.

Michael Jordan était un soldat de la NBA. Il n'a pas pris de risque avec son image. Il était un symbole absolu, un phénomène que la NBA a vendu, et il a su en profiter. Dans la NBA, le sportif fait du sport. On essaie de les rendre lisse, en opposition aux Bad Boys de Detroit, qui étaient un peu les sales gosses de la Grande Ligue. Avec sa maladie, Magic a acquis une dimension extra-sportive, et assume parfaitement cela.

Dans le basket, petits et grands, doués et moins doués, « horizontaux et verticaux » ont leur chance. C'est le sport collectif par excellence. On est obligé de jouer en équipe pour s'imposer. Un joueur ne peut pas tout faire tout seul. Pour jouer à ce sport, il faut faire preuve d'intelligence. Le physique ne fait pas tout. La finesse des règles est également remarquable. Enfin, c'est un sport de défi, dans lequel les joueurs se chambrent énormément. Cela fait partie intégrante du jeu, de son essence et de sa culture.

Pour revenir à la dimension esthétique, la ligue a réalisé un gros travail autour de son image. Un parquet de NBA, c'est beau, tout comme le son des baskets, du dribble ou du panier qui fait « swish! ». Il y a une grande importance visuelle et auditive autour du jeu. Tout cela est parfaitement rendu par les médias US, avec tout leur dispositif de caméras et de micro. On vit véritablement le jeu de l'intérieur.

Ce qui est particulier, également, c'est qu'il y a véritablement plusieurs baskets, lorsque l'on voit le basket FIBA, le Basket NBA et le basket des playgrounds. On distingue bien un style US dans ce sport, notamment lors des compétitions internationales.

Mes meilleurs souvenirs liés à ce sport, c'est sans aucun doute le Game 1 des Finals 92, avec Jordan qui prend feu à trois points, le Game 6 des Finals 93, avec le panier décisif de Paxson, et enfin la finale olympique de Pékin, États-Unis/Espagne, qui a atteint des sommets.

Pour les Européens, s'intéresser à la NBA permet de découvrir l'histoire de ce pays. Cela permet également aux états de garder des liens entre eux. Il y a des lieux mythiques du basket qui ont une véritable valeur historique, comme le Madison Square Garden ou le Boston Garden. Detroit et les Pistons sont vraiment attachés à l'industrie automobile. Maintenant, ces liens se perdent. C'est dû aux divers déménagements des franchises, ou encore à la fidélité au maillot qui a tendance à se perdre.

La NBA et cette puissance US, c'est Hollywood appliqué au basket. Les Américains ont élevé leur jeu au rang d'art. Ils donnent une grande importance à la création artistique. Ce n'est pas

qu'une question de moyens financier. Le côté sportif est exceptionnel, tout comme le côté spectacle. C'est logique qu'ils fassent rêver.

Le côté identitaire est ultra développé aux États-Unis. Grâce à cela, la NBA s'est vendue et fait rêver, même si dans l'imaginaire collectif, il est selon moi moins important que le baseball ou la NFL. En France, ce sport est vu comme un sport ghettoisé, et un sport de Noirs vu par des blancs. Nul doute que les liens entre Obama et le basket lui ont donné un coup de boost.

L'avenir, c'est les franchises à l'étranger. On en parle beaucoup en ce moment, du côté de Londres ou de Paris, mais c'est en Chine que l'avenir de la NB semble se situer, tant les playgrounds poussent comme des champignons là-bas. Le football est universel. Le basket peut l'être. »

Entretien avec Thom Mason

Professeur d'histoire du jazz au sein de la Thornton School of Music de USC

Propos recueillis en marge de son cours « The Jazz Experience: Myths and Culture », entre le 12 janvier et le 27 avril 2010.

« Jazz is a unique, self-expressive form of American music created originally by African-Americans from elements of the blues, gospel music – which is mostly Africanized European hymns – and military band music. It is created when musicians spontaneously transform melodies, rhythms, and sounds as they perform. They paraphrase or personalize the music. To do so, they use different tools of expression: tone color to express different feelings; loudness to dramatize what they're creating; and pitch to humanize how the notes are played. To achieve the goal of creating their own music, jazz musicians strive first to master an instrument, and then to use it as a tool for creating their own original music instead of recreating someone else's music.

The rhythm section defines the harmony and supply the rhythmic feel of the music.

This music is performed in the present. The musician is the creator, whereas in Europe, the composer comes first, and then the conductor comes second.

America is an environment where European and African ways combined. For example, big bands use a system of call and response, which is an African way of performing.

Most of the early jazz musicians were self-taught and played by ear.

In the 1920s and 1930s, Chicago was the home of black jazz and race records. It also hosted the larger black population in the US. It was a place of opportunity for the black community.

Louis Armstrong was politically conscious, but he was an entertainer. He knew he couldn't ruin his career for politics. But in the 1950s, when the President asked him to tour the world to promote the US, he told him, "Go to Hell, I won't until my people stop sitting in the back of the bus".

Louis Armstrong said about Bix Beiderbecke (white trumpet player), "He's the only guy that plays like me".

Harlem was a place with many intellectuals and cultural leaders at the time of the Harlem Renaissance.

The Swing Era began after the Stock Market Crash of 1929. It started thanks to the emergence of ballrooms as social centers, where people came to forget the Depression; the rise of the dance craze known as the Lindy Hop – named after Lindbergh's flight across the Atlantic; the increasing popularity of phonograph records; and the rise of radio as an entertainment medium. It was perceived as outrageous, as orchestrated sex with a phallic dimension.

When a musician was back in town, he would join a jam session. That would be an opportunity to take part in a cutting contest – when musicians are doing their best to cut the other musicians.

In New York, 52nd Street was the most exciting place to be. Speakeasies were turned into jazz clubs. You had about 16 jazz clubs over a two-block distance. There, the color line didn't matter, only the ability to play did.

In Robert Altman's documentary entitled *Jazz '34: Remembrances of Kansas City Swing*, you can find the implied, unspoken rules applied in situations when you want to take part in a jam session. You were there to prove yourself. The way you were dressed sent a message. The challenger had to sit in the audience first, and then come on stage to challenge the "established" musicians. You would then trade solos, trading 4s and 2s. To be considered as legitimate, you had to be recognized as such by the other musician. Jazz is also a social phenomenon, it has rules, you have to follow the etiquette.

Jazz started as strictly entertainment. But in the 1940s, jazz musicians started taking themselves seriously, considering jazz as art. Be Bop (Charlie Parker) was intended for listening, not dancing. Musicians started exploiting extreme tempi, emphasized virtuosic soloing, disconnected and angular melodic ideas.

At the time, Kenny Clarke changed the role of the bass drums by "dropping bombs" and using it for accents.

Be Bop was “in your face”, emotional, passionate, about high energy. But it also had a cool side, which was as fast, but with more control, restraint and subtlety.

The main difference between bop and cool was the drummer, who was more subdued. His play was more about harmonies, with not a lot of syncopated stuff. He sounded differently than the bombastic drum of bop.

At a time when people were rejecting Louis Armstrong and entertaining blacks, Miles Davis had enough power to have his ways with white managers. But he feared prejudices. He was an angry man, rude to his audience and other musicians. He used to bend because he didn't want to be considered as an entertainer, he didn't want to play for the audience. It was a racial thing.

Jazz was also expressing the feeling of the black community, especially through protest songs. This music was reflecting what was going on. These songs had a value of social commentary. But within the jazz community, the revolution was over pretty early, and it was about conveying this in the larger society.

Cool jazz was mostly adopted by whites. In New York, black musicians took on hard bop as a response, which was about being aggressive. You had to commit yourself, the music would challenge you. That was the second generation of bebop musicians.

Max Roach was a smart businessman. He had his own record company label, so that nobody would dictate what he would be recording, and whom he would record with. He was the first melodic drummer. He was also a political activist, very involved in the Civil Rights Movement. He did not have a big audience, yet he wanted to reclaim jazz from white control.

In the 1950s and 1960s, free jazz (Ornette Coleman) deliberately set out to break with the traditions of the past. It abandoned the ideas of harmonic repetition and rhythmic regularity in favor of an existential approach. The goal was to craft music in the moment.

Third stream music combines European classical music with jazz. (eg. Gershwin, Miles Davis with Gil Evans) You also have crossover artists, playing and merging different styles, like George Benson, Quincy Jones and the Last Poets.

The jazz community anticipated many social changes, from white bandleaders hiring black musicians to women leading orchestras. It keeps on evolving, and its history is being played now. Jazz music gathers a community of musicians. It's about diversity. The mentality is, I don't care what color you are, just do your play. »

Entretien avec Ronald McCurdy

Professeur de musique au sein de la Thornton School of Music de USC.

Propos recueillis le 23 octobre 2009 à USC.

« When you do this correlation between basketball and hip-hop, if you go back and examine almost every endeavor African-Americans have embraced, there's a certain Africanness that they have applied to everything. Everything from music, which is the perfect example: the piano, trumpet... they weren't intended to sound the way they sound. So in every endeavor, there was a kind of Africanism, if you will, placed on whatever the endeavor has to be. When you're playing basketball, dribbling the ball behind your back, or doing a crossover dribble, dunking the ball... All this kind of things was never a part of what Naismith had in mind when the game of basketball was invented.

? The Texas/Kentucky game

They were playing this white university of Kentucky, they were all fundamentally sound, they had this proper way of playing the game, but you had these black kids dribbling the ball behind their back, passing and making those fancy shots. And it was referred to as "N-word ball". That's how they visualized the whole way they were engaging and playing the sport. You can look at basketball, you could look at baseball, it was the same way. When African-Americans began to embrace baseball, that sport was played very differently by whites versus how blacks played the sport. The way people ran bases, even how they would hold the bat, some of the subtleties of the game, the way they would catch the ball and the whole idea of [improvisation] (the over-the-shoulder catch).

So African-Americans have always taken certain things. One of the important things is the African slave and the conversion to Christianity. Part of that conversion process involved learning the hymns from the church. African-Americans never said the hymns the way that white church fathers had envisioned, they were always improvising, embellishing these hymns in such a way to make it their own. Because in the whole African experience, it's about purposionalizing everything that you do, which is why, when you hear an African choir sing, you're not going to hear this beautiful European harmony, because it's about this person, that person, what you have to offer. So all this is about the whole personification of a certain characteristic, as opposed to this heaviness, this pristine ensemble.

The same thing happened, it permeated sports, it permeated all genres of music, just the whole vernacular of how people communicate.

? African-American need to personalize, embellish, put a personal stamp on each (cultural) act

There was nothing new about slavery, but there was something peculiar about slavery in North America. The slave masters understood the importance of diminishing any sense of family, any sense of identity, any sense of communication. And because most African languages are tonal, you can change the inflection of the voice to change the meaning of a word, the drums were taken away from Africans in North America. That in itself created a need for a code language. Hence, you had the spirituals, which evolved, which were part of that whole conversion process, but they had a dual meaning: praising God and also planning escapes. You had that kind of duality going on there. So you had the need for a code language. But the whole personification is very much African. In all European music, you have bar lines and measures, symmetry, form... In African music, you have timelines, when some events happen during the course of a piece of music, when the person decides for him, "I'm gonna do this now". By him or her doing that, it triggers over events. But it's about that person's view on how they're gonna proceed. A lot of the hope, personification is steeped in African traditions.

If you've seen any particular professional athlete, basketball players, all of them want to be rappers, and all the rappers want to be basketball players. You see Snoop Dogg trying to play basketball... What it tells me is that there's a really strong correlation between the two. They both are looked upon as entertainment. And there's a certain masculinity involved in rap music, a certain bravado that's accompanied with being a rapper, and there's a certain degree of

masculinity, that's part of being an athlete. You sure have to be that strong jock, this person who's not afraid of anything, the same kind of persona, in many ways, that's been perpetuated with rap music. I think both are a manifestation of this whole idea of personifying or personalizing. This is why sometimes, when you have a street player, a playground player who's great, but he may not fit in with the team, because it's so much about him, it's about him scoring 50 points, but the team is still losing. In many ways, in music, it's the same way. If you got a person who's gonna come up and do their own thing, then the whole ensemble suffers, you don't have a cohesive band.

Professional ball players are getting paid. The Harlem Globetrotters, that's a minstrel show with basketballs, that's what it is. It's clowning, it's demeaning in some ways. That's part of the greatest examples of basketball where the whole personalizing of each individual's abilities within the context of a team manifests itself. Because you got five guys on a team, but all of them have their own move, it's about them and their movement. In the pure sense of what Naismith had in mind for basketball, it was never about any one individual, it was about the team, all five passing in concert. There's a certain degree of Africanness, if you will, that I think you can look to basketball, you can look to baseball, everything that African-Americans have touched. They put their African stamp on it. I would think it's also about identity and sending a message. It's not mere entertainment.

I think hip-hop, in many ways, is an extension of jazz, sort of bebop, because many of the same rhythms that you found in bebop, you find in hip-hop. The one difference, and I think that's where it gets a little dicey, I saw Wynton Marsalis referring to rap music as being an extension of minstrelsy more than anything, because of how he viewed the caricatures that emanated from rap music, particularly the negative caricatures. There are people like Common, other rappers who have a much more social message. I think he was talking about the Lil Waynes, that image of rappers.

? Ronald Reagan as the founder of hip-hop.

It was during the Reagan administration that they shut down all the school programs, the social programs that provided music toward inner city African-Americans. These kids had the desire to be creative, so when you're not playing in band or orchestra, singing in a choir, then you start using your body as an instrument, you begin to figure out other ways to exert this creativity. There are elements of truth in that, somewhere. Through the 80s, when Reagan was president, all these music programs ran away. So you had a whole generation of kids who never played in band, who never learnt how to play an instrument.

But we had that same rebellious attitude in jazz, particularly in post-WWII jazz, bebop. That music was about rebellion, against the status quo of being solely an entertainer. Because before bebop, swingsters were about providing music for dances, and beyond the second generation of jazz musicians who played in these dance bands hated it, so they would go to Milton's to play until 9 o'clock in the morning, because they got to play what they wanted to play, without having to conform to what people wanted to dance to. Rap music, in many ways, certainly with the whole social message, for those who have a social message, some have delved into self-worthing and doing demeaning things to women and others, I think they have a different agenda. I think their agenda is strictly sensationalism. I think they're trying, the more bizarre thing they say, the more it will result in record sales, in CD sales. I don't look at that as being kind of any artistic prowess at all.

? syncopation and oral tradition

I think there are links, aesthetically, between jazz and basketball, because I think the whole idea of improvisation, that's perhaps the most obvious example. I mean, you watch Michael Jordan in his heyday, dribble down the lane, he has to react to the situation, spontaneously. And this is exactly what a jazz musician does. You're having a musical dialogue with 3 or 4 other musicians, and you got to react. They feed you some information, and you feed them some information, you respond to it. And the same thing happens, I guess, when you're playing basketball. You find yourself in certain situations, you have a play that's designed, but if something happens, there are

variations within the play that allow you to still be successful. The same thing happens in music, the same thing happens in basketball. I think basketball, unlike baseball, there's probably more room for improvisation. Basketball is much more interactive in that at any given time, it's that one person against the other, and they're like "let's play!" Basketball is 5-on-5, the ball is moving to different people at any given time. But even in baseball, when you play baseball, you give the signal to bunt. Basketball, there's more room for improvisation, more interaction, which is exactly what happens in the course of a jazz performance. You interact, you respond, you spontaneously respond to those around you.

In basketball, you get the rhythm because you get the ball bouncing, and the way the ball is dribbled depending on the situation, is never just a doing...doing..., it's never just that. It's never symmetrical, European-style. But I think that, when you look at how African-Americans have played the game, in all their endeavors, you can find some elements where the Africanisms have manifested themselves in whatever it is they're doing. Like when you play the trumpet, it was meant to do that "(concerto Hummel)", it wasn't meant to do that "(jazz impro)". That's another example of how African-Americans put their own stamp. The Blues was powerful. What you're talking about is really a reaction to the blues. Because everything that you find in the blues, you find in basketball, you find in the whole African diaspora, the whole African experience. You find that in the blues. That's the foundation of music. Basketball, the food, the dress,... All the things permeated from the blues. Everything is blue about basketball, the tempo, the dynamics, the rhythms, the interactions. All those things reflect the blues.

? mainstream media dealing with black musicians and athletes

I think it goes far beyond just the media. I think you have to look at the history of our country. America has always had this hiccup about race. America loved the blues, but they didn't love who invented the blues. Because you hate the person, or you despise that person, you despise everything that comes from that particular culture. That includes the dance, the music, sports. At the time of the Texas/Kentucky, we lived in a very segregated society. It wasn't so much that people like the coach from Kentucky and the coaches from Tennessee who resisted integration, had any kind of moral epiphany to begin to accept blacks on their teams. It was when one person did it. USC was really instrumental in that. USC had that kid, Sam Bam Cunningham, who played football here, and they played against Alabama, and then all of a sudden, for them to compete, it became okay, we react, we'll go ahead and we'll integrate our team, not because we had this moral epiphany, but because we want to win. The whole thing is, when you look at rap music, that's a perfect example, because when rap first emerged, it was common for radio stations to say "great music and no rap". They would actually say that as part of their marketing for that particular station. What they were saying was "great music and no black people". That's the code message in that kind of a slogan. Most people thought rap wouldn't last, but when they figured out, once mainstream discovered that there was commerce involved, now you see McDonald's that got commercials with rap, KFC got people rapping, every entity you can think of, they decided to step on that rap bandwagon because there was commercial value in it. That's the kind of thing that I think illuminates the hypocrisy that our country has had as relating to African-Americans, because if they can somehow exploit the genre. You have this kind of situation where whenever there was money to be made, all of a sudden...

The book *Forty-Million-Dollar Slave* chronicles African-American involvement in sports, going back from the plantation days, having two black slaves from rival plantations fighting each other to death, it was called Battle Royal. That was a very common practice among plantations, where one plantation owner would pit his biggest, baddest slave against another rival plantation, and they would fight to a death. The author talks about how young African-Americans, when they are discovered to have any kind of athletic prowess, they are plugged from the African-American community and put in a whole different track where sports, basketball football are the main two, become the handle behold, and move education and understanding the plan of the community. It becomes solely about them becoming the next Michael Jordan. And when you look at the Michael Jordan episode (1990), you have that kind of mindset which tells you that people like

Curt Flood, who fought for free agency in baseball, Jackie Robinson and lots of others who made the ultimate sacrifices, Wilt Chamberlain, Bill Russell, so that athletes today can have free agency, so they can demand those exorbitant salaries. It all happened in the 50s and 60s. African-Americans never had any control over their destiny in terms of being in charge of anything. (You also have the example of black jockeys being excluded from the Kentucky derby while they won routinely in the late 19th century).

If you look at some of the early 1960s Boston Celtics team, you saw very few African-Americans. Same thing with professional football teams in the 1950s. You didn't see any African-Americans play. And it wasn't until, again, the game became more interested to watch because of how they play, they can run faster, they had a different style of jockeying and running, things that weren't happening in the game prior to their involvement. And there was a price tag placed on them, since commercialism was involved.

There's a huge gap now between athletes, musicians and the rest of the community. What happens today is, if they understood the struggle, you would have more athletes who would perhaps understand the importance of education, and the importance of giving back to the community, instead of having a foundation to get a tax break. If you had more athletes who truly understood what Curt Flood and others did to provide them the opportunities, you would see much more social awareness. To football players, going to school is just a pit stop, a pit stop to the NFL. And sadly, most schools with high profile sport programs, for athletes, they become pit stops. Among white athletes, you have a different mindset. Does he want to play professional football? Maybe. But that's not his sole reason for having come to school here. Sadly, it seems like for too many of our black athletes, this has become their meal ticket. This is their way out. »

Entretien avec Kevin O'Neill

Entraîneur de basket-ball au niveau universitaire et en NBA. Alors entraîneur de l'équipe masculine de USC.

Propos recueillis le 20 novembre 2009 à USC.

« I'm from a real small town, and I used to play all day every day. That was what I did, just playing basketball all the time. I went to college to play basketball, realized I couldn't play it for a living so I decided to coach it for a living. I've coached everything from high school through the NBA, had some great opportunities through basketball, and I've enjoyed it a whole lot. It's just something that's always been in my blood.

My parents weren't sports people at all. It's just something I picked up as a kid and loved every second that I played it.

I like the competition, the team bonding, the whole team atmosphere. Being part of a team, being part of a group is important to me. That's some of the things I like the most about basketball.

I draw the emphasis on teamwork, hard work, sharing, being together, doing the right thing by your teammates at all times, all those things, to me, are life lessons as well as basketball lessons. Hopefully for our young guys, they can learn those things as being part of a team, and being part of our team. Hopefully that'll help them as they go along in life.

I feel as an educator as well as a coach. I think it's important that you work on these guys, not only on the basketball court, but make sure they get an education. Because, basically, when it comes down to it, not many of these guys are going to play in the pros. Maybe 1% of all guys who play in college play in the pros. So I want to make sure they're prepared to make a living.

College basketball and NBA basketball are like chess and checkers, two different games on the same court. The rules are all different, how you deal with the players is different. It's just a straight job in the NBA. It's what it is. Everybody is their own corporation. In college, you're part of a team, you're on scholarship, you're trying to get an education. In the NBA, it's a straight job. These guys, that's how they approach it.

You have to deal with egos, but it's not as bad as everybody thinks it is. It's really important that you treat them professionally. It's really important you don't let them be unprofessional in their approach. You do more directing in the NBA than you do directing and facilitating in college, because in the NBA, you're with them 3 or 4 hours a day, max. The rest of the day, they're on their own. It's like they show up for work and that's it.

I try to teach this professional approach to my players at USC. I try to press upon them the importance of doing things, being first-class player, being professional in their approach.

What college basketball has become is such a big business, in terms of the money you can make between attendance, TV and all that kind of stuff. It would be my hope that the NCAA in general make sure to hold college programs to high academic standards and high eligibility standards, doing the right thing more. I think that's going to be a challenge for college sports going forward. Some people stress one more than the other, offense over defense... I believe defense wins championships, and I think recruiting wins championships. It's about having good players, and then implementing your philosophy to those players. You put it together like a puzzle. You don't want to duplicate players. You want to try to piece it together: have a guy that can lead your team, have size in the frontline, have athletes on the wings... I think that's a really important part for winning.

I think you just have to recruit the right guys. You got to have people that really you can count on, that will get an education, that are good people. I've always believed that good people make a good product, and bad people make bad product. So we try to recruit good students, good players and good people.

People that have significantly changed the game? John Wooden, obviously. Adolph Rupp. On the pro level, you're talking guys like Phil Jackson, Red Auerbach. Those guys are what I call milestone guys. They've hit big-time milestone for their careers and made a lasting impression on

the game. I think because of guys like that, basketball has become a very popular game, both at the college and NBA levels.

Bill Russell, to me, changed the game more than anybody. He was such a great winner and a great team guy. And then, if you look, there's been Magic Johnson who's had a huge impact on the game, Larry Bird, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar... There's a lot of great players who impacted the game. The thing about it is you hope guys like Kobe Bryant keep impacting the game in a positive manner as he does, because he's like the epitome of working hard, the epitome of doing the right thing and trying to win games. And I think that's really important that we have guys like that over and over again that keep the history of basketball being a positive one.

I really don't encourage my players to watch games from the past because today's kids don't care about what went on back then. They're not into the history of the game. Young players, they care about who's in the NBA right now. That's important, and they don't really respect the traditions of the game. That's just the way it is. Kobe, they would watch him, but if it goes too far back, where they don't know the players... They're inspired by Kobe, they're inspired by LeBron, inspired by guys like that, but they don't care what Bill Russell did. Unfortunately, that's just the way it is.

I think players now too often think about being in the NBA when they don't have any chance to be there. And I think players, for the most part, focus more on their own personal goals versus doing the right thing and try to win games. That's kind of a product of our society.

Are there differences in how players play depending on their background? I think it just depends on the player. Some guys are shooters, some guys are penetrators, some guys are dunkers... I think it depends on the player, not so much where they come from. I think they're influenced by their background but I think everybody establishes his own identity as a player regardless of where they're from.

I let my players deal with the media because I think it's good for them, I think it makes them grow up. It's important for them to make radio shows, TV shows and all those things, because to me, that's part of growing up. So I don't inhibit them at all, from any part of the media. It's part of their education as a player.

Basketball was important where I'm from. It's a small town that was supported very well. I think it's been part of my town's life as I grew up. They won the 1st state championship a couple of years ago, and it's something everybody takes pride in and has as a reference point.

Internationally, people look at the NBA and pro basketball as a representation of the American society. But I think if you talk about in the United States, more people identify with college basketball than they do pro basketball. I think it's hard for people to identify with a lot of the guys, how much money they make. I think people love to identify with college teams. »

Entretien avec Bruno Poulain

Journaliste sportif à Canal Plus, commentateur des Finales NBA entre 1997 et 2012. Alors directeur de la section omnisport.

Propos recueillis le jeudi 5 mars 2009 à Canal Plus.

« Ce que j'aime dans le basket, c'est ce mélange d'adresse, de puissance physique, d'engagement. Cela mêle parfaitement gestes spectaculaires et aspect tactique. Également le côté show, spectacle à l'américaine.

La NBA a la chance d'avoir un sport culturel important aux USA. Tout le monde sait ce que c'est qu'un panier de basket, tout le monde y a joué à un moment ou à un autre. C'est le même phénomène que pour le base-ball ou le football américain. Mais ils ont réussi à en soigner l'image, à le structurer en partant d'un sport de rue, un sport hyper-urbain né sur les playgrounds à un sport universitaire. La NBA a transformé cette énorme base en le transformant en un superbe sommet de la pyramide. C'est désormais un circuit qui mêle l'aspect compétition et l'aspect entertainment, sans dénaturer le sport. Ils adaptent les règles avec des modifications microscopiques pour que le spectacle reste à la hauteur des attentes du public. Ils ne se posent pas de question. Quand une règle n'est plus efficace, et que les entraîneurs et les défenseurs se sont adaptés et ont pris le pas sur les attaques, ils font évoluer la règle pour redonner l'avantage à l'attaquant sans pour autant en faire un show débile et sans intérêt.

Dans 95% des autres sports, on est dans un immobilisme absolu. L'une des forces de la NBA, c'est de savoir s'adapter aux contraintes et aux évolutions. Les règles des sports ont été écrites pour des gens normaux. Pas pour des super athlètes professionnels qui s'entraînent comme des fous, qui sont surdimensionnés, hyper-costauds. La puissance physique et la super-professionalisation renforcent obligatoirement la défense et la tactique défensive, car c'est plus facile de défendre que d'attaquer.

La NBA n'est pas un phénomène culturel comme le baseball, qui est vraiment le sport américain numéro 1 depuis la nuit des temps, qui est un peu le sport des campagnes qui fait partie de la tradition. Le basket, c'est plus un sport hyper-urbain, des grandes villes et des métropoles, qui est facile à jouer. La NBA, c'est un sport avec des superstars, mais surtout, comme tous les sports pro US, c'est un sport de spectacle super familial. Tout le monde vient ensemble au stade, tu connais ton voisin, le mec au-dessus de toi, ça fait 12 ans qu'il est là... Si tu arrives un peu en retard, c'est pas grave, si tu repars un peu en avance, c'est pas grave. C'est une consommation du sport différente dans la salle comparée à l'Europe. C'est une perception différente.

Il n'y a pas d'agressivité. Il y a des rivalités entre les clubs, mais une rivalité bon enfant. Et ce phénomène est présent dans tout le sport américain. En football, c'est pareil, ainsi qu'en baseball et au hockey. Les gens viennent au match pour passer un bon moment. Il y a aucune agressivité. C'est un climat bon enfant, de fête. On vient au stade pour s'amuser, pour encourager, passer un bon moment, on boit des coups, et tout se passe bien. L'aspect négatif, c'est que peut-être les ambiances ne sont pas aussi incroyables qu'en Grèce ou en Angleterre, parce que ce n'est pas la même consommation du sport, c'est beaucoup plus cool et beaucoup plus sympa.

Le match de référence, c'est le 6e match des Finals 98, le dernier match de Michael Jordan. C'est la référence absolue. C'est aussi le match le plus regardé de l'histoire du basket. Personnellement, je n'oublierai jamais le Game 3 de Miami/Dallas, avec le show de Wade, qui est sur une autre planète. Un truc invraisemblable. La ville chloroformée devient en transe. Dans l'émotion et dans l'ambiance, c'était fabuleux. Un moment assez extraordinaire.

Il y a aussi le Game 1 LA Lakers/Sixers et Iverson qui calme la salle de Los Angeles à lui tout seul.

Michael Jordan et Dwayne Wade sont des joueurs hors-normes, tout comme Iverson dans ses jeunes années, Kobe aussi. Je n'ai suivi que la fin de carrière de Magic et Bird.

Les Américains ont le respect des champions du passé, et la culture de cela. Ils se servent énormément des images et des personnages pour faire passer des messages, pour que les gens n'oublient pas, pour cultiver la mémoire. Il y a une vraie culture sportive américaine. Il y a un

respect invraisemblable pour les anciens joueurs. Quand ils montrent Julius Erving ou Bill Russell, et cela n'est pas rare, la salle est debout. Ce sont des vecteurs de promotion de leur sport. Ils respectent ces joueurs et cette mémoire. Lorsqu'ils ont réunis les 50 meilleurs joueurs de tous les temps lors du All Star Game 97 à Cleveland, c'était un moment vraiment exceptionnel, et la salle était debout. Ils savent rendre hommage, comme lorsqu'ils retirent les maillots des légendes. Il y a un grand respect de la performance et de la mémoire de cette performance. Là-dessus, les sports européens ont des leçons à prendre sur cette reconnaissance. Je trouve cet aspect du sport US très bien, car les joueurs disparaissent très vite, sinon.

Michael Jordan est passé dans la culture américaine au sens large, car il fait partie des champions hors normes. Il a encore plus marqué l'histoire du basket que Magic Johnson. C'est une icône totalement légendaire. Michael Jordan, c'est Nike, c'est le développement des baskets, d'un style de mode, d'un style de vie. C'est une icône. Magic est très connu, mais il reste dans le monde du basket, même s'il est très grand public. Après Jordan, il y a Magic. Dans l'inconscient, Larry Bird n'est pas du tout au même niveau.

Beaucoup de stars du rap aiment le basket et assistent aux matchs. Mais c'est également le cas de stars du rock. On montre beaucoup les rappeurs, car ils sont à la mode, et parce que c'est un sport très Black dans sa culture. Mais la NBA essaie de casser cette image très rap. Ils utilisent le rap, le rock, la pop dans leurs communications. Ils ne veulent pas être irrémédiablement associés au hip-hop. Ces deux univers sont obligatoirement liés car c'est un sport très Black, et que pleins de joueurs ont eux-mêmes fait du rap. C'est également lié aux origines des stars.

Lorsque George dit que le All Star Game est le Black Superbowl, c'est essentiellement lié à la foule que l'évènement draine. Toute la communauté noire a rendez-vous lors du All Star Weekend, et cela ne se limite pas au seul match. Pendant 3 jours, des centaines de milliers de personnes débarquent pour voir les stars dans les boîtes, les restos,... Même si elles n'ont pas de billets. C'est l'environnement qui est important. Sportivement, ça n'a rien à voir, c'est juste un show.

Le sport professionnel, c'est le rêve afro-américain. C'est le cas en NBA, comme en NFL, en NHL moins car il y a peu de noirs américains. Le foot US et la NBA, c'est le rêve américain. Cela commence par être une star universitaire, ce qui est déjà monstrueux, et après de passer professionnel, c'est l'étape au-dessus. Le sport aux USA est un vrai moyen d'ascension sociale, surtout pour les gens des quartiers défavorisés. Leur seule chance de sortie, c'est le sport. Il y a un siècle, on disait que c'était la boxe qui permettait de sortir du ghetto et de s'élever socialement. Aujourd'hui, le foot US et le basket, c'est clairement ça. Le baseball touche davantage les populations latines. Le sport est un moyen d'ascension sociale, aux États-Unis plus qu'ailleurs.

Pour moi, l'engagement politique, c'est personnel, et ce n'est pas le rôle du sportif. En revanche, il peut tout de même faire passer des messages éducatifs au sens large, et avoir un rôle de modèle dans le comportement et le style de vie. C'est obligatoire dans la vie des sportifs, lorsque l'on voit l'influence des superstars sur le comportement des gens. Les gens s'identifient, ils « font comme ». Le sportif a donc une véritable importance.

À l'époque de Jordan, on n'est plus au temps de Bill Russell. Ça n'avait rien à voir avec l'époque Martin Luther King ou ce qui se passe aujourd'hui avec Obama.

Il y a toujours des références aux anciens. La référence absolue, c'est Jordan, et toujours on se demande qui sera le nouveau Jordan. Aujourd'hui, on est davantage dans une comparaison de générations, avec d'un côté Jordan, Magic, Bird, Malone, et désormais, on a de nouveau des joueurs phénomènes qui jouent en même temps, avec Kobe Bryant, LeBron James, Dwayne Wade et Dwight Howard. On peut de nouveau parler d'une génération surdouée, extraordinaire, fantastique, comme c'était le cas au début des années 90. On ne peut pas les comparer.

Aujourd'hui, on est revenu dans le monde du sport en terme d'impact. On parle entre basketteurs. Pour le grand public, Jordan est tout en haut, au firmament. LeBron James est à des années lumière de la notoriété de Michael Jordan. En Europe, si on demande le nom d'un basketteur, c'est systématiquement celui de Jordan qui apparaîtra. Je ne sais pas s'il y aura un jour un basketteur qui fera enlever de la mémoire individuelle Michael Jordan. C'est le cas également dans le golf, avec Woods. Dans 50 ans, on n'aura pas d'équivalent grand public.

He Got Game expliquait relativement bien l'univers du sport universitaire américain. C'était un peu romancé, mais très sympa.

Croiser Jordan dans un vestiaire, un couloir, c'est un rêve d'enfant... Jordan, c'est super impressionnant, mais la première fois que j'ai vu Shaquille O'Neal, c'était aussi impressionnant. Jordan, c'est le personnage hors normes, et quand on a la chance de pouvoir le voir jouer, on en profite. »

Entretien avec George Raveling

Ancien entraîneur de l'équipe masculine de USC, Responsable de la section basket international, Nike.

Propos recueilli le 21 avril 2010 à USC.

« I was in Washington on August 28, 1963, right next to Martin Luther King Jr. during his famous "I Have a Dream" speech. He even gave me his draft.

We should be focused on China, China, and China. We are witnessing a social, political, economic and cultural shift there. There are 366 million basketball participants, most of them (90%) playing 3-on-3 outdoor basketball. This is the only country in the world where basketball is the #1 sport. And they're actually trying to copy the American model in sports. Plus 6 of the 10 largest cities in the world are in China. From a business standpoint, this destination makes sense.

Kobe Bryant is the #1 non-Chinese sportsman in China. He is so popular because he is the most business-conscious athlete with Jordan. He is a business savvy guy. He saw there was an opportunity for him, so he's spent some time there, and now he is a US spokesman.

He has all the elements to be the best basketball endorsee – apart from Jordan.

On his first trip to China, he just shot around with some kids on a deserted playground, and he brought some shoes for them.

Also, he is into product development, and he is curious, he asks questions about Nike.

The other players were shocked when the Chinese people chanted "Kobe!" during the Olympic opening ceremony.

Promoting our athletes there is a challenge for Nike. We are a premium brand, so our prices can be problematic when we want to compete with Chinese brands. These brands represent our only threat. We can't afford these brands to marginalize our brand and products there. Also, the outdoor game requires another type of shoes. They play more of a recreational type of game.

We want to bring the game to a global audience. So what we do is we seek out basketball talents and we sign them.

Our athletes are walking ambassadors of the brand as well as role models.

Our goals are to maintain our dominant position; to influence the growth of the global game effectively and positively; and to own the most important relationship. We want to be the authentic brand of choice for the elite international basketball community. Here are our guidelines: seek, sign, serve and maintain.

Our focus is mainly on China, and then on FIBA and Europe, then on the World Championships and USA Basketball. Then we focus on growing targeted relationships and securing authentic and quality information.

Nike can influence the growth of the game, how it is played, taught, officiated, promoted and administered.

We are more into partnership than sponsorship.

It is impossible for people to go 24 hours without seeing a swoosh. The last thing we need is exposure. We're in constant search of what's next. We look for opportunities.

We signed Ricky Rubio when he was 14. He is not Americanized with tattoos, poses and all these American bullshits... We use him in Europe more than in the US.

Jordan landed with Nike because he could get a signature shoe. Adidas wasn't ready to do that. He was the first African-American lead endorser by a big company. Also, we did a good marketing job, with the Mars Blackman ads and the "Air" nickname. Plus Jordan interacted with all ages. He smiled, he wore nice clothes. Only Nike is bigger than the Jordan Brand in basketball. His brand is bigger than Reebok and Adidas united.

75% of NBA players have to be in Nike footwear. Our goal is to reach 80%.

Our players have the right to express political views if they want to. We wouldn't interfere. »

Entretien avec Xavier Vaution

Journaliste sportif à Canal Plus, spécialiste de la NBA.

Propos recueillis le samedi 25 avril 2009 à Canal Plus.

« Le rôle joué par le basket-ball dans l'évolution de la condition des Noirs américains, c'est un vaste sujet, aussi vaste que le territoire américain ou que la culture américaine. Il y a 60 ans, il n'y avait pas un seul Noir qui avait le droit de participer à un sport professionnel. Ça a l'air d'être d'un autre temps, et finalement, on se rend compte que c'était hier, et dans un sens ça fait super peur. Quand on voit que 60 ans plus tard, c'est un Noir qui est à la tête des États-Unis, on a presque l'impression que quelque part, ils veulent se racheter, mais ce n'est pas non plus un hasard si ce Noir américain est un fou furieux de sport. Il a pratiqué le basket, et a été champion de l'état d'Hawaï. C'est une évolution. Le sport a permis l'évolution, non pas de la race noire, car c'est un mot à bannir, mais de la culture noire américaine. L'afro-américanisme qui n'a pas toujours eu une très bonne image, notamment au début des années 90, avec la ghettoïsation et les émeutes de Los Angeles. Finalement, ça a pris du temps, mais ça se développe de façon hyper positive.

À mon sens, ça a commencé avec le sport. Il y a un siècle, l'esclavage était une réalité. Cinquante ans plus tard, les Noirs avaient le droit de participer aux grandes ligues de sport professionnel, et surtout le basket, beaucoup plus que dans les autres sports. Il suffit de regarder les statistiques. C'est dans le basket qu'il y a la plus grande part d'Afro-Américains. Le football n'est pas loin, le baseball, ce n'est pas encore ça, et le hockey, je n'en parle même pas...

Quelque part, le vrai basket américain comme nous on l'entend, c'est-à-dire le côté show, spectacle, etc... est né à New York, à Harlem. Les Harlem Globetrotters ont été la base qui a permis de gravir les échelons. Ce n'est pas parti d'un milieu professionnel, quelques uns ont pu le devenir petit à petit. Le basket est le sport le plus représentatif de cette communauté. C'est historique. Il y a le côté New-Yorkais, et aussi l'autre côté, à Los Angeles, où on a voulu faire la même chose, avec la construction de plusieurs playgrounds. Étant donné que ces playgrounds étaient essentiellement situés dans les banlieues ghettoïsées, ça a certainement permis l'éclosion de certains Blacks pour atteindre le haut niveau et finalement finir professionnels durant les années 50, et du lien très fort entre ce sport et cette communauté. Le basket permet une certaine mobilité sociale.

On a coutume de dire que le All Star Game, c'est le Superbowl des Blacks. C'est vrai comme ça ne l'est pas. Ça permet à une partie de cette communauté de se retrouver autour du basket, parce que ce sport fait intégralement partie de la culture de cette communauté, parce que le basket est proche du hip-hop et que le hip-hop est forcément proche de basket américain. Il y a toujours une question de clan. Las Vegas, c'était un sketch. La ville était noire de peau. Les gens étaient là pour vivre l'évènement. À New Orleans et Phoenix, pareil. C'est typiquement américain. Ils aiment se déplacer pour vivre l'évènement de près et son atmosphère, sans forcément y être. On veut vivre le truc en groupe.

Le lien entre le hip-hop et le basket est à trouver dans leurs origines, dans les ghettos, sur les playgrounds. Mais il y a également une question de rythme. Le rythme du jeu correspond au rythme du hip-hop. Ça, c'est indéniable. Si nous mettons pas mal de hip-hop dans les sujets, c'est pas un hasard. C'est parce que, quand tu mets un morceau hip-hop, ça marche. Tu sais pas pourquoi, ça marche cent fois mieux qu'autre chose. C'est pareil pour la vieille Soul, tout ce qui est Motown, ça fonctionne très bien aussi. Les deux sont des musiques blacks. C'est des rythmes qui collent au jeu, c'est des trucs qui vont exactement avec. C'est pas pareil avec le foot US, ni avec le baseball, ni avec le hockey. C'est une affaire de rythme. Et le rythme, ça, ils l'ont dans la peau, c'est indéniable.

Je n'espère pas que la jeunesse afro-américaine mette sur le même niveau Martin Luther King, Malcolm X et Michael Jordan. Et je ne pense pas que ce soit le cas. J'ose espérer que les gens sont assez intelligent pour faire la différence entre Michael Jordan et Malcolm X. On peut être basketteur et homme politique, comme c'est le cas de Kevin Johnson, l'actuel maire de Sacramento. Ils sont beaucoup à vouloir occuper des rôles dans les associations ou bien être

directement impliquer en politique. C'est un fait. Certains ont beaucoup de choses à dire. Jordan, très sincèrement, n'a pas grand chose à dire. Il a beau avoir été le génie absolu sur le parquet, pour ce qui est hors parquet, il n'est pas aussi génial. Un mec comme Magic Johnson a sans doute bien plus de choses à dire. Larry Bird est resté dans son Indiana natal, et il sera écouté, mais il sera écouté *pour le basket*. Il y a eu une forte implication pour Obama. Mais cette implication a été générale. Ça n'a pas été les joueurs de basket qui ont fait élire Obama. Dans l'ensemble, le monde du sport est démocrate aux États-Unis. Les basketteurs sont quasiment à 100% derrière Obama, ainsi que la plupart des joueurs des autres fédérations sportives. Je crois et j'espère qu'ils sont allés au-delà de la couleur de peau. Martin Luther King et Malcolm X sont des figures emblématiques pour elles-mêmes. Il n'y a qu'à voir le MLK Day, la semaine Black. Le pays semble vouloir se racheter pour avoir mis autant de temps à les reconnaître. Je ne pense pas, et je n'espère pas que les jeunes des ghettos préféreront écouter Jordan dire n'importe quoi plutôt que quelqu'un qui a des idées.

Dans les salles de basket aux USA, il n'y a pas beaucoup de Noirs, il y a beaucoup de blancs car les places sont assez chères. Les Noirs, on les trouvera en haut dans la salle, mais pas tant que ça. Il y a des équipes particulières. Par exemple, les Clippers sont décrits comme l'équipe des Noirs à Los Angeles, car les places sont moins chères, et donc les gens se rassemblent plutôt autour de cette équipe. Ils ne vont pas voir les Lakers, avec le côté paillettes, etc. La NBA, c'est surtout des Blancs qui regardent les Noirs, le plus souvent. Si on prend les Utah Jazz, à Salt Lake City, chez les Mormons, s'il y a 2 Noirs dans la salle, c'est le bout du monde. Mais ça ne pose aucun problème. La mentalité de « sport de Blancs » a évolué tardivement, mais très vite.

Je pense que la dimension raciale est exagérée et relève du cliché. Aux États-Unis, le basket n'est pas un sport *pour* les Noirs, c'est un sport pratiqué par une majorité de Noirs. À ce moment-là, pour le foot US, la situation est la même. En aucun cas le basket est devenu un sport de Noirs. Il suffit de regarder les équipes des petits bleds. Il y a quasiment que des petits blancs qui jouent. C'est lié au fait qu'il faille s'acheter des chaussures, payer sa licence... C'est pas donné à tout le monde. Les Blacks qui réussissent réussissent à partir du lycée, surtout, et après s'ils ont la chance de toucher une bourse pour aller à l'université. S'ils sont très talentueux, les facs misent sur eux car ensuite, ils feront parler de la fac en question. Même au niveau professionnel, on ne peut pas dire que les Noirs se soient accaparés le basket. Je n'ai jamais vu la moindre intolérance envers un Blanc en provenance d'un Black, et vice versa. En tout cas, en général, ça n'existe plus. Les Américains sont uniquement fiers de leurs couleurs pour le lycée et les universités. Se sentir proche d'une franchise, c'est plus difficile, sauf dans le cas de franchises mythiques. C'est le cas pour les Boston Celtics. Il y a un mythe, et ça, tu le sens quand tu es à Boston. Il y a un vrai truc identitaire. Detroit, c'est la même chose autour des Pistons depuis 50 ans. Detroit, c'est des gens particuliers, ils vivent et ils meurent pour leurs équipes. Ça c'est l'esprit « col bleu ». Les Lakers, ça a été difficile, car ils ont quitté Minneapolis pour Los Angeles, et il faut pouvoir s'identifier. Les Jazz étaient à l'origine basés à New Orleans. Utah Jazz, ça n'a rien à voir, et ça n'a aucun sens. Il n'y a pas de jazz à Salt Lake City. À la Nouvelle-Orléans, c'était particulier, il se passait quelque chose. Il faut ce côté historique, les Américains aiment ça. À partir du moment où l'équipe commence à grandir et à gagner, ça va. C'est tout le problème du sport américain, ce système de franchisation. C'est très difficile de se sentir proche de cela. Après, il y a des équipes particulières. Dans le cas du Jazz, désormais, c'est un véritable culte, parce qu'il a peu de sports représentés. En ce qui concerne les New Orleans Hornets, Katrina a, malheureusement, beaucoup aidé, dans un sens. Ça a regroupé la Nouvelle-Orléans, et à ce moment-là, ça représentait véritablement la ville, plus encore que les facs.

À New York, les gens sont proches des Knicks. Cela se sent dans les salles. Les gens viennent voir leur équipe. Ce n'est pas forcément le cas à Charlotte, où les gens ne savaient pas qui étaient Boris Diaw. Ils vont là-bas comme ils vont au cirque. Pour nous, voir un match NBA, c'est un événement. Pour eux, c'est juste une sortie, une routine.

Entertainment, c'est le mot clé, c'est la NBA. C'est le plus grand championnat du monde, mais pour que les gens viennent dans les salles, il faut qu'ils aient ça, l'*entertainment*. C'est les shows

aux temps-morts et à la mi-temps. Si tu veux pas les voir, va t'acheter à manger et regarde le match sur la télé HD du bar... David Stern compte surtout sur le show et le spectacle. Si on prend l'Euroleague, le niveau est exceptionnel, mais le jeu est chiant. Il manque quelque chose, cette étincelle qui fait qu'aux États-Unis, ça prend une autre ampleur.

He Got Game, c'était une bonne photo à l'époque. Je ne sais pas si c'est encore le cas aujourd'hui. Spike Lee, c'est un malade mental de basket et des Knicks. Il n'a pas pris n'importe qui pour incarner Jesus Shuttlesworth, il a juste pris le meilleur shooteur de ces 15 dernières années. Au niveau photographie de l'époque, ça représente plutôt pas mal l'environnement des jeunes prospects. C'était peut-être un peu cliché par moment. Il y a quelques trucs un peu faciles, des clichés. C'est le problème avec les films de Spike Lee. Parfois, il tombe dans la démagogie absolue. Il faut arrêter de parler de « tous ces pauvres Noirs... ». Ce n'est pas aider la cause. Peut-être qu'à cette époque, ça a fait quelque chose. Mais je pense que pour aider les causes, il faut les traiter comme elles sont, et ne pas les surjouer.

Julius Erving est un joueur qui a révolutionné le jeu. C'est lui qui a fait passer le jeu de la terre aux airs, dans les airs. Il a marqué une véritable révolution. C'est un Noir, et ça, ce n'est pas un hasard. À la base, il y a Bill Russell. Puis Erving a porté le basket à un autre niveau. Il n'y aurait pas eu de Michael Jordan sans Dr. J. Et Julius Erving a sans doute beaucoup plus de choses à dire que Michael Jordan. Et récemment, on a donné au trophée de MVP des Finals le nom de Bill Russell. Ce n'est pas un hasard, lorsque l'on sait toute l'importance que revêt ce joueur dans l'histoire de la NBA. Sans oublier Wilt Chamberlain.

Si Michael Jordan incarne le gagnant et le talent absolu, Bill Russell incarne la classe absolue. Jabbar, comme Ali, ont réussi à faire accepter tant bien que mal leur religion. »

Annexe n° 2 : Carnet de Bord (Extraits et photos)

Ville

La ville de Los Angeles est physiquement marquée par le sport, que ce soit à travers les stades, les *playgrounds*, mais encore les publicités et les *memorabilia* (dans les restaurants). Au centre ville, elle est dominée par les Los Angeles Lakers et l'équipe de football des Trojans de USC.

La NBA est présente lors des matches des Lakers et des Clippers à travers son logo, mais aussi ses sponsors et ses slogans (NBA Cares, Read to Achieve, Big, NBA Is Family). Son message est mêlé à celui du club.

Matches des Lakers

Apparition des réseaux sociaux jusque sur les parquets (@Lakers) et les panneaux (pubs électroniques Facebook)

Davantage de références à la culture latina (musique salsa, Los Lakers)

“The Trilogy Continues”

“There’s only one stat that counts, championships”.

L'étude des programmes de matchs permet de distinguer l'identité que la franchise veut construire autour de son équipe. Dans le cas des Lakers, ils mettent leurs stars en avant (Kobe Bryant), ainsi que leur identité internationale (et notamment les liens avec la communauté latina, à travers l'Espagnol Pau Gasol), et surtout leur tradition de victoires. En l'absence de titres, le focus est fait sur Bryant, la star et l'attraction principale. En revanche, lorsqu'il se blesse, l'identité se reporte sur la notion d'équipe et sur la marque « Lakers ».

Le cérémonial d'avant-match est le même depuis 2009 et mon premier match. L'ordre des animations est toujours le même (présentation du match par une présentatrice, présentation du match par le « Public Announcer », entrée des joueurs, clips d'introduction (retracant les temps forts de l'histoire des Lakers puis clip « I Love LA » avec des images de la ville), hymne, présentation des joueurs (avec vidéo, cette fois-ci, au storytelling adapté à la saison et aux résultats de l'équipe, de « The Trilogy Continues » lorsque les Lakers visent un 3^e titre de rang en 2011 à des messages d'effort collectif plus évasifs lorsque l'équipe est médiocre, en 2015).

Surtout, on ressent une appartenance à plusieurs communautés entremêlées. Dans le stade, on est (presque) tous fans des Lakers, on est tous fans de basket, et on aime tous le sport. Et surtout, et même si tout le monde n'est pas américain (moi le premier), on participe pourtant tous à un rite clairement américain. Cette observation dépasse le simple moment de l'hymne, vraiment empreint d'un patriotisme émotionnel qui peut trancher avec d'autres expériences dans des stades étrangers. Le sentiment de l'expérience américaine est un peu partout, entre le jeu, les histoires contées à travers lui, le consumérisme policé autour du sport, le sport présenté comme un produit « pur »... Avant d'être à un match de basket, on est à une réunion d'Américains, comme si ceux-ci voulaient se rassurer et montrer que leur tissu social et même leur contrat social étaient toujours d'actualité, et leurs idéaux toujours incarnés à travers les joueurs. Il se passe beaucoup de choses en termes de symboles, et la communion se fait à travers les joueurs, qui deviennent des vecteurs d'américanité et de la société américaine idéale potentielle (lorsque l'équipe gagne). La fin de match, en cela, est un anticlimax assez fascinant. Si l'on partage avec son voisin de tribune à propos de l'action, on se salue et on se quitte assez rapidement. Ce qui fait le lien, c'est l'équipe. C'est le chaînon entre les fans.

Aussi, le passé du club apparaît partout, des tickets aux bannières de champion accrochées au plafond, en passant par les maillots retirés, également accrochés au plafond, ou encore le mini-musée à côté de la boutique, qui regroupent des peintures et des maillots des anciennes gloires du club (qui ont tout de reliques à connotation religieuse, par ailleurs).

Autre aspect essentiel, la consommation. Les couloirs du stade sont remplis de stands de nourritures divers et variés, ainsi que de petites boutiques vendant des maillots, tee-shirts et autres objets aux couleurs du club. Contrairement aux stades européens, ici, les boutiques viennent au consommateur.

Discussion avec deux fans afro-américains, une dame âgée (environ 70 ans) et son fils (environ 50 ans). Tous les deux sont abonnés (season ticket holders) depuis 27 ans (et fiers de l'être), et portent des vêtements aux couleurs des Lakers. La mère tricote machinalement en suivant le match d'un œil distrait et en réagissant aux belles actions, tout en les commentant occasionnellement à son fils, sans s'arrêter de tricoter. Le fils porte un maillot de Magic Johnson, son joueur préféré. Il me confie qu'il est nostalgique de l'époque « Showtime », de l'ambiance dans l'ancienne salle (le Forum) et n'ose évoquer l'équipe actuelle. Cependant, pendant le match, une action d'éclat des Lakers nous fait échanger un sourire entendu.

Matches des Clippers

Entre 2009 et 2015, les matches des Clippers ont vu leur prix augmenter (à mesure que les résultats de l'équipe s'améliorent). Cependant, même lorsqu'ils sont médiocres, les Lakers restent l'équipe la plus chère en terme de prix de billet (ou de parking...). Aussi, si dans l'imagerie et l'esthétique générale, la culture hip hop reste très présente (imitation de tags, DJ Dense à l'animation, insistance sur le concept de « Representing »), on observe un mouvement vers une animation plus familiale, moins connotée.

L'équipe représente : Passion, Dedication, Heart, Basketball & Los Angeles.

Quand l'équipe adverse entre sur le terrain, le stade joue la Marche de l'Empereur de Star Wars, ce qui oriente d'emblée le récit de la partie vers un manichéisme (Les Clippers sont le Bien, l'adversaire le Mal).

Du côté des programmes, en 2009-2010, la stratégie est clairement tournée vers la notion d'équipe et de collectif, vraisemblablement due au manque de stars dans l'effectif. Cependant, les arrivées de Blake Griffin et Chris Paul ne changent que sensiblement la stratégie. L'équipe reste le centre d'attention, seul le slogan change (Rise, Represent LA), indiquant de nouvelles ambitions.

Slogan : Rise puis The Rise Continues (depuis l'arrivée de Blake Griffin (car dunker+équipe en progrès, ascension vers les sommets), Don't Miss the Next Highlight

Trois cheerleaders (1 Afro-Américaine, 1 Latino-Américaine, 1 Américaine d'origine asiatique) sont présentes dans le hall d'entrée du stade pour poser pour des photos avec les fans.

Opérations auprès des fans : « Meet DeAndre, Blake, etc. » (prénoms pour plus de proximité).

Les fans sont désignés par le mot « Clipper Nation ».

Sur le devant des maillots extérieur est inscrit « Los Angeles », et non « Clippers » (une marque en reconstruction avec héritage de défaites, s'associe plutôt à Los Angeles et à un imaginaire plus attractif).

Matches des USC Trojans (Basketball)

Basketball : les joueurs n'ont pas leur nom sur leur maillot. Le slogan est « Witness the Rise », ce qui met les joueurs en position de messies en pleine ascension, et le fan en position de témoin des miracles des jeunes prophètes qui sont appelés à devenir des héros.

La section étudiante est gratuite pour les étudiants de USC. C'est aussi la section la plus enthousiaste. Le reste du stade est moins bruyant. Seul cas à part, le match contre UCLA, où le stade est plein et l'ambiance électrique.

Dans la présentation d'avant-match, sur l'écran géant, Tommy Trojan, mascotte de l'équipe, donne un coup d'épée dans le logo de l'équipe adverse, pour mettre dans le ton d'un affrontement aux allures guerrières.

Le traitement des matchs de l'équipe masculine et de l'équipe féminine est en tout point identique. La rhétorique autour du sport féminin est bien plus tournée sur la notion de performance et de compétition qu'en France. L'esthétisme n'entre pas en ligne de compte.

Cependant, le lien entre les filles et leurs pères est souligné à l'occasion d'un match de volley, pour lequel les premières familles arrivées au stade remportent un tablier pour barbecue pour le père, et un sac de plage pour la fille...

En classe, mes étudiants me familiarisent avec le concept de « bandwagon fan », débat que j'ai déclenché en demandant s'il y avait des fans des Celtics et des Lakers, puis d'autres équipes. En fonction de leurs origines géographiques, les étudiants discutaient les allégeances des uns et des autres et identifier les « faux » fans. Evidemment, tous sont fans de USC, quasiment par obligation, car liés à cet alma mater. Plus tard dans l'année, un de mes voisins m'a invité à regarder un match du tournoi final de basket car son « alma mater » y jouait. Des années après son passage dans l'école en question, il supportait encore cette équipe, et ce même s'il n'était pas un véritable fan (il ne les a suivis que lors du tournoi final, par curiosité et comme par obligation).

Matches des USC Trojans (Football)

Le match de football est un événement, puisque plus rare que les autres rencontres sportives (il y a moins de matchs dans la saison de football).

Aussi, USC est une université de football par tradition. De grands joueurs sont passés par l'université (notamment OJ Simpson, dont l'héritage sportif est relativement peu mis en avant malgré ses performances).

Le stade (LA Coliseum) est plein, et les fans portent quasiment tous un tee-shirt ou un maillot de USC (tant et si bien que je me sens comme « obligé » d'en acheter un, pour manifester mon appartenance à la communauté des fans de USC).

S'il y a peu de merchandising au stade (qui est vétuste), il y a des stands de nourriture partout. Pour le merchandising, les fans ont rendez-vous sur le campus voisin, dans la boutique/bookstore de USC, pleine à craquer les jours de match. Le campus tout entier est colonisé par USC football et ses fans à travers le Tailgating (les gens se retrouvent avant le match pour manger et boire ensemble). C'est un véritable moment de création ou de réactivation de liens sociaux entre les gens, qui parlent de football, mais pas seulement. On se retrouve autour du foot, mais on passe surtout un moment ensemble.

Sur la question du merchandising, le phénomène est incroyable. Tout se vend et s'achète aux couleurs de l'université. Evidemment, les joueurs ne touchent aucun dollar sur ces revenus, qui, à en juger par la foule qui vient à chaque match et qui ne manque pas de consommer, doivent être importants. Aussi, le fait de mettre la boutique dans la bookstore (où les étudiants achètent leurs livres pour étudier) est assez symbolique de la situation autour de l'étudiant-athlète, à la fois là pour étudier, mais aussi pour faire faire du profit à l'université.

Les fans de USC ont un signe distinctif (le V de la victoire avec les doigts mis en avant en rythme avec la musique). La fanfare (Marching Band) a un rôle crucial, puisqu'elle dirige les chants des supporters (comme l'orgue à l'église).

Après un match (et une défaite de USC), dans le bus, un jeune afro-américain (20-25 ans) habillé avec un bonnet des Raiders, accoste un homme blanc âgé (60-65 ans), et sans le connaître, entame la discussion, un sourire aux lèvres (« What happened to your team, man ?! »). Les deux parlent football pendant le reste du voyage avant de se séparer.

Matches des USC Trojans (Baseball)

Le match de baseball est une expérience totalement différente des autres sports. Le rythme y est lent, l'action brève, les points peu nombreux. Mais l'atmosphère qui y règne est particulière. L'accès au terrain des Trojans se fait par une allée bordée de portraits des anciens grands joueurs de l'université. Des plaques commémoratives rappellent les équipes victorieuses du passé.

Il y a simplement un camion qui vend des hot dogs. Le reste, c'est le stade et le jeu, simplement. Les tribunes peuvent être bondées (contre USC lors des matchs les samedis soirs) ou quasiment vides (lors des matchs en fin d'après-midi en semaine). Les gens y vont pour regarder le jeu ou

simplement regarder le coucher de soleil sur Los Angeles au son des strikes. Il y a un côté pastoral (au sens naturel) dans le décorum.

Par ailleurs, les animations sont tournées autour de la musique rock (des années 50), et il y a bien sûr le 7th inning stretch, la pause pour s'étirer au son de « Take me out to the ball game », le tube des fans de baseball. Tout est affaire de tradition.

Matches des LA Dodgers

Là aussi, la tradition domine, comme lors des matchs de baseball des Trojans. Seulement, la ferveur est plus importante, le stade magnifique et gigantesque, sur les hauteurs de la ville.

Le numéro 42 de Jackie Robinson est retiré. C'est le cas dans l'ensemble des franchises de MLB. Seulement, Robinson, était un Dodgers (il n'a jamais joué à Los Angeles, mais il faisait partie des Dodgers lorsqu'ils évoluaient à Brooklyn).

Par rapport à l'identité de ce club « déraciné », il est désormais solidement attaché à la ville de Los Angeles, qu'il nomme habilement Dodgertown dans sa communication. Aussi, en 2009-2010, les Dodgers ont déployé une stratégie de communication autour du slogan « This is my town », pour contrer la tentative des Anaheim Angels de lier son identité à Los Angeles à travers son nouveau nom (les LA Angels of Anaheim).

Par ailleurs, au niveau marketing, « Dodger » est devenu une marque, appliquée à la couleur de l'uniforme (Dodger blue) mais aussi aux hot-dogs vendus au stade (Dodger dogs)...

Enfin, le côté spirituel de l'expérience du match de baseball se retrouve également à travers le nom de la route qui mène au Dodger stadium, Elysian Park Avenue.

All-Star Weekend 2011 – Los Angeles

Un évènement pour la ville affiché dès l'aéroport (portraits de joueurs sur les piliers).

Un atout touristique, un spectacle plus qu'un évènement sportif.

La Jam Session est organisée au Convention Center, à côté du Staples Center. Tout est sponsorisé, les fans (majoritairement afro-américains, américains d'origines latine et asiatique, majoritairement en famille) portent pour la grande majorité des maillots à l'effigie de leurs équipes et joueurs préférés.

Il y a des ateliers pour les enfants où comparer sa taille de chaussure, de main, ou sa détente avec des joueurs NBA, des terrains où jouer avec des baskets ou des maillots de marques sponsors, des stands où obtenir une dédicace d'anciens joueurs ou joueuses.

Le merchandising est mis en avant. La boutique de l'évènement est située en plein cœur du Convention Center. Impossible d'y échapper. On y vend le maillot du match (un maillot forcément collector puisqu'un nouveau maillot est dessiné à chaque All-Star Game). (à noter qu'on retrouve le même maillot en promotion (25\$ au lieu de 100\$) une semaine après le match dans les malls de Los Angeles).

Habituellement accessible, l'espace autour du Staples Center (où il y a les statues des anciennes gloires des équipes de Los Angeles) n'est accessible qu'aux médias et aux porteurs de tickets. Le stade devient encore davantage un ghetto riche au milieu du centre ville de LA. Le prix du billet est rédhibitoire (700\$ et plus, comparable au prix d'une place pour les Finales NBA). Je ne peux qu'acheter une place pour l'entraînement des All-Stars (\$50).

Lors de la présentation des joueurs et le cérémonial des hymnes, tous les drapeaux des pays représentés au sein de la NBA sont présents.

Même dans le bar où je regarde le match, les joueurs de LA (Blake Griffin, Kobe Bryant) sont applaudis, et les Celtics hués...

Les pubs sont nombreuses, et sont avec des joueurs (Dwight Howard, LeBron James), du basket, des Afro-Américains, ou encore des voitures, des bières et des films d'action.

Parmi les artistes présents et montrés par les caméras, il y a Stevie Wonder, Jay-Z, P-Diddy et John Legend. Le show de la mi-temps est assuré par Rihanna et Kanye West. L'esthétique afro-américaine est clairement présente à travers la musique.

Venice Beach

C'est le lieu de rendez-vous des basketteurs de la région. C'est aussi le terrain immortalisé dans le film *White Men Can't Jump*.

Là aussi, le lieu est régi par des règles tacites. Il y a 3 terrains parallèles à la voie (très fréquentée) sur laquelle passe la promenade qui serpente de Venice Beach à Santa Monica. Le terrain le plus proche de cette voie, bordé par des petites tribunes, est le plus « disputé ». Les habitués y jouent entre eux. Il y a même un homme qui arbitre (et qui porte un maillot d'arbitre). Il n'y a quasiment que des joueurs afro-américains ou métis sur le terrain. Le jeu oscille entre des arrières vifs qui pénètrent, ou bien des intérieurs très puissants qui font parler leurs muscles (certains jouent torse nu pour lancer leur message de manière plus évidente encore). Il y a peu de shoots extérieurs à cause du vent du Pacifique (la plage et l'océan sont à quelques pas). Il y a beaucoup d'échanges entre les joueurs, entre trash-talking et discussions autour des décisions arbitrales...

Les autres terrains sont moins fréquentés, et la compétition y est moins féroce ou spectaculaire.

Enfin, il y a un autre terrain, positionné à côté de ces 3 terrains, et esthétiquement plus « travaillé ». Il est aussi à côté de la voie principale. En revanche, il n'est pas parfaitement nivelé (il est très légèrement en pente) et n'a pas de tribunes. Il n'est donc pas vraiment « éligible » pour devenir le terrain principal.

Le jeu pratiqué est d'assez bon niveau. Les équipes se font de manière informelle, et l'équipe gagnante reste sur le terrain. Des joueurs de tous profils (en termes de niveau, d'origines sociales, ethniques, de nationalités) s'y retrouvent. L'ambiance est plus détendue que sur le terrain principal, mais le jeu est sérieux tout de même.

Playground USC

Situé dans une petite enclave entre l'un des parkings du campus de USC et le Galen Center, salle de l'équipe de basket-ball de USC, le *playground* est constitué de 2 terrains de basket côte à côte et d'un terrain de *beach volley*.

Ce playground est peu fréquenté par les étudiants de USC, qui lui préfèrent le Gym. En revanche, des jeunes afro-américains viennent des quartiers situés au sud du campus pour y jouer. Souvent, ils viennent avec une chaîne stéréo et jouent entre eux sur demi-terrain en 2 contre 2 ou 3 contre 3.

Alors que j'y joue, je suis invité à les rejoindre, avec un autre joueur qui shootait sur un autre panier pour faire un 3 contre 3. L'autre joueur (blanc, environ 23 ans) est habillé avec des vêtements de basket de la marque And 1. Il affiche un visage fermé, ne fait pas de passes et force toutes ses actions. Il veut jouer tous les adversaires en 1 contre 1, dans un style proche de celui des mixtapes And 1 (l'efficacité en moins...). Nos adversaires commencent par nous tester sur les premières actions. Alors que le meneur de jeu tente de me dépasser pour marquer un lay-up tranquille, je le contre facilement, ce qui provoque les railleries de ses camarades... Sur les actions suivantes, il hausse considérablement son niveau de jeu, cette fois-ci parvenant à marquer malgré ma défense. Surtout, pendant le match, nous échangeons des commentaires sympas, entre auto-dérision et compliments mutuels. A l'issue du match, on se sépare sur un « Good game ». En revanche, mon partenaire d'un match reste fermé et n'échange pas un mot avec aucun de nous. Il a été dominé tout le match par son adversaire direct.

Depuis mon année de terrain, ce playground est désormais devenu un ensemble de 3 terrains de beach volley où joue l'équipe de USC. Les joueurs des quartiers sud ont donc été chassés du campus par ces travaux.

Gym USC

C'est l'autre lieu où jouer au basketball sur le campus. Il y a 3 terrains côte à côte, en face de la salle de musculation des étudiants. Le matin, il n'y a personne, ou presque. Le soir, en revanche, les étudiants jouent de manière informelle. Pareil le week-end.

Les joueurs sont de toutes origines, mais on note une forte présence asiatique (liée à la politique de recrutement de USC).

Le jeu pratiqué est un mélange de jeu académique (pour le rythme) et de jeu libre (shoots en première intention). Lorsque j'y joue, les joueurs ne savent pas utiliser d'écrans ou en poser. Surtout, ils ne font pas de passes, et sont très surpris d'en recevoir. On m'identifie tout de suite comme « foreigner » par cette caractéristique.

En ce qui concerne la salle de musculation, le spectacle y est fascinant. Le rapport au corps des étudiants fait office de choc culturel. Les jeunes femmes font du vélo ou de la course à pied pour rester minces, et les jeunes hommes font de la musculation, essentiellement du haut du corps. En somme, ils tendent tous à la réalisation des canons de beauté qu'ils ont sous les yeux à longueur de journée, et qu'ils ont encore sous les yeux pendant leurs séances de sport. En effet, des écrans diffusent les chaînes sportives en boucle, et chacun dispose d'un écran sur sa machine (dans le cas des coureurs), navigant entre sport, séries tv et... chaînes culinaires... En somme, le gym est un lieu de standardisation des corps vers une hypermasculinité musculeuse ou une hyperfémininité vaporeuse, en accord avec les canons de beauté du moment. Par ailleurs, l'homoérotisation du lieu (des vestiaires à la salle de sport) est évidente, bien que latente, en particulier du côté des hommes, qui cultivent une fraternité virile, mais se dévisagent et se touchent les muscles en permanence (de grands miroirs courent le long des salles et permettent cette contemplation constante du corps en action).

Le spectacle le plus fascinant dans la perspective du rapport au corps réside dans le *combine*, moment de la *draft* NFL où les jeunes *prospects* réalisent une batterie de tests et exercices physiques sous l'objectif des caméras. Sans leur équipement, en débardeur, tous muscles dehors, les joueurs montrent leurs capacités physiques les uns après les autres. L'aspect « marché aux bœufs » est saisissant. Pourtant, le spectacle semble routinier pour les étudiants. Il fait même office de motivation pour certains.

Gym Hollywood

J'accompagne un ami dans une salle de fitness sur Hollywood boulevard où il y a un petit terrain intérieur. Le niveau de jeu est inégal mais intéressant (les équipes se font sans trop connaître le niveau, ce qui brasse les forces en présence). Le jeu est très physique (sans doute parce que pratiqué par des hommes qui sortent de la salle de musculation...). Il y a quelques shooteurs longue distance, mais le jeu est tourné vers le jeu intérieur et la lutte au rebond, ou alors sur les meneurs de jeu rapides.

L'ami que j'accompagne (blanc, 35 ans) a joué à un assez bon niveau en lycée. C'est un bon joueur, explosif, doté d'un bon shoot, mais surtout d'une bonne détente et de bonnes qualités en pénétration. Il domine les rencontres. Il est aussi ravi d'avoir trouvé un partenaire qui lui donne la balle, lui qui adore shooter.

L'ambiance est généralement très détendue, et le trash-talking de rigueur (on se chambre gentiment). En revanche, parfois, quelques débuts de bagarre éclatent, notamment sous les panneaux, où les joueurs sont tous très musculeux et puissants. Il y a aussi quelques débats interminables sur les décisions d'arbitrage (l'auto-arbitrage entraîne quelques abus, parfois, notamment chez les plus égoïstes des joueurs présents).

Les rencontres sont intenses, mais les joueurs ne se livrent pas trop non plus. Mes coéquipiers me sourient et m'adoptent très vite lorsque je plonge pour tenter de sauver un ballon. On m'explique avec le sourire, « we don't usually hustle that much! ». Aussi, à un autre moment, alors que je marque enfin un panier (après 3 ou 4 échecs) sur une passe de mon meneur de jeu de circonstance (afro-américain, 25 ans), celui-ci me lance, toujours avec le sourire, « About time, huh ? ». Ici, dans ces deux cas, le trash-talking devient contrat de complicité et d'adoption, comme sur le playground de USC. Durant la suite de la partie, on se cherche et se trouve les yeux fermés, une fois les premiers ratés du début de match. Puis à la fin, on se salue. « Good game ».

Le prix relativement bas de l'inscription (30\$/mois) fait qu'il semble y avoir une certaine mixité sociale.

The Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame (août 2010)

Dans le hall, le visiteur entend des bruits de chaussures de basket qui crissent sur un parquet, de ballon qui rebondit, de paniers marqués, de fans qui crient, ainsi que des commentaires célèbres de matchs. Il y a également des maillots de joueurs célèbres et des Harlem Globetrotters. Sur des écrans passent les résumés des Finales NBA des années 2000, jusqu'aux Finales 2010 (déjà historicisées à travers leur présence au sein du Hall of Fame).

Au dernier étage, sur un dôme, figurent des photos des personnalités entrées au Hall of Fame, « the Honor's Ring », avec la description des « stellar achievements of the game's legends and champions ». Pour entrer au musée, il faut être à la retraite depuis 5 ans et être « outstanding in (one's) chosen profession ». Au centre, un écran géant (similaire à ceux dans les salles NBA) passe des extraits des Finales du passé et des moments emblématiques.

1^e inductee : James Naismith (1959)

Original Celtics (1959) « playing with flair and strong fundamentals »

NY Renaissance (1963) : “one of the first true dynasties”, “the all-black NY Renaissance moved the ball around with such wizardry and deception that their opposition was often rendered helpless”, “Fancy-passing Rens barnstormed throughout the country making easy work of opponents”.

Red Auerbach (1969) : “the architect and mastermind behind one of the most dominant franchises in pro sports history”, “cigar-clamping Auerbach”, “aggressive, demanding, and often volatile on the bench”, “his coaching brilliance”.

Adolph F. Rupp (1969) : “The Baron of Bluegrass”

Bob Cousy (1970) : “The Houdini of the Hardwood”, “razzle-dazle ball-handling abilities”, “exceptional peripheral vision”, “outstanding, all-around player”, “one of the best playmakers ever”

Abe Saperstein (1971) : “masterful promoter and shrewd businessman”, “an all-black barnstorming team playing serious ball and dominating games”, “unique style of play” mixing “technical mastery with humor”, “sleight of hand and fun”.

Bill Russell (1975) : “Before Bill Russell brought his marvelous defensive and shot-blocking skills to basketball, the game focused primarily on offense”, “initiated a defensive mentality that remains a focal part of championship basketball”, “considered the greatest center in basketball history”, “turned the Boston Celtics into a powerful machine that overwhelms opponents both defensively and offensively”, “his battles with Wilt Chamberlain were legendary”.

Bill Sharman (1976) : “brought a disciplined work ethic to the game”.

Elgin Baylor (1977) : “One word: unstoppable”, “an innovative offensive force never before seen”, “tremendous body control and could suspend himself in the air”, “the man with 100 moves”, “first athlete to play above the rim”.

Wilt Chamberlain (1979) : “Big, strong, fearsome and determined”, “fantastic abilities”, “an offensive force that could singlehandedly take over a game”, “although his accomplishments were often credited to his tremendous size, Chamberlain was a talented athlete who possessed exceptional speed, agility, stamina and strength”.

Oscar Robertson (1980) : “The “Big O” could do it all”, “Robertson's offensive prowess changed the point guard stereotype from simply a passer and “floor general” to a scorer and offensive weapon”. (no mention of his role in free agency battles)

Jerry West (1980) : “on the fast track to stardom from the day he touched a basketball”, “Mr. Clutch”, “his cool, calm and collected personality and his leadership on the court were a coach's dream”.

Willis Reed (1982) : “It was a classic moment in basketball history when a courageous Willis Reed hobbled through the tunnel at Madison Square Garden, reemerging on the floor for game

seven of the 1970 Championship Series between the New York Knicks and Los Angeles Lakers”, “a physical inside player who battled heroically against the era's bigger and stronger players”.

Chuck Daly (1994) : “ability to take diverse personalities and create a harmonious, winning team”.

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar (1995) : “The world may never see an athlete dominate a sport for as long and as masterfully as Kareem Abdul-Jabbar”, “the 7'2 cerebral center established himself as one of the game's most talented and recognizable figures”, “his trademark skyhook”, “basketball's most classic and lethal offensive weapon”, “bringing finesse and agility to the center position”, “traits he substituted for brute force and strength”.

George Gervin (1996) : “smooth, graceful, creative, unstoppable”, “Iceman”.

Gail Goodrich (1996) : “intelligent, ball-handling skills and excellent court vision”.

David Thompson (1996) : “lightning quick moves, and explosive 44-inch vertical leap and a precise shooting touch”, “could grab a \$5 bill on top of the backboard”.

Larry Bird (1998) : “In 1979, when Larry Bird joined the Boston Celtics, he launched a new era in basketball, both in Beantown and throughout the NBA. Bird got his start in a small Indiana town, where he led Springs Valley High School to the state sectional championship. In 1979, Bird led Indiana State to the NCAA Championship Game. Turning pro at a time when the league and the Celtics needed a boost, Bird and fellow rookie sensation Magic Johnson rejuvenated the NBA world. Bird's court savvy, deft passing, and clutch shooting forever redefined the small forward position and turned the Celtics into winners”.

Marques Haynes (1998) : “one of the world's finest ballhandlers, flashed his style on court”, “became an internationally famous athlete and basketball entertainer. Haynes played in more than 12,000 games, traveled more than four million miles, and captivated fans in 97 countries around the globe. His dribbling style confused and confounded opponents and became one of the Globetrotters' most potent offensive weapons”.

Lenny Wilkens (1999) (no mention of his social impact)

Kevin McHale (1999) : “unstoppable array of low post moves”, “revolutionized pivot play”, “the Big 3 [with Bird and Parish], one of the greatest frontlines in basketball history”.

John Thompson (1999) : “strong will and even stronger commitment to his players”, “lives off the basketball court”.

Isiah Thomas (2000) : “known for his willingness to attack the basket. While his cool, collected demeanor masked an intense desire to win, he also brought scoring, passing, and flair to the game”, “brought prominence back to Detroit, making the Pistons one of the league's elite teams”, “the undisputed leader of the "Bad Boys””.

Moses Malone (2001) : “A modest citizen off the court, on the hardwood, Moses Malone was an aggressive and tenacious player”, “the first modern player to go straight from high school to professional basketball”, “despite his aggressive style, he played a record 1,212 games without a single disqualification”.

Harlem GlobeTrotters (2002) : In basketball's storied history, there may be no single organization more synonymous with the game than the world-famous Harlem Globetrotters. Originally formed from the Wendell Phillips High School, the team played in the Negro American Legion League as the "Giles Post," and in 1927 turned professional as the Savoy Big Five under manager Dick Hudson. Later that year, promoter and future Hall of Famer Abe Saperstein bought the team and re-named it the Harlem Globetrotters. Up until the late 1930s, the Globetrotters were a serious competitive team, and in 1940 won the prestigious World Professional Basketball Tournament in Chicago. With the acquisition of Inman Jackson in 1939, the Globetrotters began to work more light entertainment and comedic routines into their appearances. After World War II, the team became real "globetrotters," travelling the world and entertaining thousands”, “the Globetrotters became basketball ambassadors, bringing their showmanship and goodwill to millions. The team remains as popular as ever”.

Larry Brown (2002) : “he exudes the most pride and appreciation when he is referred to as a teacher of the game. In a remarkable coaching career that has spanned more than three decades, Brown has taught well”.

Earvin “Magic” Johnson (2002) : “few players in history have exhibited as much enthusiasm for basketball or displayed such an engaging personality both on-and-off the court as Earvin "Magic" Johnson. It was Johnson's incredible passion, coupled with his amazing skills that dazzled generations of fans and turned basketball into "Showtime." At 6-foot-9, Johnson was a point guard in a power forward's body. No player Johnson's size had ever done what he could do with a basketball and his incredible talents resulted in a national championship at Michigan State (1979) and five with the Los Angeles Lakers (1980, 1982, 1985, 1987, 1988). Throughout the 1980s, he turned the triple double - double figures in three statistical categories - into an art form”, “Johnson redefined the sphere of traditional position play because he could excel at every phase of the game. As a rookie in the 1980 NBA Finals, Johnson played all five positions - scored 42 points - and was named NBA Finals MVP”.

Drazen Petrovic (2002) : “Drazen Petrovic had such artistic skills on the basketball court that those who saw him play called him the "Mozart of the Parquet." An offensive force with limitless range on his perfectly-released jump shot and explosive moves to the hoop”, “a dominating player in international play”.

Earl F. Lloyd (2003) : “On the night of October 31, 1950, Earl Lloyd, a forward with the Washington Capitols, became the first African-American to play in a NBA game. From that moment, Lloyd would forever change how African-Americans would integrate into professional basketball. Lloyd's ability to conduct himself with grace, style and professionalism both on-and-off court during an era of segregation became the model for others to follow”, “a rugged power forward”, “known for his defensive play on the opponent's top scorer, rugged rebounding and effective offensive game”.

Robert Parish (2003) : “Robert Parish rarely showed his emotions on the court, but his play spoke volumes about his immense talent”.

James A. Worthy (2003) : “known as "Big Game James"”, “was at his best in the clutch and when the game was on the line”, “running the floor with speed and agility, he often finished a play with a swooping one-handed dunk. In the low-post, the versatile Worthy had an assortment of offensive moves that made him an unstoppable force”, “he was the ideal player for the Laker running game and post-up offensive style”, “matching teammate Magic Johnson stride for stride in Showtime lore”.

Charles Barkley (2006) : “A relentless and undersized power forward, Charles Barkley outplayed, outperformed, and outclassed opponents who regularly stood more than half a foot taller than him. His larger-than-life personality made Barkley one of the game's greatest characters while his hardnosed style of play made him pound-for-pound and inch-for-inch one of the game's greatest rebounders”, “capable of controlling the defensive rebound and dribbling the length of the court for a ferocious finish at the rim”.

Joe Dumars (2006) : “A pillar of sportsmanship and one of the NBA's greatest defensive players”, “he subsequently received the J. Walter Kennedy Citizenship Award for community involvement. A true leader in basketball circles, Dumars served as a mentor to NBA rookies and others for his classy demeanor and is the namesake for the NBA's sportsmanship award”.

Jacques Dominique Wilkins (2006) : “In the pantheon of basketball's greatest dunkers, Dominique Wilkins deserves mention alongside such legends as Elgin Baylor, Connie Hawkins, and the great Julius Erving. Wilkins was a high flyer who electrified fans with his trademark windmill dunk and all-out effort. Whether going through someone or over someone, the "Human Highlight Film" as he came to be known was an artist with grace, power, and purpose. His style battles fought above the rim with Michael Jordan were epic and left crowds begging for more”.

Phil Jackson (2007) : “Intellectual, spiritualist, maverick, athlete, coach - Phil Jackson is equal parts all five. But while Jackson was a modestly successful player in the NBA, it is as a coach that he leaves his footprint on the history of the game. Installing the complex triangle offense and

employing a coaching philosophy heavily influenced by Native American and Eastern philosophy, Jackson has been at the helm of not one, but two of the greatest dynasties in NBA history”.

Texas Western (2007) : “Playing with confidence, determination, and intensity, Texas Western made history on March 19, 1966 when the Miners became the first team in history to win the NCAA championship with five African-American players in the starting lineup. By beating an all-white Kentucky squad in the title game, 72-65, the Miners contributed to a sea change in intercollegiate athletics. Regarded by many as a key turning point in the civil rights movement in general and in the integration of college athletics in particular, the team's victory was seen as instrumental in transforming the history of college basketball. In the mid-1950s, Texas Western became the first college in a southern state to integrate its intercollegiate athletic teams. The highly publicized and inspirational 1966 championship game capped an amazing season for Texas Western”, “in 2006, forty years after the Miners captured the national title, the story was made into a major motion picture, the team visited the White House, and was honored at halftime of the 2006 NCAA national championship game”.

Hakeem Olajuwon (2008) : “A native of Nigeria, Hakeem Olajuwon came to America armed only with a dream and an extraordinary ability to learn the game of basketball. Blessed with soft hands, great balance, and flawless footwork gained from his days playing soccer and team handball as a boy, "Hakeem the Dream" played the better part of his career in his adopted home of Houston, Texas. He teamed with fellow Hall of Famer Clyde Drexler at the University of Houston where the Phi Slama Jama fraternity reigned supreme in college basketball”.

Pat Riley (2008) : “No matter the time or place, or circumstance or setting, Pat Riley knew how to win. He was a master of the X's and O's, skillful at adapting system to personnel, but his true strength was his innate ability to connect with players from any generation. The Riley mantra of hard work, discipline, and unselfish play resonated well with young players and veterans alike”, “the architect of a phenomenon known simply as Showtime, fast-breaking and no-look passing his Lakers into superstardom”.

Patrick Ewing (2008) : “In a city famous for its skyscrapers, Patrick Ewing was a towering figure in New York sports for fifteen memorable seasons. The 7-foot, 240-pound center was a force at Georgetown University”, “used a powerful combination of defense, rebounding, shot-blocking, and scoring to do battle with formidable opponents inside the paint. The Ewing arsenal included a virtually unstoppable baseline jumper that frustrated shot-blockers and thrilled fans”, “tremendous skill set”, “Playing in an era full of talented big men, Ewing's heart and determination set him apart from his contemporaries. He leaves a legacy as one of the most consistent and effective centers in basketball history”.

John Stockton (2009) : “His number is retired, a street in Salt Lake City is named for him, and there is a statue of his likeness outside the arena where he played his entire NBA career”, “a throwback player who brought his hard-nosed, all-business approach to every game he ever played. Stockton was “old school” in every sense and that style suited him well”, “the gritty Stockton”.

David Robinson (2009) : “Christened “The Admiral” at the US Naval Academy, David Robinson patrolled the lane like a mighty aircraft carrier for nearly twenty seasons”.

Michael Jordan (2009) : “Michael Jordan personified greatness on the court, and redefined superstar athlete off it. His freshman season at UNC culminated with Jordan hitting the game-winning shot in the 1982 NCAA national title game. That shot put Michael on the map and a new era was born”, “the young superstar began stockpiling NBA hardware. The court was his and the world soon followed. His unmistakable style – the wagging tongue, the baggy shorts, the signature line of sneakers – helped make the 14-time All-Star the most recognizable person on the planet”.

Vitrine dédiée à la promotion 2009 avec les chaussures de Michael Jordan.

Possibilité de regarder des films documentaires (*Hakeem the Dream, Jordan to the Max, NBA Guts and Glory*).

Sur le sol, traces de pas de joueurs (pour comparer la taille de pied).

Atelier « basketball around the world », commentaires radio de la saison 1945-46.

Possibilité de recréer des commentaires emblématiques en position de commentateurs :

Marv Albert, May 8, 1970: “Here comes Willis! And the crowd goes wild!”

Walter Ausley, April 4, 1983: “The Cinderella team has done it! The glass slipper fits!”

+ highlights classiques récentes.

Possibilité de regarder des matchs de légende :

28 février 1940, Pittsburgh vs. Fordham

Game of the Century, January 20, 1968, UCLA vs. Houston

Vidéo “NBA 50 Greatest Plays”

Parcours-musée “From Peach Basket to Glory”

Quand vidéo au sujet des débuts du basket-ball : ragtime

Quand vidéo au sujet des années 1950 : jazz

Madison Square Garden décrit comme « a shrine where history was made ».

Au sujet de l’intégration des joueurs noirs : “Only after World War II did blacks emerge as basketball stars and gain acceptance on college, Olympic and professional basketball teams”.

1957: Tennessee State, first all-black college to win a national title (NAIA)

1948: Don Barksdale, first African-American player to play on an Olympic team

Harlem Globetrotters originellement de Chicago

Dans un match en 1939, l’équipe mène 112-5, “began to clown around”.

Dunk prohibited from 1969 to 1976 at the NCAA level.

The Magic/Bird National Championship game gathered the biggest national audience ever. “That single game led to the growth of March Madness Final Four, which is now as important as the Super Bowl, the World Series or the NBA Finals”.

“The 1950s/1960s Celtics were the epitome of basketball excellence”, achieved “stellar performances”.

Basketball was the sport of the 1970s, but the rivalry between the ABA and the NBA didn’t help the sport capitalize on its success.

“Red, White and Blue”: “With its red, white and blue basketball, colorful characters and innovative game, the ABA provided fans with an exciting, unpredictable alternative to the NBA. It had a major effect on how the very modern basketball is played”.

“Lights, Camera, Action!”: “In the 1970s, players like Dr. J and Nate Archibald set the stage for the electrifying style of basketball that later overtook professional basketball. In the 1980s, Isiah Thomas’ ball handling, George “Iceman” Gervin’s scoring, Moses Malone’s rebounding and the epic battles between Larry Bird and Magic Johnson helped revitalize interest in the game”.

“Going beyond the Rim”: “During the 1990s, Michael Jordan’s emergence as an international icon, and the phenomenal success of the US Olympic Dream Team, helped raise the game and those who played it to a new level. Players became media stars in the United States and around the world. New technologies made the game even more accessible”.

The Dream Team led the game “to maximum exposure”.

March Madness & Cinderella Stories

The Game through the Media

“The press coverage provided the foundation for the game’s later growth”.

Coach's Corner (bios, stratégies)

John Wooden: "It's what you learn after you know it all that counts".

Clair Bee: "Play as a team and eliminate all thoughts of personal glory".

Bob Knight: "Everyone wants to win, but not everyone is willing to prepare to win".

John Wooden: "What you are as a person is far more important than what you are as a basketball player".

Bob Knight: "The will to win is grossly overrated. The will to prepare is far more important".

Pat Riley: "There are only two options regarding commitment: You're either in or out. There's no such thing as life in-between."

Chuck Daly: "As a coach, you learn all you can about your players – what motivates them, who they're close to, all those things".

Red Auerbach: "If you want to be a champion, you've got to feel like one, you've got to act like one, you've got to look like one".

Lenny Wilkens: "Winning makes *everyone* a star".

"Become Legendary: The Story of Michael Jordan"

Actions esthétiques avec ralentis.

Clip vidéo : "Love Is... Playing every game like it's your last / Taking the air less travelled / Your first / Realizing not to quit your day job / Playing with nothing but heart /..." mettant en scène Jordan et les tableaux de sa legend.

Exposition consacrée à l'histoire de l'équipe olympique américaine de basketball

"USA Basketball: The Colors of a Nation Worn with Pride"

Drapeau américain géant fait de baskets Nike aux couleurs du drapeau...

"1936: The Games of the XI Olympiad. Germany. The 3rd Reich. Jesse Owens. Basketball".

"1972: USSR Outlasts USA".

"1992: Magic and Michael and Larry. Charles and Scottie and Patrick. Stockton to Malone. The Admiral and the Glide".

"The 1992 Olympic Games gave the World the Dream Team, that star-studded lineup of the greatest basketball players on the planet. The Americans waltzed through the tournament beating opponents by an average of 44 points on the way to the gold medal, but the final score mattered far less than the style and grace with which the NBA superstars turned men into boys. Nothing symbolized the magnitude of this phenomenon more than members of opposing teams clamored for autographs and pictures before tip-off. Chuck Daly, the man charged with keeping the troops in line, vowed never to call a timeout, never to stand and pace, and never to miss a tee time on the road to gold. He kept his promise."

"After a disappointing bronze medal finish in 2004, the US had officially been knocked off its lofty Olympic perch. Looking to the 2008 Olympics, the Americans assembled a team of players whose skills complemented each other on the court, and instituted a three-year commitment as a prerequisite to join the team.

In Beijing, the "Redeem Team" cruised through group play with an average margin of victory of 32.3 points, setting up a final game against Spain that was much closer than the 118-107 score indicated. The win secured the United States' first Olympic gold medal in 8 years, and after the game, coach Mike Krzyzewski said the team's close bond made the difference. In the victory, five players averaged double digit in scoring – led by Dwyane Wade's 16 points per game – which meant that the US was a team in every sense of the word, and back on top again."

"August 24, 2008: Mission Accomplished

USA Reclaimed the Gold Medal.

Witness Gold"

Le but du musée est multiple. Il permet d'éduquer les fans de toutes générations à l'histoire du basket-ball telle que le Hall of Fame veut la construire. C'est donc une histoire relativement édulcorée, « corporately correct », et faite pour créer du lien entre les générations. C'est aussi une véritable expérience américaine, accentuée par l'exposition sur Team USA, qui est une célébration de l'Amérique et de sa domination sur le monde... du basket.

Les leçons de vie des coachs sont à lire comme des leçons de vie générales. Cela renforce la démarche d'éducation morale par le sport. Le musée est un parfait exemple d'expérience d'edutainment. L'un des symboles de cette démarche est la salle finale, le terrain de basket du Hall of Fame, qui a différents paniers sur le côté, qui correspondent aux différentes formes adoptées par le panier de basket à travers l'histoire – un autre moyen de créer un lien intergénérationnel tout en jouant.

Aussi, au sujet des descriptifs des différents membres du Hall of Fame, les petits textes, tout en étant tous relativement mélioratifs, laissent entrevoir l'identité construite de chaque joueur, ainsi que l'identité de jeu (Textbook/Schoolyard). Il serait intéressant de confronter le public à ces textes de manière aveugle et de voir s'il peut identifier la couleur de peau du joueur.



Photo 1 : Statue de Michael Jordan – United Center, Chicago



Photo 2 : Statue de Michael Jordan – United Center, Chicago



Photo 3 : Statue de Magic Johnson – Staples Center, Los Angeles



Photo 4 : Statue de Kareem Abdul-Jabbar et Magic Johnson – Staples Center, Los Angeles



Photo 5 : Bannières de champion des Lakers – Staples Center



Photo 6 : Maillots retirés des légendes des Lakers – Staples Center

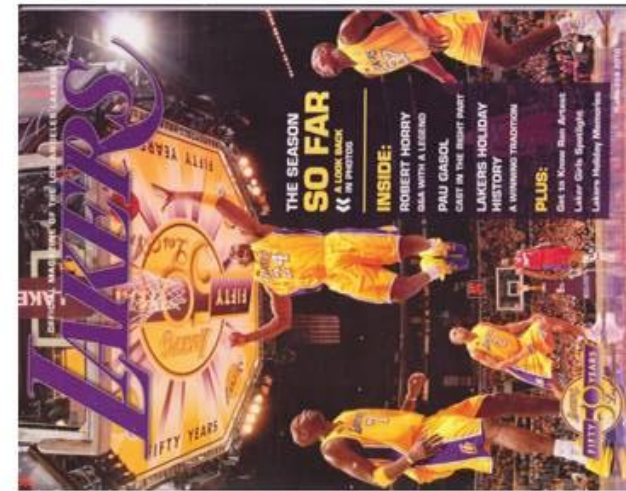


Photo 7 : Les Clippers « représentent » L.A. – Staples Center

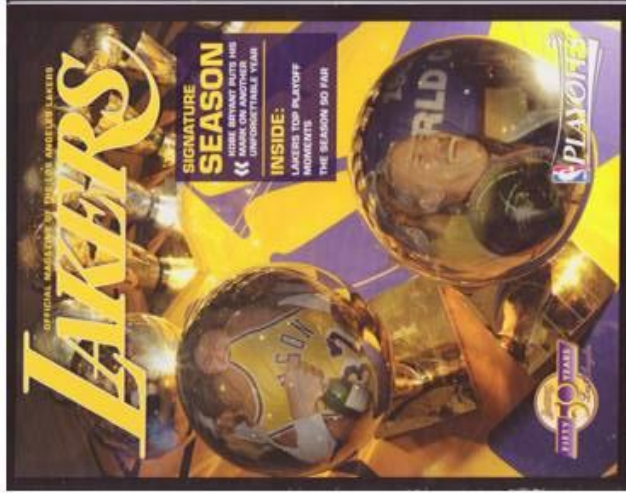


Photo 8 : Hymne américain avant un match des Lakers – Staples Center

**Construite une identité victorieuse,
entre passé et présent**



Lakers, Official Magazine of the Los Angeles Lakers, jan-fev.2010



Lakers, Official Magazine of the Los Angeles Lakers, Playoffs 2010



Exemples de billets pour des matchs des Lakers, Saison 2009/2010

Le All-Star Weekend comme une opportunité pour la NBA de soigner son image de marque



NBA All-Star 2011 Los Angeles, Commemorative Program, Official All-Star Rosters, Statistics and Records
Avec un volet spécial dédié à l'initiative « NBA Cares »

Le Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame
Lieu de mémoire et de mise en récit de l'histoire du basket-ball



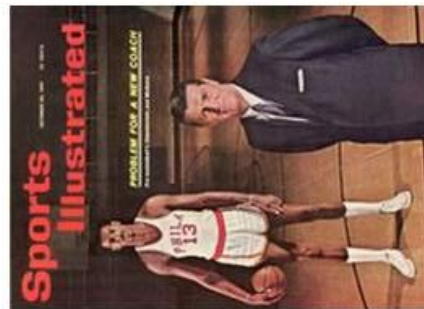
Photo 9 : Le Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame – Springfield, Massachusetts



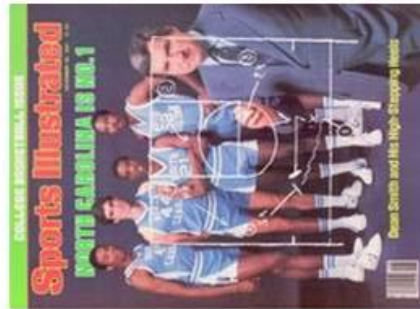
Photo 10 : Logo du Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame

Annexe n° 3 :
NBA, image et storytelling : l'exemple des couvertures de *Sports Illustrated*¹

La figure du coach



Wilt Chamberlain
et Frank McGuire
SI - 30 octobre 1961



Dean Smith et ses joueurs de NCU
SI - 30 novembre 1981



John Wooden
SI - 14 juin 2010



Mike Krzyzewski et Jabari Parker
SI - 24 février 2014

¹

<http://www.si.com>

The Doctor: De la ABA à la NBA



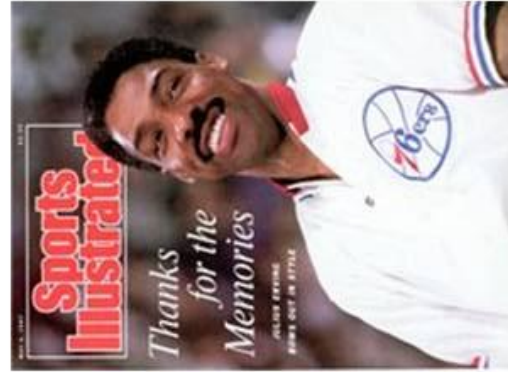
Dr. J, symbole du jeu moderne
SI - 14 janvier 1974



Dr. J, la silhouette de la ABA
SI - 17 mai 1976

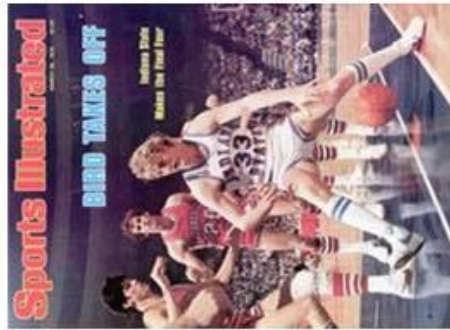


Dr. J dunks sur Boston et la NBA
SI - 31 mai 1982



La 1^{ère} star crossover du jeu
SI - 4 mai 1987

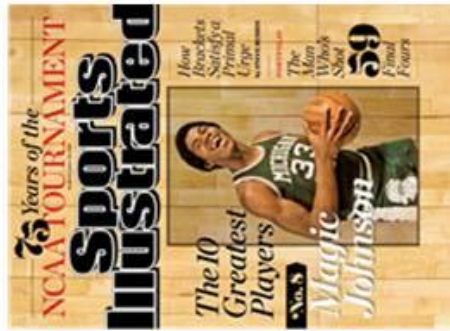
Bird vs. Magic: The Early Years



Le décollage de Bird
SI – 26 mars 1979



Bird, 5^e meilleur joueur de
l'histoire du NCAA Tournament
SI – 6 mars 2013



Magic, 8^e meilleur joueur de
l'histoire du NCAA Tournament
SI – 6 mars 2013



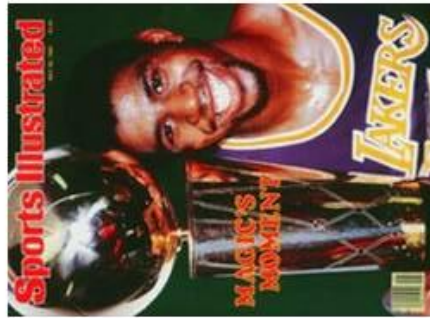
Le Show Magic porte Michigan State
jusqu'au titre NCAA
SI – 2 avril 1979



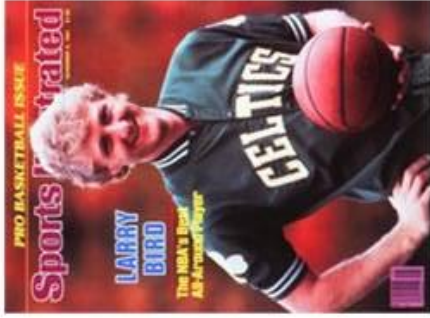
Magic, le Showman
SI – 27 novembre 1978



Le shoot de Bird face à Dr. J
SI – 28 avril 1980

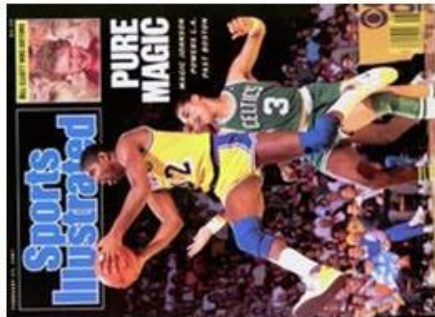


Magic brille et gagne son 1^{er} titre
SI – 26 mai 1980

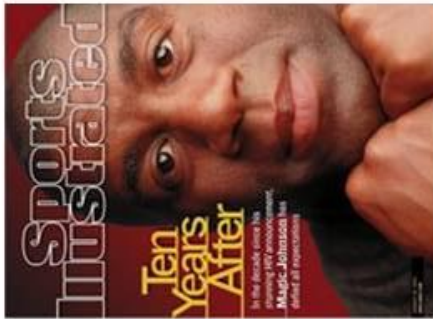


Bird, joueur le plus complet
de la NBA
SI – 9 novembre 1981

Bird vs. Magic



La magie Magic, encore et toujours
SI - 23 février 1987



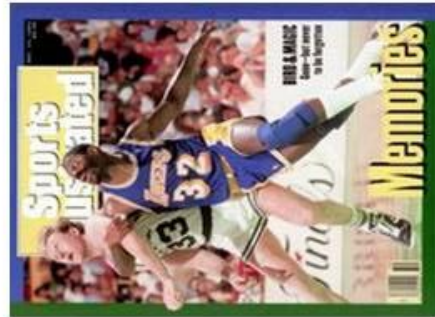
Magic et son combat contre le HIV
SI - 20 août 2001



Comment vivre sans Larry?
SI - 23 mars 1992



Coach Larry Bird
SI - 27 octobre 1997

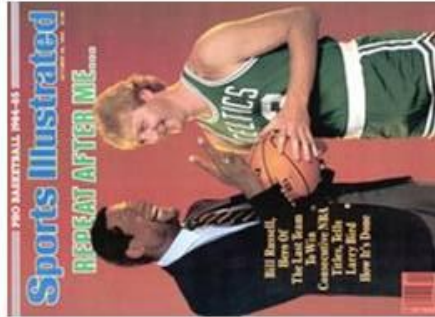


Nostalgie à peine les héros à la retraite
SI - 14 décembre 1992

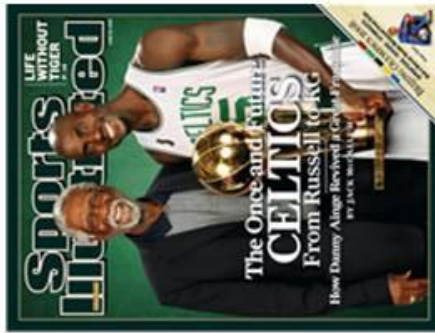
Celtics vs. Lakers: Clash of Dynasties



La légendaire fierté des Celtics
SI – 8 juin 1987



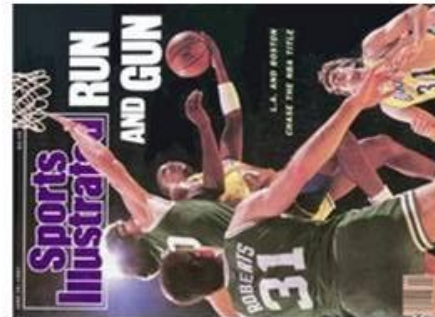
La victoire en héritage
SI – 29 octobre 1984



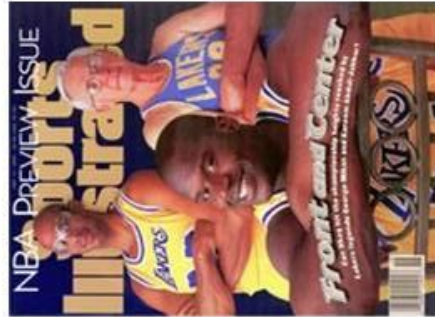
La victoire en héritage, toujours
SI – 30 juin 2008



Retour à la gloire
SI – 1^{er} juillet 2008



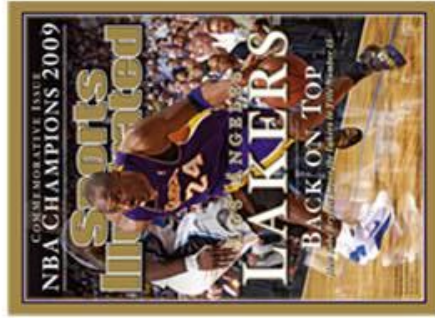
Le jeu rapide et spectaculaire
des Lakers
SI – 15 juin 1987



Une tradition de pivots dominants
SI – 11 novembre 1996



Le Show en héritage
SI – 27 avril 1998



Retour au sommet
SI – 23 juin 2009

**The Lakers/Celtics Rivalry,
Same Old, Same Old**



Rêve d'un nouveau duel,
Playoffs 2008
SI - 21 avril 2008

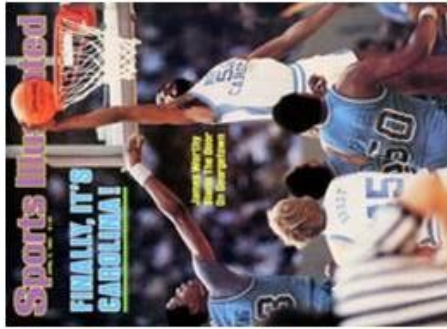


Le retour de la plus grande
des rivalités
SI - 9 juin 2008



Duel Bryant/Pierce, Finales '08
SI - 16 juin 2008

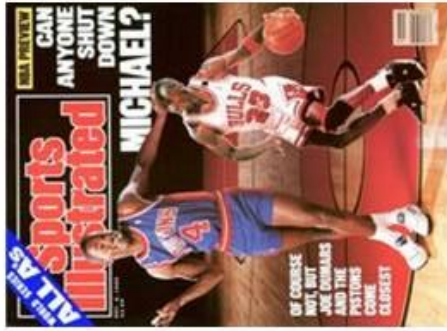
Michael Jordan



James Worthy en couverture pour la victoire de North Carolina
SI - 5 avril 1982



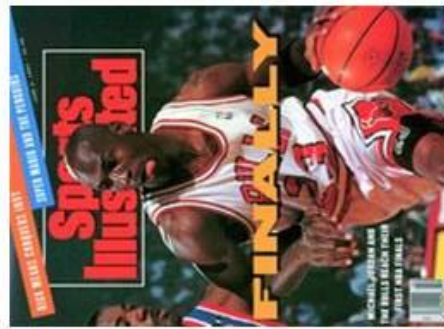
Une star est né,
Jordan brille lors de sa saison rookie
SI - 10 décembre 1984



Les Pistons, seuls à pouvoir contenir Jordan
SI - 6 novembre 1989



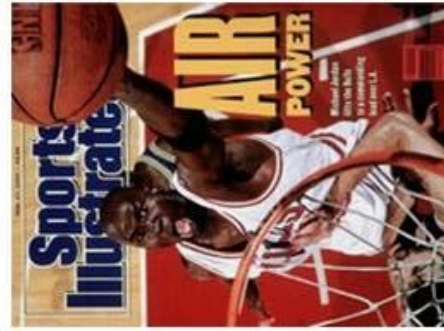
Les Air Jordans, bijoux du ghetto
SI - 14 mai 1990



Jordan passe enfin l'obstacle Detroit
SI - 3 juin 1991



Jordan et Johnson, Finales '91
SI - 10 juin 1991



Jordan prend le pouvoir sur la NBA
SI - 17 juin 1991



Jordan vs. Barkley, Finales '93
SI - 21 juin 1993

Michael Jordan, suite



Jordan fait son retour
SI - 27 mars 1995



Duel de Titans entre Jordan et O'Neal
SI - 22 mai 1995



Arrêter Jordan et les Bulls, impossible pour Seattle (Finale '96)
SI - 10 juin 1996



La Dynastie Jordan remporte les Finales '97
SI - 23 juin 1997



Jordan et les Bulls poussés dans leurs retranchements, ECF '98
SI - 8 juin 1998



Jordan au sommet, Finales '98
SI - 10 juin 1991



Le dernier titre, le dernier tir
SI - 22 juin 1998

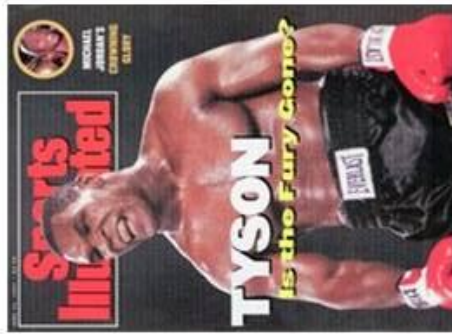


15 ans après, la légende perdure
SI - 18 février 2013

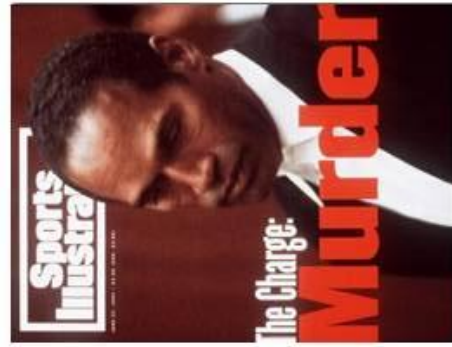
Bad Boys, Signifying Bodies



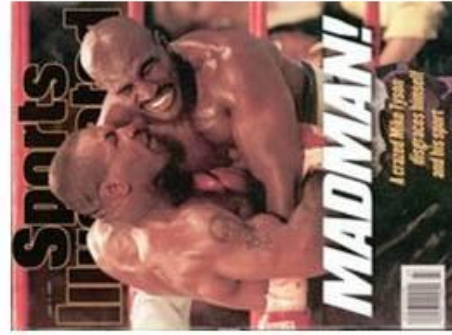
Mike Tyson, champion poids lourd de la fin des années 1980
SI - 4 juin 1988



La fureur Tyson
SI - 24 juin 1991



Le procès d'OJ Simpson
SI - 27 juin 1994



Tyson mord Holyfield
SI - 7 juillet 1997



L'excentrique Dennis Rodman
SI - 29 mai 1995



Allen Iverson, pas si mauvais garçon
SI - 9 mars 1998



L'idylle Iverson/Larry Brown
SI - 23 avril 2001

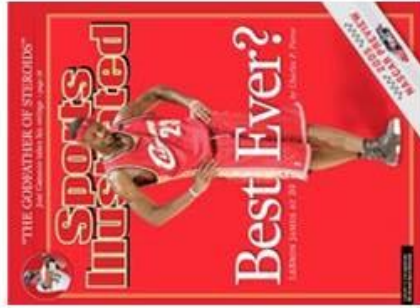


Charles Barkley « se déchaîne »
SI - 11 mars 2002

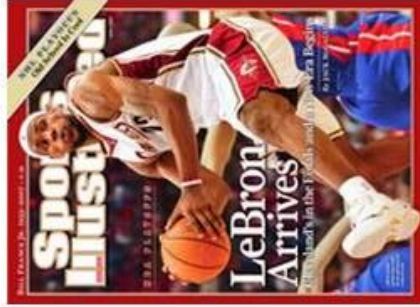
LeBron James



L'Élu
SI – 18 février 2002



Meilleur joueur de tous les temps ?
SI – 21 février 2005



James entre sur parmi les Grands
Et joue ses 1^{res} Finales
SI – 11 juin 2007



L'épiphanie de LeBron et son
mea culpa par rapport à 2011
SI – 30 avril 2011



Le Roi James, champion,
reçu et corrigé
SI – 2 juillet 2012



James élu sportif de l'année 2012
SI – 10 décembre 2012

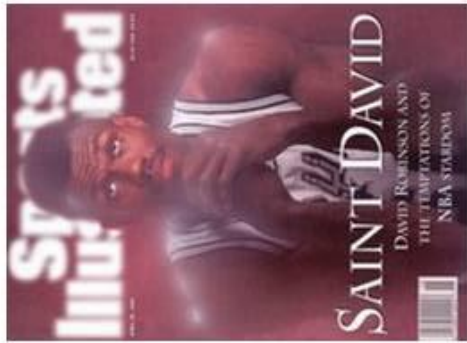


L'instant MJ de LeBron, décisif
dans le match 7 des Finales 2013
SI – 1^{er} juillet 2013



« Je rentre à la maison »
SI – 21 juillet 2014

**San Antonio Spurs,
Unappealing Heroes?**



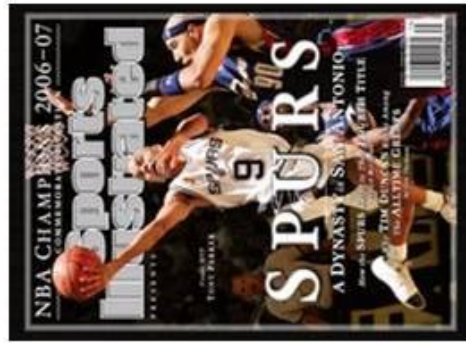
David Robinson, Mr. Nice Guy
SI – 29 avril 1996



L'efficacité des Spurs vient à bout
du style flashy des Lakers
SI – 31 mai 1999



La dynastie silencieuse
SI – 25 juin 2007



Tony Parker en couverture
pour le titre de 2007
SI – 27 juin 2007



Duncan-Ginobili-Parker
Trio le plus victorieux de l'histoire
SI – 10 juin 2013



Le titre 2014, une œuvre d'art
SI – 23 juin 2014

Annexe n°4 :
Communautés et expérience de fan aux États-Unis :
L'exemple du fan des Lakers



(Source : Étude de terrain, 2009-2015 ;
Réal. : DESCAMPS, Y, 20015)

Annexe n° 5 : NBA Player Dress Code²
Tel que publié sur le site nba.com – 20 Octobre 2005
(annoncé le 17 octobre 2005 par David Stern)

1. General Policy: Business Casual

Players are required to wear Business Casual attire whenever they are engaged in team or league business.

"Business Casual" attire means

- A long or short-sleeved dress shirt (collared or turtleneck), and/or a sweater.
- Dress slacks, khaki pants, or dress jeans.
- Appropriate shoes and socks, including dress shoes, dress boots, or other presentable shoes, but not including sneakers, sandals, flip-flops, or work boots.

2. Exceptions to Business Casual

There are the following exceptions to the general policy of Business Casual attire:

a. Players In Attendance At Games But Not In Uniform

Players who are in attendance at games but not in uniform are required to wear the following additional items when seated on the bench or in the stands during the game:

- Sport Coat
- Dress shoes or boots, and socks

b. Players Leaving the Arena

Players leaving the arena may wear either Business Casual attire or neat warm-up suits issued by their teams.

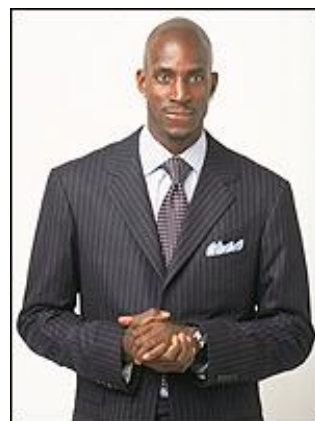
c. Special Events or Appearances

Teams can make exceptions to the Business Casual policy for special events or player appearances where other attire is appropriate -- e.g., participation in a basketball clinic.

3. Excluded Items

The following is a list of items that players are not allowed to wear at any time while on team or league business:

- Sleeveless shirts
- Shorts
- T-shirts, jerseys, or sports apparel (unless appropriate for the event (e.g., a basketball clinic), team-identified, and approved by the team)
- Headgear of any kind while a player is sitting on the bench or in the stands at a game, during media interviews, or during a team or league event or appearance (unless appropriate for the event or appearance, team-identified, and approved by the team)
- Chains, pendants, or medallions worn over the player's clothes
- Sunglasses while indoors
- Headphones (other than on the team bus or plane, or in the team locker room)



Kevin Garnett has always looked good in suit and tie.

Jennifer Pottheiser/NBAE/Getty

²² http://www.nba.com/news/player_dress_code_051017.html

Annexe n° 6 :
Les liens entre le hip-hop et le basket-ball³

1/ Le basket-ball dans les textes de Public Enemy

Chuck D/*Flavor Flav/Ensemble*

« Rebel Without a Pause » (*It Takes a Nation*, 1988)

Attitude - when I'm on fire
Juice on the loose - electric wire
Simple and plain - give me the lane
I'll throw it down your throat like Barkley

« Air Hoodlum » (*Greatest Misses*, 1992)

Risin' up in the 'Velt Strong Island New York
The hood in case you did not know my base
There was a ballplayer who had all the skills
Wit' the pill to pay the piper, plus all the bills
Mick his first name, Mack the awesome game
Practiced in the heat, in the rain or in pain
Mick so quick, at six foot six,
Down to be picked by anyone but the Celtics
Oh what a handle could score from the floor
With people bangin' on him, or even hangin' on him
But what he did best, above all the rest was...
"A player that can leap, with the best of them"
"As a high school standout..."
"The skywalker himself!"
"I felt, he could do, to make this an effective basketball team"
Grades nine and ten, Mickey Mack was all that
But in class his ass sat way in the back
How I know, cause I know, I used to flow wit' the bro
He didn't mind I used to read him his own headline
'Cause he could not read 'em his school wouldn't need 'em
If the lines wouldn't went like this
Mickey Mack jumped over the candlestick
His stack was his stats but his D was still wack
Grades eleven and twelve he found the wrong clientele and all
During class, he would dribble in the hall
But never got in trouble in school, but the trouble was
It was cool if your brain was just another bubble
As long as he could score fiddy-two
Get thirty-three rebounds, fuckin' around
Temas lost to him he went right through 'em
Division, county, state, that's three count 'em
Championships for a small town bro

³ JAH, Yusuf, ed.. *Chuck D: Lyrics of a Rap Revolutionary*. Beverly Hills, Offda Books, 2007, 416 p..
<http://publicenemy.com>
<http://uproxx.com/dimemag/2013/11/50-greatest-basketball-references-hip-hop/>

That's bound to go pro
 "He gets free, turn on the jumper, good!"
 "Streak of lightning when he breaks loose..."
 "We all felt in our hearts we could win this ballgame"
 "They just required me to have the game that I did
 I'm just... that's all I that's all I that's all I can say"
 "That's all I can say"
 "He hauled down fifteen rebounds, and kept the ball away from everybody"
 "Then he had a triple double!"
 "A-a-a sensational player..."
 SAT's didn't matter 'cause he was all that
 You know the pat on the back
 He was always in the news you gotta know what it means
 It means revenue, and I'm tellin' you
 I saw cars and G's come to our school please
 Approach Hell with the principal, where's the coach
 Went to college four years wit' a scholarship...
 ... And won the championship
 But when it came to his life he didn't care...
 ... 'Cause he took it to the air.
 "Cross and a hook, he scores, he's fouled!"
 "From the far corner, breaks West and here's the jumper, good!!"
 "There's the jumper, it's not gonna go, rebound batted back..."
 The fall began when Mickey Mack fell
 Hell ripped his knee drafted last by personnel
 Oh how he loved the game, it was fantastic
 Until he was cut, and couldn't stick
 Times got tighter and tighter
 He had an attitude, was rude, so he turned into a fighter
 School wouldn't give him the job that he needed
 Assistant to the assistant coach, they didn't need it
 Then he resorted to a stick up kid
 Ski-mask and gat, but this game he wasn't good at
 And the drugs on the side
 Police ambushed his ride (gunfire) another homicide
 He was over, ghost y' know
 Hometown hero, but now a zero
 To those hypocrites who ripped him blind
 For his skills without the will to develop his mind
 Forever in the news the community views him
 Only as Air Hoodlum
 "I don't understand it, the kid coulda been another Jordan!"

Public Enemy – *He Got Game* soundtrack (1998)

He Got Game

(...) If man is the father, the son is the center of the earth
 In the middle of the universe, then why
 Is this verse comin' six times rehearsed?
 Don't freestyle much but I write 'em like such (*Word*)
 Amongst the fiends controlled by the screens
 What does it all mean all this shit I'm seein'?

Human beings screaming vocal javelins
 Sign of the local nigga unravelling
 My wanderin' got my ass wondering
 Where Christ is in all this crisis
 Hating Satan never knew what nice is
 Check the papers while I bet on ices
 More than your eye can see and ears can hear
 Year by year all the sense disappears
 Nonsense perseveres, prayers laced with fear
 Beware, two triple O is near
It might feel good
It might sound a little somethin'
But damn the game if it don't mean nuttin'
What is game? Who is game?
Where's the game in life behind the game behind the game
I got game, she's got game
We got game, they got game, he got game
It might feel good
It might sound a little somethin'
But fuck the game if it ain't sayin' nuttin'
 Damn, was it something I said?
 Pretend you don't see so you turn your head
 Ray scared of his shadow, does it matter?
 For the reparations got him playin' with the population
 Nothin' to lose, everything's approved
 People used, even murders excused (*You preach to 'em yo*)
 White men in suits don't have to jump
 Still a thousand and one ways to lose with his shoes
 God takes care of old folks and fools
 While the devil takes care of makin' all the rules
 Folks don't even own themselves
 Payin' mental rent, to corporate presidents (*My man my man*)
 Ugh, one outta million residents
 Bein' dissident, who ain't kissin' it
 The politics of chains and whips
 Got the sickness and chips and all the championships
 What's Love Got To Do with what you got
 Don't let the weight get to your head or lost to your heart (*Word*)
 Nonsense perseveres, prayers laced with fear
 Beware, two triple O is near
Yeah that's right
Everybody got game
But we just here to let y'all know
That PE, is in full effect, from right now till the year 2000
Aiyo my man sing it
 [Stephen Stills] There's something happening here (*Yeah yeah*)
 What it is ain't exactly clear
 There's a man, with a gun over there (*Yeah that's right hahaha*)
 Tellin' me, I got to beware
 It's time we stop, children what's that sound?
 Everybody look what's goin' down
 (*Aiyo, I don't think they heard you Stevie*)

Kick it to 'em again one more time)
It's time we stop, children what's that sound?
Everybody look what's goin' down
Haha, that's right boy, PE in full effect boy to the year 2000 yo
Stop, look, what's that sound
Everybody knows what's goin' down
Come on sing it
Sing it again y'all come on
Hey!
He-hey!!!
Aiyo, these are some serious times that we're livin' in G
And a new world order is about to begin, y' know whut I'm sayin'?
Now the question is - are you ready, for the real revolution
Which is the evolution of the mind?
If you seek then you shall find that we all come from the divine
You dig what I'm sayin'?
Now if you take heed to the words of wisdom
That are written on the walls of life
Then universally, we will stand and divided we will fall
Because love conquers all, you understand what I'm sayin'?
This is a call to all you sleepin' souls
Wake up and take control of your own cipher
And be on the lookout for the spirit snipers
Tryin' to steal your light, y' know whut I'm sayin'?
Look withinside yourself, for peace
Give thanks, live life and release
You dig me? You got me?

Unstoppable (feat. KRS One)

[KRS-One]

You better ask yourself
What do you want, what do you need, what will you find
Don't be afraid, don't fall asleep, open your mind
I hope this rhyme gets you in time and space, come to a different place
Where you hear spiritual lyrical knowledge and you're face to face
Like welfare, and these rappers lyrics they need help there
Does KRS represent heaven? Hell yeah
Let me take you elsewhere, where you stand, there's a curse there
For sure, unless you're mature, grow up
If you're immature, then you're livin' sinister
You reject the words of the minister
You better get witcha Qu'Ran or Bible, you won't be livin' long
if you're livin' idol, the T'cha, that's my title
Shakin' it up, wakin' it up, makin' it up, breakin' it up
Takin' it up higher, no liar, you can't deny the
Public Enemy, with the public enema
I gets way up in your buttocks, I rocks cause it's hip-hop
The long-laster, Chuck D with BlastMurderer
I know you heard of the word I be swervin' and servin' ya
Alertin' ya, while splurtin' a divine speech
Slow the party down so I can spit it
To each I teach mystic lyric, don't stop, you can get it

You better hear it. Battle? Quit it!
 [Chuck D] Unstoppable, Public Enemy on a disc
 [KRS-One] Unstoppable
 [Griff] Runnin' the game, Chuck and Kris
 [KRS-One] Unstoppable, bet you didn't know they had grip
 [Together] Unstoppable
 [Chuck D] You don't wanna take this risk
 [Chuck D] Unstoppable, Public Enemy on a disc
 [Together] Unstoppable
 [KRS-One] You don't wanna take the risk!
 [Chuck D]
 Can the black hear his stepchild, run the mile
 Forever like a juvenile, to stay alive
 Survivin' in the freestyle, yo' hold it down
 Walkin' on the wild side, to live or die
 Damn another slow song
 Yo' Money put the record back the FUCK on
 No respect for the Usual Suspects, mad teens
 Pourin' fire on the gasoline, defeat fiends
 Feelin' like fever, I'm gettin' warm
 Chalk marks in the rainstorm, children of the gone
 Lost and forgotten, minds rotten
 The arcade shot 'em, Channel Zero on the TV got 'em
 If you don't love yourself you can't love nobody
 If you don't know yourself, then you nobody
 Do your thing, no bang, in the same damn gang
 I never sang, I'm back, but I transmit slang
 Silence in the face of violent crews
 My rhymes and news be blacker than most blues
 Troublin', it all come tumblin', for the strugglin'
 Occupations, daily operations stimulations
 Causin' mental violations, minds on vacation
 In the middle of Revelation is a nation (...)

« **Is Your God a Dog?** »

Crosstown traffic black to black you shoulda seen her
 Long and winding road to the arena
 Crystal ball I prophesized what was on the horizon
 And forewarned y'all is it any wonder
 What kind of ground you goin' under?
 A September ender to March madness, remember?
 You never heard a murder take it for example
 Unsolved mystery life lost in a funk sample
 Enter the bandwagons braggin' hangin' banners
 Clearin' the way for younger MCs and new Hammers
 What was criticized six years back is now back
 With New York on the Jersey Front and back
 Feel like Tiger Woods got mad good
 Way up from the cheap seats comin' outta the hood
 Race to the black seats amongst the wack seats
 Be the hardcore alongside the deadbeats
 The world lookin' on like spectators at crucified gladiators

And playing hate like alligators
 Feels like a jungle inside where fish swim and birds fly
 Man got a tendency to die, man falls to the hands of man
 But damn if I'll ever try to survive at courtside
 Four tickets to fly rap or play ball do the game
 Or duck the drive by
Idols in the sky, look at how they die
Right before your eyes, realize
Is your Lord a God?
Or is your God a dog?
 (...) Same league that defends be the same ones that do us in
 Spys, C.I.A , F.B.I and them suits up in that corporate sky
 Eye for an eye the target is the bad guy
 Heard the war is on from the announcin'
 Bound to get the crowd bouncin'
 Yes and it counts and in this corner representin' the
 Best in the West, died from four bullets two in the chest
 Worshipped on the other side off TV sets
 Had mad fans comin' outta both sex
 Sold, multi-platinum eight times gold
 But died of homicide twenty five years old
 Heard he died in debt too I ain't seen a winner yet, you?
 The confused crowd booed the whole crew
 In that corner number one in the East
 The peace cursed for life by the mark of the beast
 Raised by peeps rode jeeps deep in Brooklyn beats
 Praised as a hero who came up off the streets
 The crowd looks on claimin' sides they don't own
 A house built up on their skulls and them bones
 Knew it be a matter of time the play by play
 Two main rappers slain so let us pray
 (...) With all the gunnin' crowd goin' crazy
 Gettin' bigger proud to be called a bunch of bitches and niggas
 The ghetto, stage fulla field nigga goals
 Hip hop shootouts verses those house negros
 Five bodies got on the shot clock runnin' down in the count
 Made the scoreboard rock the referees the L.A.P.D
 The L.V.P.D said they couldn't catch what they could not see
 Question, was it bigger than the names?
 Not only in the game?
 But the game behind the game
 Down to the remaining seconds of this record
 Anatomy of a murder, intensity of a mystery
 Dead and gone as the heads looked on helpless
 As the atmosphere was preyed on investigating
 And the winners be Interscope, UNI , Arista, BMG
 Lost in overtime the tombstone trophies for the people that cried
 And the rhymes that died, the beats that deceased
 May the best rest in peace (...)

« **House of the Rising Son** »

Look around
What do you see
Can you see what I can see
Hard to live without we
Catchin' hell without he
Phenomenons, phenoms and prodigies - huh
20,000 maniacs just gotta be
Human highlight flicks
They wanna be
Hobbies turned to robberies
They killin' me
The gun didn't know I was loaded
Devil attempts to get heroes railroaded
Stole the ball from lost souls
For whom the final bell tolls
Confused wit' Moses in street clothes
I suppose he the one wit' cornrows
Blessed to do this
Outside J
Do you know the way to the ABA?
One on one
He just begun
Come to the house
Of the rising son
I ain't one of these
Programmed cats
Just off the black
Where the shot clock at
Don't back me if I come
Wit' milky raps
Smack me if I rhyme on
Silky tracks
Takes a nation to get back - huh
Mike sometimes the opposite
Of watcha like
I'm tired of taps within
Sometimes your brain's your cell
Prisons the skin you in
Gettin' change beyond the point
Blank range
Combined wit' the cross it's gettin' over strange
Here comes the son
But who's gonna stop
The rain

Game Face

Hey yo, Chuck, yo the world if sleepin', G
We got to wake everybody up yo
Hey yo, it's goin' down, baby
Let everybody know how it's goin' down, baby
The way this goes down is simple, from this day forth

Anything to deal with rap, *Stay off!*
It's just the players, no pay offs, strictly skills (*uh*)
If your brain's the same you'll stick to your deals
And this field ain't about sellin' a mil'
With the run of the mill, so just be tellin' the real
It ain't like a third time fella's appeal
'Til the God scolds him and tells him to deal
I'll allow you to write, maybe allow you to bite
If you're down to fight the power *here's the power to fight*
Overpower the mic, hit the crowd with the bomb diggy
Ring the alarm, now the squads with me
From way back I show now weakness when I speak this
Mentally strong to keep this hit in my speeches given
Now listen from the beginnin' 'til I reach the endin'
My short stories winnin' and keep the beats spinnin'
You know the name, P.E.!
You know the game, P.E.!
We ain't for the game
We for the change
I wake up everyday with my game face on
(...) Break harder than ever, follow my lead
Through the fast lane in the game, they follow my speed
Either ease off the gas or floor it
You ain't ready to get it, I dunno why they keep askin' for it
This the real P.E., ain't no castin' for it
Cop lights, news camera, no action for it
Get the uncut raw, we somewhat sure
Hip hop's like a chess game, discussin' the war
Strategize, move like masterminds
When it's your go and your do', just cash mine
Last time we welcomed y'all to the Terrordome
Used the mic to reach out and touch, instead of the phone
I appear from the rear, stayin' from clear
Nobody can say if I'm here so they play it by ear
But here's the way I lay the idea
From this point on, the rest of '98, put it in high gear (...)
[Verse 3: Professor Griff]
I saw it comin', premeditated world domination hesitated
Rough this nuclear war head, detonate it
I'm forbidden, so I stay hittin' up forgiven
For givin' the livin' the truth, 360 proof
So world look before this world's took
I curl books under my arm
Smoke charm and learn about this world's
Revelation the world cooks
I spit gold versus the pearl hooks
The first album made the world crooks
Got 'em snatchin', robbin', thievin', stealin' ideas
Believe in pleadin' reason for treason, conceal it for years
My criminal attract an accomplice to grub something
Results DRASTIC MEASURES
And the death of joy, the death of casket treasure

From the abyss, the greatest trick I played on the world
Was leadin' them to believe my mother's clit didn't exist
Then I extended the list
Revolutioned every flag raised by a clenchin' fist
Yeah that's right, once again
Smooth the Hustler, and he ain't no crowd buster
Straight up Iceberg Slim
Yo, baby, you need to get with him
Flava Flav, Chuck D, Public Enemy, Smooth the Hustle
We out the backdoor, baby

« **Politics of the Sneaker Pimps** »

("Jesus is the best thing that happened to the game
Since the tennis shoe was invented")
On the outs I lace up, the world I face up
To score on anybody, it's war on everybody
The new guys come in blood shot between the eyes
As long as their sellin' that merchandise
And one what goes in, don't come back
The color may be green but it's also black
And red I know many heads that spent bloodshed
Cursed in converses, dead in Pro Keds
Now every Tom, Dick, Harry or Joe Smith
Skip the Spauldings, pony's, and K-Swiss
High school and college coaches gettin'
Kickbacks from scholarships and them slave ships
Converses for the pros, kids with Filas
Reebok, Nikes, New Balance my Adidas
Ain't part of that clique, spendin' all the chits on kicks
PS in the politics
Politics of them sneaker pimps (...)
Hey Dr. J where you got those moves
Was it gettin' high in the schools, can it be the shoes?
Truth is truth, I tear the fuckin' roof off the house
Expose them foes with my mouth
I see corporate hands up in foreign lands
With the man behind the man gettin' paid behind the man
I hold the rocket, stop the hand in my pocket
200 a pair but I'm addicted to the gear
They'll make me do things on the court to amaze ya
I heard they make 'em for a buck 8 in Asia
They came a long way baby since
Clyde Frazier had Pumas, pullin' mad consumers
Them Filas I'm feelin' but I cant touch the ceiling
Them New Balance hits 120 million
The last thing I need is Adidas terminatin' my contract
For wearing those old pair of wack
Reebok low tops covered up by floppy socks
Gave me a jump shot before I got jumped and shot
Duckin' a word from my sponsor
Trying to end my year like Kwaanza

(...) Been paid since the 8th grade
11th grade, pop the champagne
12th grade start the campaign
Gettin' fame, sign my name in the dotted frame
Nike got me pullin' re's and g's
Shit, I can get shot for these
Please God give me 20 more years in these knees
To maintain without this game I gotta do keys
And I don't wanna go there because it's fuckin' everywhere
Factories wanna see me, kids wanna be me
Behind the wheels and endorsement deals
It's the politics and the tricks behind the kicks

« **What You Need Is Jesus** »

Now here's the pop, turnaround jumper,
Hits the rim bounce away, the new slave trade.
Manchild, six feet five, but juvenile.
Thin line between getting bucks and gettin' wild.
Brooklyn style, hundred thousand miles.
Parquet tiles, leavin' ankles broke in a pile.
Son got a ticket to fly, he can make it if he try,
To the sky, like a Coney Island ride.
Gettin' pages, from his super agent,
Community raises at the clout or the cages.
No doubt, center stages, mad phases,
From behind crazies flippin' through the faces.
Paper chases, love that many places.
Pros and cons, flicks between the races.
He hold the rock, call for sweat shops.
Guard the set shop replaced by sex shops.
The highest bidder, no room for the quitter.
Gave seven tickets, under counterfittas.
Three cities a week, droppin' needles.
Like the black Beatles take heed, what you need is (...)
Crack my picture, never switch up.
Smack the back ups, pack them pick-ups.
Resurrection of the two men vocal section.
The spirit in your dark ass direction.
Duckin' them spray-ups on my way that I thought be lay-ups.
Won the battle wars, a thousand one push-ups.
Here marks the return of them rules about Ruff Ryders.
Risin', chargin' hard from the point guard.
Watch what you pray for, but know the team that you play for.
Need I say more?
Uh, scared of the resurrection,
Sacrifice yours, them, maybe the revolution is basketball.
Changes, generanges. Which means rearrange shit,
Erase shit, stuck on Playstations.
Then the new plantations, I said a millions heads.
Waitin' for another nation.
To make your World Be Free.
No shoppin' sprees, there ain't no stoppin' me.

Here's the fee, not the weed.
Got to see, Godspeed. What you need is (...)
Sticky D gives you fits, on them turnaround hypocrites.
Comin' and goin' like flics.
Hit 'em net scripts, like a butcher.
Gettin' all the chips musta been a road trip against the Knicks.
On T.V. showcasin' kicks.
Must be the fan cause his video gettin' all the chicks.
Walk up on a replay on Monday.
Sportscenter highlights, last second steal kept 'em real.
What you need is (...)

« **Super Agent** »

(...) Sold, black gold, one strong buck,
To the Milwaukee Bucks, for a million bucks.
Just get him off the streets so he don't get bucked.
Super agent to the rescue so he won't get fucked.
Uh. Run nigga run to the auction block.
But you can't pledge allegiance to the block.
This buck here, is the right kinda stock.
For sale for passin', the right kinda rock.
Yo. Auctioneer Stern, to massive fuck.
Can a nigga go home to where he used to walk?
Come back, but super agent said, "You can't talk"
I didn't know basketball had a baulk.
Uh the Buck runs laps, while they run craniums.
Players be drainin' 'em, owners be claimin' 'em.
Super agents fraimin' 'em and then nicknamin' 'em.
Drainin' they ass, to pack them stadiums.
Super agent (Super agent, where are you now?)
Super agent (What a hell of a man)
(Where you at?) Super agent (Super agent, where are you now?)
Never flagrant (Big daddy moves).
(Where you at?) Super agent (Super agent, where are you now?)
Super agent, (Backstabbin') super agent,
(Super agent, where are you now?)
Never flagrant (Watch yo' back)
Let's get it on!!
The players ear word for word verbatim.
Super agent got him locked. Coaches be hatin' him.
Super agent wouldn't even come in my hood.
If I had no skills, was wackin' no good.
Uh, in my neck of the woods the leagues concrete.
One can only dream about wood, yeah.
Feel the grain and let the bills get paid.
Pay respect to the projects,
And the half court rejects.
Scholarships, save that college shit.
Then championships, don't pay for the head trips.
Can I get a chance if I don't sing or dance?
Right about romance? Or wear short pants?
So I rave and rant, and you can't say I can't,

Get my grants, cold chillin' in a b-boy stance.
(...) Fuck that trophy, find the loot then approach me.
Land a milk and honey can I get a quickness to the money?
All witness, no cheers the four years I ain't wit' this.
Hell wit' the N-C-double A cause my super agent's paid.
With his dollars I could buy a fuckin' college.
Mister Ra-ra campus isn't keepin' school bustas.
Lookin' who's lovin' ya, going for the jugular.
They know they can't contain me on the regular.
Pimps pushes, the pocket book guzzeler.
Would you pardon my father please, Mister Governor?
Thought he had it made, dreamin' about a trade.
Things we get, help but the roof on this bitch.
Dark side of the room when he jumped the broom.
Super agent got this player, nine figure wages.
Back of sports pages, off ghetto stages.
Shootin' sleepin' pills and runnin' to the hills (...)

« **Go Cat Go** »

Say it takes two to tango
But a crew to bang, yo
Superstar shootout
Overtime at Durango
Clear out the box out
Practice at the range - yo
Get the D to step back
Unless they be deranged, though
Re mi fa so la ti dough
The chiza rarely do missa
Money earner isa
Barn burner
Highlighted by the headturner
Every step you take
Televised by Ted Turner
TBS and TNT
Sunday drain the tray
But drew the foul on NBC
Ain't no stoppin' me
I told y'all
I close the door on the series
Swept but they ain't here me
In case you forgot
This shot is hot
Boo yoww
Like Stuart on the Scott
Haves and have not
Go cat go
Let the legend grow
Game it like you game it
Better let 'em all know
1 for the chiza
2 for the flow

3 to get the heads ready
Go cat go (...)
High and down low
Do it like you did
On the brother wit' the fro
Good job baby
Get the crowd crazy
Put that finger up at the section ladies
Scream c'mon scream
At the chiza and the cream
Raised up in Brooklyn
But be ballin' down in Queens
White man's burden
Be a black man's dream
Badge over troubled green
Be a triple team
Suits and ties
See the envy in the eyes
Controllin' guys while the
Buyers lie about the size
High priced Adonises
Unkept promises
Box score forgets all the no name threats
Puttin' numbers up
To get them numbers up
Keep bouncin'
But who's countin'? (...)
Let the legend grow
Game it like you game it
Better let 'em all know
Go cat go
Let a player know
Coney Island style
Before you go pro

Sudden Death (Interlude)

Virgin bitches
With rockin' clitches
Gettin' riches
Snitchin' and trippin' your way into the here at
The devil carried the cross to Christ
On the back of a black angelic hood rat
On an anti low jack crack hat
I'm humble
But I'll rumble
With any given devil
On any given level
But must I put into effect
And black caught [inaudible]
No don't test me
Checks from the ass to the throne
Grown, I'ma do it my way

Oh, by the way, I don't play
So what you say about this lost and found
In lust but bound
To get the stacks
From the last sex acts
Sack the Government tongue kissed the devil's daughter
And sent native daughters to the slaughter
The last six chapters of an anti-nigga knock
Entitled life in the fast lane
Like death, in the last lane
I live, until the day I die
I live, until the day I cry
I'm dead, the day I lie
I'm not takin' payoffs
And layoffs
Knockin' G's off
From the tip off
Less academic calories
Hope to make a high price salary
I got 40 acres to confiscate
I got a mule that can't wait to [inaudible]
On who gets paid
And who gets laid
And who gets saved
And who gets sprayed
By burnt pale faces
Fiends in high places
Faces and faces chasin' traces and cases and cases of case suits
Gettin' loot
In a two piece multinational corporation noose
Around the neck of his pops
Got locked and dropped by a dirty cop
Stop
I got an attitude how do you figure
Am I supposed to be a nigga? (...)

2/ Textes d'autres artistes consacrés au basket-ball

Kurtis Blow – « Basketball » (1984)

They're playing basketball
We love that basketball
They're playing basketball
We love that basketball (...)
Basketball is my favorite sport
I like the way they dribble up and down the court
Just like I'm the King on the microphone
So is Dr. J and Moses Malone
I like Slam dunks, take me to the hoop
My favorite play is the alley oop
I like the pick and roll, I like the give and go
'Cause it's Basketball, uh, Mister Kurtis Blow (...)
I used to go to dinner, and then take the girl
To see Tiny play against Earl The Pearl
And Wilt, Big O, and Jerry West
To play Basketball at it's very best
Basketball has always been my thing
I like Magic, Bird, and Bernard King
And number 33, my man Kareem
Is the center on my starting team
Clyde, Rick Barry and Pistol Pete
Now these players could never be beat
Isiah and Iceman too
Just give 'em the ball and then you talk up too
Dantley and Wilkins are on the scene
And Ralph Sampson is really mean
Bill Russell didn't take no junk
And Darryl Dawkins got a monster dunk
Tell me, were you in the joint?
The night Wilt scored a 100 points
Or when Celtics won titles back-to-back
And didn't give nobody, no kind of slack
Or when Dr. J shook the whole damn team
With moves that came right out of a dream
Or when, Willis Reed stood so tall
Playing D with desire, it's basketball (...)
I get the ball and then I go and play
Like the superstars in the NBA
The forwards, the centers, and all the guards
The ones you see on the bubblegum cards
Me and home boy would go one on one
'Cause playin' the game is a lot of fun
Sit by the TV and watch 'em all
'Cause Kurtis Blow is rappin' basketball (...)

Lil Wayne – Kobe Bryant (2009)

(...) Kobe doin' work
Two-four on my shirt
He the greatest on the court

And I'm the greatest on the verse
Going for the 4th ring like it was his first
Gotta get the bling
Do it for Kareem!
Two-four so nice, my flow so mean
Catch me at the game sitting next to Goldestein
Kobe Bryant Nikes, purple gold strings,
Kobe in the game dunking on your team
Black Mamba, attack conquer
Basketball beast, rap monster
Crossover good, a turnaround jumper
Or just drive the lane and dunk on dunkers
You know where it's going, it's going down yo
This is the Lakeshow, but don't drown though
I call him King Bryant, now let the crown show
(...) Pass me the damn ball
I don't need a pick at all
And don't worry 'bout my shot
'Cause I'ma get that off
Yea, I drops 40 on your double team
Then I drop 81 on another team
Yeah, you better guard me with caution
And watch I work 'em like an auction
No such thing as exhaustion
No time for resting
'Cause I don't take breaks
I just break records
And I prefer the ball with 3 seconds
And I bet we gon' win it all in 3 seconds
Ya dig? That is a guarantee
Apparently
And please tell your defense
Don't ever man to man with me
Double team, triple team
Your defenders sick of me
But, I never let 'em get to me
Literally
Step back and give 'em a three
Ain't no defending me
(...) Never take a day off
Catch you at the top of the key
And get a J off
Baseline facetime
Tongue out like two-three
Even two-three gotta love how I do me
Practice while you sleep
Practice in my sleep
Straight outta high school
Tha brackets ain't for me
I will be jumping over you
Like I got a mattress at my feet
And all the Phil Jackson teams

Better be passing it to me
I put the master in the beast
Attack you like a beast
I am starving for victory
And that means I'ma eat
And when they ask you who's the best
Then the answer should be me
(...) Call me Mr. Clutch or Mr. Automatic
I can post 'em up, or Lamar go get the alley
I'm going for the ring
I'm going for the ring
I went to Beijing
And came back with the bling
Who they want? They want Kobe
And what he want? He want the trophy
The victory
And the glory
No Shaq
No Robert Horry
Now break 'em off, Kobe break 'em off
You better be where that Laker don't
Yea, just give him the ball and he take it off
Or he properly dishing it to Gasol
Or give it to D-Fish on the wing, yeah
Or just let lil' Ariza do his thing, yeah
'Cause I'm great, and so is my team, yeah
(...)
Do it for Magic
It's show time baby
I see nothing wrong with doing it four times baby
I'm the best yes
And he the best yeah
Don't worry LeBron – get 'em next year
Now what's defense,
To an assassin?
Killer instinct
Murder the basket
Then steal the ball back
Hold it for ransom
It's more than a game
This is a passion
Been a all-star, been a champion
Free throw line, you hear 'em chanting
MVP, MVP
Kobe Bryant aka Envy Me
In knee deep, smash any D
Whoever he is he can't guard me
He can't guard me

Ice Cube – « Wicked » (1992)

'Cos I'm the one with the fat mad skills
And I won't choke like the Buffalo Bills
Sittin' at the pad just chillin'
'Cos Larry Parker just got two million, oh what a feelin'
So shake that nigga and pass me the pill
And I'll slam dunk ya like Shaquille O'Neal.

Ice Cube – « It Was A Good Day » (1992)

Which park are y'all playing basketball
Get me on the court and I'm trouble
Last week fucked around and got a triple double
Freaking niggas every way like MJ
I can't believe today was a good day.

A Tribe Called Quest – « Steve Biko (Stir It Up) » (1993)

Hip-hop scholar since being knee-high to a duck
The height of Muggsy Bogues, complexion of a hockey puck.

Notorious B.I.G. – « Gimme the Loot » (1993)

I'm slamming niggas like Shaquille, shit is real
When it's time to eat a meal, I rob and steal (...)

Beastie Boys – « Get It Together » (1994)

See I've got heart like John Starks
Hitting mad sparks
Pass me the mic and I'll be rocking the whole park.

Notorious B.I.G. – « Things Done Changed » (1994)

If I wasn't in the rap game
I'd probably have a key knee-deep in the crack game
Because the streets is a short stop
Either you're slinging crack rock or you got a wicked jump shot.

Notorious B.I.G. – « Jam Sessions » (1995)

Rebounding, outstanding, no one surrounding
I'm screwing and doing like I was Ewing
The only one soaring and scoring is Jordan
He must have had his Wheaties this morning.

Phife Dawg – « Baby Phife's Return » (1996)

Like Jordan had Starks, while you playin' hokey pokey
There's no time to be dokey
Cuz I come out to play every night like Charles Oakley.

Sauce Money – « Reservoir Dogs » (1998)

Yo, the left hook will shatter your chin
Similar to Darryl Dawkins when he shattered the rim.

Beastie Boys – « Unite » (1998)

Going off the hook like Latrell Sprewell
I've got the ill technique so you know me feel well.

Cam'ron – « What Means the World to You » (2000)

Top baller in every state
In Chi I'm Mike
Boston I'm Kenny
Miami I'm Timmy
Phoenix I'm Penny

Beanie Sigel – « Raw and Uncut » (2000)

I'm Scottie Pippen it's like Magic, Worthy, Parish, Bird, B, Stockton, Malone
Who gonna stop and hold this?
Game like Doc and Moses
Full court press and the Roc controls this.

Jay-Z – « Hola Hovito » (2001)

I ball for real, y'all niggas is Sam Bowie
And with the third pick, I made the earth sick
M.J., him Jay, fade-away, perfect

Jay-Z – « Encore » (2003)

As fate would have it, Jay's status appears
To be at an all-time high, perfect time to say goodbye
When I come back like Jordan, wearing the 4-5.

Jay-Z – « Pump It Up (Remix) » (2003)

Hovi baby, you Kobe maybe Tracy McGrady,
Matter fact, you a Harold Miner, J.R. Rider, washed up on marijuana
Even worse you a Pervis Ellison, you worthless fella

50 Cent – « Follow Me Gangsta » (2003)

My team in the cut
Packin' middle things
I got more foreign shooters
Than the Sacramento Kings.

Lil Wayne – « Fireman » (2005)

Addicted to the game like Jordan and Payton
Ya'll in the race and me I'm at the finish line
Been running for too long it's time to gimme mine.

Jay-Z – « Blow the Whistle » (2006)

Uh! Ask my nigga LeBron!
We so big we ain't gotta respond
When you talkin' to a don,
Please have respect like your talkin' to your mom

Jay-Z – « The Prelude » (2007)

Before The Answer was a 3,
I was down in Georgetown with a Hoya chick, lawyer chick.

Ludacris – « Wish You Would » (2008)

I'm on point like CP3
And I'll be going down in rap as the MVP.

J. Cole – « Dead Presidents II » (2009)

My whole life practice to be the one,
What's it like to be LeBron.
They calling you the savior, so much pressure but you deal with it,
The weight of the world on your shoulders but you still lift it.

Cool Kids – « Pennies » (2009)

Auburn Hills, Michigan, home of the Palace
The place on the map where Isiah beat Magic,
Throwin' elbows, had them Rick Mahorn habits.

Young Jeezy – « 24-23 » (2009)

See I used to pay Kobe, but now I pay LeBron,
Kobe, LeBron, Kobe, LeBron.
Yeah I used to pay Kobe until I paid LeBron
Kobe, LeBron, Kobe, LeBron.
24, 23 – y'all niggas remember me.

Jay-Z – « Empire State of Mind » (2009)

(...) Say whattup to Ty-Ty, still sippin' Mai Tai's
Sittin' courtside, Knicks and Nets give me high five
Nigga I be Spike'd out, I could trip a referee
Tell by my attitude that I'm most definitely from (...)
Me, I got a plug, Special Ed "I Got It Made"
If Jeezy's payin' LeBron, I'm payin' Dwayne Wade
(...) Came here for school, graduated to the high life
Ball players, rap stars, addicted to the limelight.

Sho Baraka – Kobe Bryant On 'em (2010)

Opposition in my face, I'm try to play 'fence
I'm bigger than this dude that don't make no sense
I Kobe Bryant on 'em

Drake – « Thank Me Now » (2010)

I could relate to kids going straight to the league
When they recognize that you got what it takes to succeed.
And that's around the time that your idols become your rivals.
You make friends with Mike but gotta AI him for your survival.
Damn, I swear sports and music are so synonymous,
'Cause we wanna be them and they wanna be us.

J. Cole – « Return of Simba » (2011)

Being good is good, that'll get you Drew Gooden
But me, I want Jordan numbers, LeBron footin'
Can't guard me, Vince Lombardi, John Wooden

Drake – « Stay Schemin' » (2012)

Kobe 'bout to lose a hundred fifty M's
Kobe my nigga I hate it had to be him
Bitch you wasn't with me shooting in the gym

Kanye West – « New God Flow » (2012)

Hold up, I ain't trying to stunt, man,
But these Yeezys jumped over the Jumpman
Went from most hated to the champion god flow.
I guess that's a feeling only me and Lebron know.

3/ Exemples de textes de rap écrits par des joueurs NBA

Shaquille O'Neal – « I'm Outstanding » (1993)

I was born three six seven eighteen I think it's on a Wednesday,
Hail to the moon, just like Kunta Kinte
That means I'm gifted from the get-go
Mom's you never let go, mad thanks for raising me right, bro'
You gave me confidence to stop the nonsense
Didn't live in Bel Air like the Fresh Prince
Times are hard, times are rough
Didn't have 'Toys R Us' toys, but I had enough love
Plus the guidance from above
To go to the park, sweatin' push and shove
Maybe then for a dunk like you told me
Then there were a few times when dad had to scold me
Prayed for my safety, I know how you was feeling
Didn't want me wheeling and get to drug dealing
Remember when you asked me this one day
Who I wanna be like, I said, Dr J
Then you said, good, now you gotta go
Take the damn ball and slam it through the hole
Mom cracked a smile, daddy gave a frown
I said to myself, I can't let them down
So make way, I'm coming in for a landing
And nothing's gonna stop me from being outstanding
I'm outstanding
Now let's skip to the time when I was fifteen
Shaq is in the house, no, Shaq is on the scene
Now my name's in papers, girls caught the vapors
Kids look up to me like a skyscraper
Now, a role model, I mean a role figure
Then I ask myself, can I get any bigger?
My dream is coming true, but coming through slowly
Then I remember what mom and dad told me
Remember this, son, do all the runs
Shoot your gift like a gun and never forget where you come from
You're young, gifted and Black
If they can't say, Shaquille O'Neal then make 'em scream, Shaq
Like the fam' do, in the stands who
When I freak the funk on a dunk they, ahh ooh
From high school to college, they gave me enough knowledge
Make that gift and now it's time for me to fulfill my dream
To be in the leader's game like Hakeem
I'll make the backboards shatter

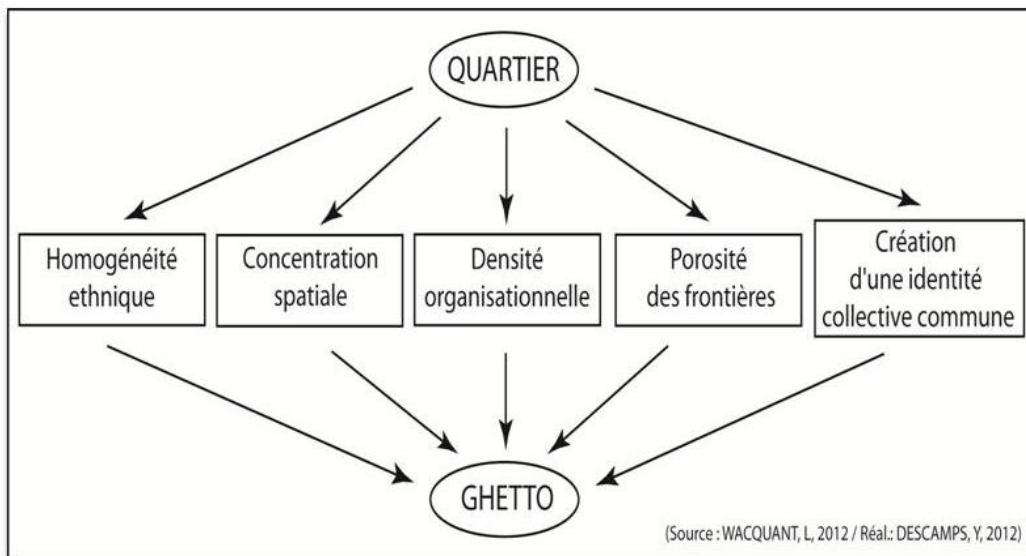
Fans chit-chat
Even make the other centers get madder
That's me, who can it be?
The master of disaster, seven foot three
Brother, ain't no other in the nation
I'm born from my mother but I'm God's creation
I'm outstanding (...)
'Cause now I'm outstanding, wave your hands and pump your fist
When I'm on the court you know it's strictly swish
'Cause there's some things that I gotta do
Tape up the ankle, pump up my Shaq-shoe
And now it's time to take care of business
To run up the court with Nick and Dennis
Scott, but I won't stop, gotta keep striving until I reach the top
Gonna take a peek over the mountain, I flow like a fountain
Peace, I gotta go and I'm out and
But before I go, wave your hands
Peace to all my family, friends and fam'
I'm outstanding.

Jewels (Allen Iverson) – « 40 Bars » (2000)

For the year 2G the rap game change for one name
Jewelz aim to slain anything on this plane
Remains are found when the best kept secret get heated
You went platinum wit' a ghost writer,
So in the game you won you cheated
My slang bang when you need it
You man enough to pull a gun be man enough to squeeze it (*gunshots*)
Die if you don't believe it
Anything to do wit' millions I'ma be wit' it
Hats off to the hardcore niggaz FUCK the rest
In my guess y'all useless, just talkin' music
Never mistake me for a fake MC
You got the wrong idea nigga I'm CT fool
Get murdered in a second in the first degree
Come to me wit' faggot tendencies
You'll be sleepin' where the maggots be
Ain't nuthin' kinda used to beef actually
But when it's on I raise first automatically
Won't catch me as a victim and a rap casualty
Dynasty Raiders hit VA in the summertime
Ten Bentleys in one line
Gats in each hand, twin 45's in mines
Snipers hittin' niggaz long distance for a rate
Sons and daughters, one order you'll be floatin' in water
Bad news home of the Dynasty Raiders
One luv to the ol' school niggaz
They in the jail tryin' to raise us
Even the ones that tried to blaze us
But couldn't even graze us
See dem bitch ass niggaz y'all killin' don't amaze us
Y'all slobbin' I'm spittin' wit' a mouth full of rage

*(Dis my nigga jewels representin' bad news
Yo my homie say dat shit)*
Everybody stay fly get money kill and fuck bitches
I'm hittin' anything in plain view for my riches
VA's finest fillin' up ditches, when niggaz turn to bitches
Die for zero digits; I'm a giant y'all midgets
I know killaz that kill for a fee
That 'll kill yo' ass for free, believe me
How you wanna die fast or slowly?
Fast as a rolie, slow as a rolie polie
I bought yo' shit it was weak, trashed it now you owe me
All the hardcore niggas know me
I ain't knockin', I'm jus' gon' bust up in the motherfucker
Takin' anything that's rightfully mines
Lust, AKs, rifles, and nines
Physique crew, thick designs
Wit' jewels that shine all the time
Ain't nuthin' sweet about this rate of mystique
Got niggas while you eat shit sleep and beat yo' meat
Die reachin' fo' heat, leave you leakin' in da street
Niggas screamin' he was a good boy ever since he was born
But fuck it he gone life must go on niggas don't live that long
But hoes in wigs niggas that think they head strong
Got niggas hollerin' Jewelz dead wrong on this song
This type of murda don't need no hook
Just forty fuckin' bars from da mouth of a crook!!!
Yo!! (*gunshot*)

Annexe n° 7 :
Du quartier au ghetto : le processus de ghettoïisation selon Loïc Wacquant



Annexe n° 8 : La bande-image de l'histoire afro-américaine

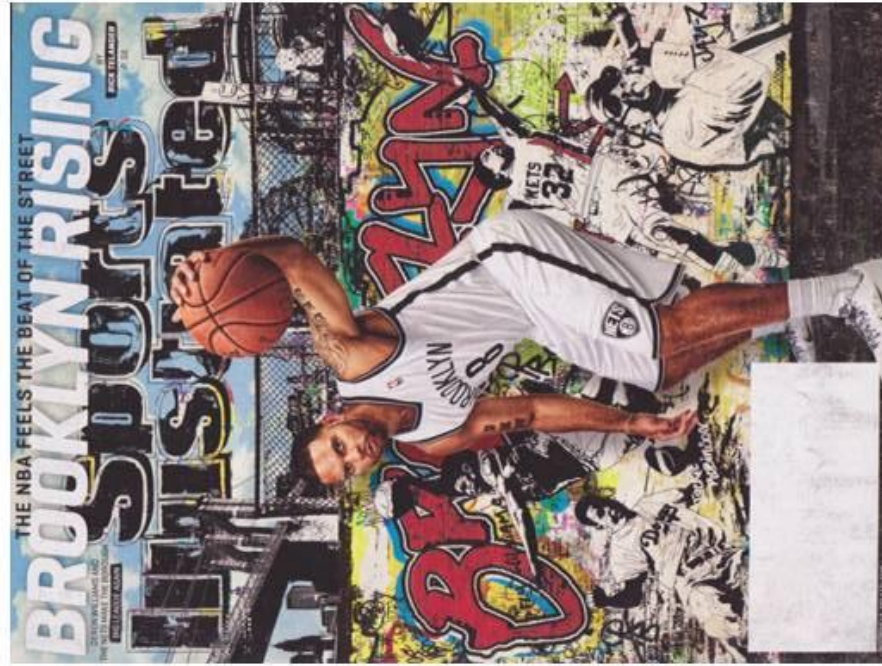


Photo 12 : Brooklyn, le basket, le playground et le hip-hop
In *Sports Illustrated*, Volume 111, n° 15, 15 octobre 2012

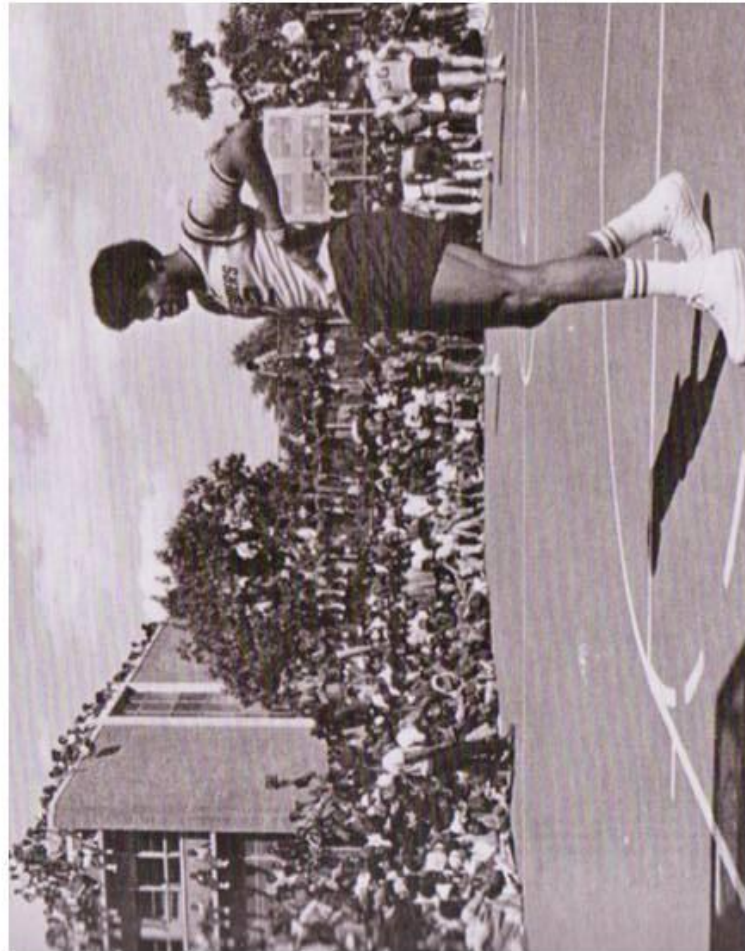


Photo 11 : Julius Erving au Rucker Park, New York
In Julius ERVING, with Karl Taro GREENFELD, *Dr. J The Autobiography*, New York, HarperCollins, 2013, p. 117



Photo 13 : Julius Erving pendant ses années en ABA
 In *Sports Illustrated*, Volume 118, n° 25,
 17 juin 2013, p. 55



Photo 14 : Walt Frazier à Harlem
 In Joe CORTINA, *NEA at 50*, NBA Entertainment ent,
 Warner Home Video, 2003 (1996).



Photo 15 : Walt « Clyde » Frazier dans le métro new-yorkais
 In Ben OSBORNE (ed.), *Slam Kicks Basketball Sneakers that
 Changed the Game*, New York, Universe, 2013, p. 42



Photo 16 : Erving face aux Celtics, 1983.
In Julius ERVING, with Karl Taro GREENFELD, *Dr. J The Autobiography*, New York, HarperCollins, 2013, p. 277



Photo 17 : L'Afro de Dr. J. In Joe CORTINA, *NBA at 50*, NBA Entertainment, Warner Home Video, 2003 (1996).



Photo 18 : L'Afro du jeune Earvin Johnson, In EDELMAN, Ezra, *Magic & Bird: A Courtship of Rivals*, HBO Sports, Warner Home Video, 2010.



Photo 19 : Erving au dunk
Ben OSBORNE (ed.), *Slam Kicks Basketball Sneakers that Changed the Game*, New York, Universe, 2013, p. 51



Photo 20 : Detroit, ville col bleu
 In : *25 Years of Champions*, NBA Entertainment, Warner, 2005



Photo 21 : Indiana, la version pastorale du basket
 In : *25 Years of Champions*, NBA Entertainment, Warner, 2005



Photo 23 : Los Angeles, oulier basket-ball et "fun"
 In : *NBA Dynasty Series: Boston Celtics, The Complete History*, NBA Entertainment, Warner, 2004



Photo 22 : La tradition de victoire des Celtics, identité de la franchise
 In : *NBA Dynasty Series: Boston Celtics, The Complete History*, NBA Entertainment, Warner, 2004



Photo 24 : Le Fan des Celtics hait les Lakers
In : 25 Years of Champions, NBA Entertainment, Warner, 2005



Photo 25 : Les fantômes des anciens succès des Celtics rôdent
In : 25 Years of Champions, NBA Entertainment, Warner, 2005



Photo 27 : La statue de Red Auerbach veille sur la ville avec son cigare
In : 25 Years of Champions, NBA Entertainment, Warner, 2005



Photo 26 : L'arrivée au vétuste Garden par le vieux m étro de Boston
In : 25 Years of Champions, NBA Entertainment, Warner, 2005

Photos 28-30 : Le duel Magic-Bird mis en image par les médias américains.
In Ezra EDELMAN, *Magic & Bird: A Courtship of Rivals*, HBO Sports, Warner
Home Video, 2010.

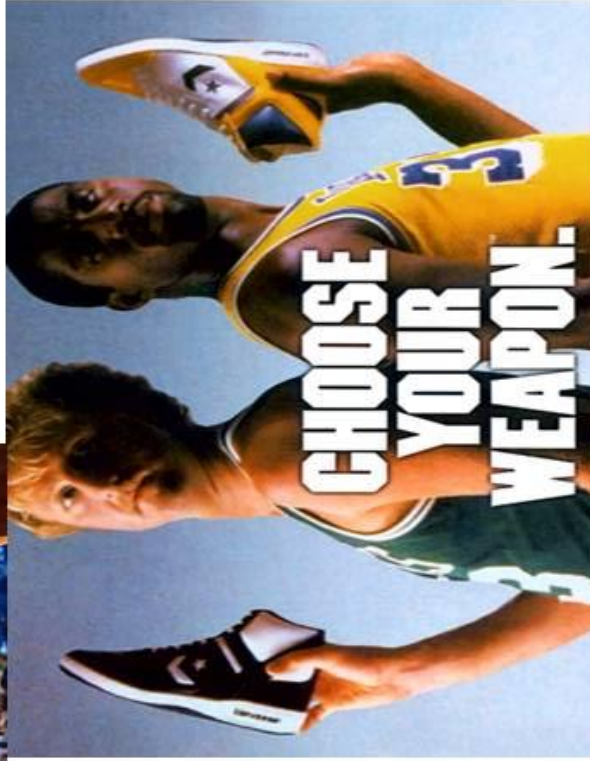




Photo 31 : Jordan face à Bird par CBS.
In *Ultimate Jordan*. NBA Entertainment, Warner, 2004



Photo 32 : Jordan face à Magic par NBC.
In *Chicago Bulls, 1990-1991 NBA Champions: Learning to Fly*. NBA Entertainment, Warner, 2006 (1991).



Photo 35 : Jordan au dunk sur les Celtics
 In *Slam Magazine*, Jordan A Hall of Fame Tribute.
 Special Collector's Issue, 2009, p. 82



Photo 34 : Air Jordan
 In *Constant NEMALLE, Michael Jordan, le livre d'or*,
 Paris, éditions Solar, 1999, p. 59



Photo 33 : Jordan en vol,
 In *Slam Magazine*, Jordan A Hall of Fame Tribute.
 Special Collector's Issue, 2009, p. 61



Photo 36 : The Move et la mise en abîme des premiers titres de Jordan
In 25 Years of Champions, NBA Entertainment ent, Warner, 2005



Photo 38 : The Flu Game et le dépassement de soi
In 25 Years of Champions, NBA Entertainment ent, Warner, 2005

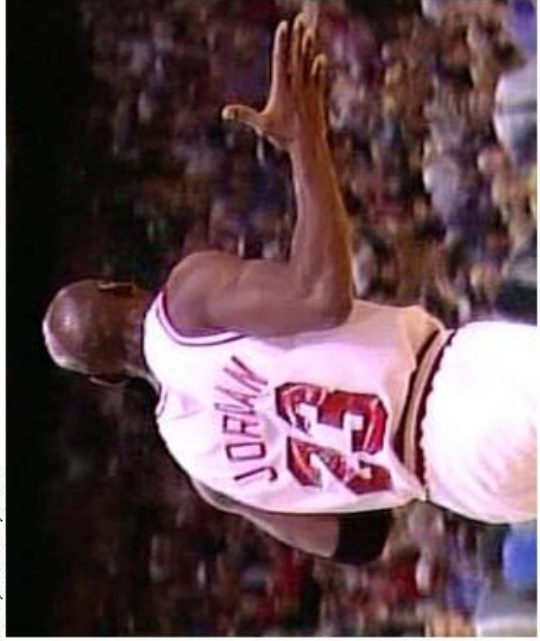


Photo 37 : The Shrug et le moment de grâce
In 25 Years of Champions, NBA Entertainment ent, Warner, 2005



Photo 39 : The First Shot
In Ben OSBORNE (ed.), *Slam Kicks Basketball Sneakers that Changed the Game*, New York, Universe, 2013, p. 53

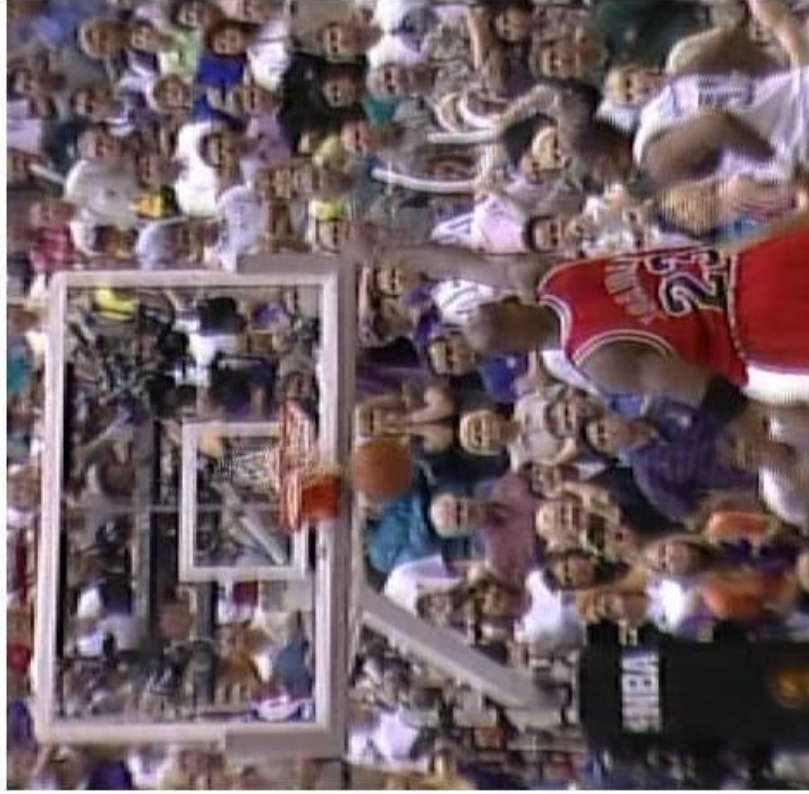


Photo 40 : The Last Shot
In *25 Years of Champions*, NBA Entertainment, Warner, 2005



Photo 41 : Iverson et le corps du Gangsta Ball
 In *Larry PLATT, Only the Strong Survive : The Odyssey of Allen Iverson, New York, Harper, 2002, p. 117*



Photo 42 : Iverson avec son mentor et entraîneur,
 Larry Brown
 In *25 Years of Champions, NBA Entertainment, Warner, 2005*

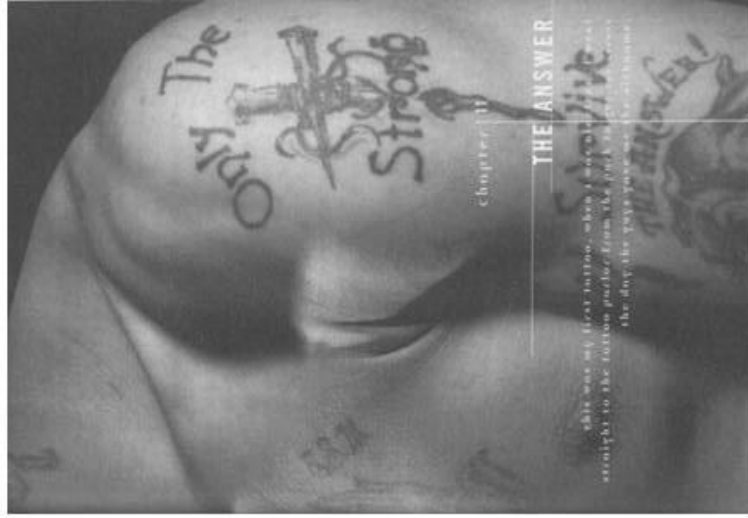


Photo 43 : Iverson et le darwinisme social dans la peau
 In *Larry PLATT, Only the Strong Survive : The Odyssey of Allen Iverson, New York, Harper, 2002, p. 189*



Photo 44 : Lakers-Celtics, le passé au présent
 In *Boston Celtics, 2007-2008 NBA Champions: Celtic Pride Returns*, NBA Entertainment, Warner, 2008



Photo 45 : Lakers-Celtics, mise en scène d'une rivalité
 In *Los Angeles Lakers 2010 NBA Finals Series*, NBA Entertainment, 2010



Photo 46 : Lakers-Celtics, deux franchises dans l'histoire
 In *Los Angeles Lakers 2010 NBA Finals Series*, NBA Entertainment, 2010



Photo 47 : Jordan et la Dream Team, ou le Soft Power américain par le basket-ball
 In *ESPN Magazine*. "Michael Jordan The Best Ever". Hall of Fame Collector's Issue, 2009, p. 47



Photo 48 : Vince Carter dunker sur Frédéric Weis, Jeux olympiques de Sydney
 In Ben OSBORNE (ed.), *Stam Kicks Basketball Sneakers that Changed the Game*, New York, Universe, 2013, p. 183



Photo 49 : Photo accompagnant le tweet de LeBron James du 23 mars 2012
@KingJames : #WeAreTrayvonMartin #Hoodies #Stereotyped #WeWantJustice
<https://twitter.com/kingjames/status/183243305428058112>



Photo 50 : Wilt ou le corps athlétique et érotique
 In Wilt CHAMBERLAIN, *A View From Above*, New York, Signet, 1992, p. 152



Photo 51 : Les deux étoiles noirs dans un sport blanc
 In George EDDY, *Les stars du basket américain*, Espagne, Solar, 1992, p. 74



Photo 52 : Wilt vs. Bill, Lakers vs. Celtics
 In Beckett.Presents Basketball/Greats, p. 101

Annexe n° 9 :
Discours et conférence de presse d'Adam Silver au sujet de l'affaire Sterling
29 avril 2014⁴

Shortly after the release of an audio recording this past Saturday morning of a conversation that allegedly included Clippers owner Donald Sterling, the NBA commenced an investigation, which among other things, included an interview of Mr. Sterling.

That investigation is now complete. The central findings of the investigation are that the man whose voice is heard on the recording and on a second recording from the same conversation that was released on Sunday is Mr. Sterling and that the hateful opinions voiced by that man are those of Mr. Sterling.

The views expressed by Mr. Sterling are deeply offensive and harmful; that they came from an NBA owner only heightens the damage and my personal outrage.

Sentiments of this kind are contrary to the principles of inclusion and respect that form the foundation of our diverse, multicultural and multiethnic league.

I am personally distraught that the views expressed by Mr. Sterling came from within an institution that has historically taken such a leadership role in matters of race relations and caused current and former players, coaches, fans and partners of the NBA to question their very association with the league.

To them, and pioneers of the game like Earl Lloyd, Chuck Cooper, Sweetwater Clifton, the great Bill Russell, and particularly Magic Johnson, I apologize. Accordingly, effective immediately, I am banning Mr. Sterling for life from any association with the Clippers organization or the NBA. Mr. Sterling may not attend any NBA games or practices. He may not be present at any Clippers facility, and he may not participate in any business or player personnel decisions involving the team.

He will also be barred from attending NBA Board of Governors meetings or participating in any other league activity.

I am also fining Mr. Sterling \$2.5 million, the maximum amount allowed under the NBA constitution. These funds will be donated to organizations dedicated to anti discrimination and tolerance efforts that will be jointly selected by the NBA and its Players Association.

As for Mr. Sterling's ownership interest in the Clippers, I will urge the Board of Governors to exercise its authority to force a sale of the team and will do everything in my power to ensure that that happens. This has been a painful moment for all members of the NBA family. I appreciate the support and understanding of our players during this process, and I am particularly grateful for the leadership shown by Coach Doc Rivers, Union President Chris Paul and Mayor Kevin Johnson of Sacramento, who has been acting as the players' representative in this matter.

We stand together in condemning Mr. Sterling's views. They simply have no place in the NBA.

Thank you, and I'll take any questions.

⁴⁴ <http://www.usatoday.com/story/sports/nba/2014/04/29/adam-silver-commissioner-opening-statement-donald-sterling/8467947/>

Do you or any of your emissaries have any clue as to whether Mr. Sterling will acquiesce to your wishes to sell the team, or do you expect a fight?

Adam Silver: I have no idea.

From polling the owners that you've spoken to, what support do you think you have to force Mr. Sterling to sell the team?

A.S.: I didn't poll the owners. I spoke to several owners, and I have their full support.

What kind of authority do they have to force a sale?

A.S.: The owners have the authority subject to three quarters vote of the ownership group, of the partners, to remove him as an owner.

The word you used specifically was outrage. You said that you were personally outraged, yet many people believe that they are outraged that for years people have known that this man is a racist slumlord and the NBA hasn't done anything until today. Can you please answer why.

A.S.: I can't speak to past actions other than to say that when specific evidence was brought to the NBA, we acted.

Should someone lose their team for remarks shared in private as this is a slippery slope?

A.S.: Whether or not these remarks were initially shared in private, they are now public, and they represent his views.

What was the process to coming to this decision over the last couple days, and when did you decide that this was the appropriate action to take?

A.S.: I ultimately decided this morning that this was the appropriate action, and the process beginning Saturday morning when this tape was first released was to appoint an investigator. It was David Anders from the Wachtell Lipton firm. He conducted a series of interviews, some by phone, some in person. He concluded his investigation late last night.

Adam, you said you would encourage owners to force the sale of the Clippers. When will that action take place?

A.S.: The process will begin immediately. We will most likely use a standing committee of the NBA. The equivalent of our executive committee is our advisory finance committee. I've had several discussions with Glen Taylor, who is our chairman of the board and also the leader of the advisory finance committee, and we will begin that process immediately.

In your conversations with Sterling, did he own up to this immediately? Was it only after you guys had come up with some sort of proof? And what, if anything, has he expressed approaching remorse, regret, anything? What's his sentiment at this point?

A.S.: Mr. Sterling acknowledged it was his voice on the tape, and he has not expressed to me directly any other views.

What message do you have for the Clippers and their fans and their fan base in terms of moving forward from this point on?

A.S.: My message to the Clippers fans is this league is far bigger than any one owner, any one coach, any one player. This institution has been around for a long time, and it will stand for a long time, and I have complete confidence in Doc Rivers, in the basketball management of that club, and the players deserve their support. They've just been through an incredibly difficult incident in their lives.

Was the punishment designed in effect to get the message across to Mr. Sterling that there's no point in him there's no advantage, nothing to be gained from him continuing his ownership? And also in determining what the punishment would be, including the suggestion to the Board of Governors, did you take into account Mr. Sterling's past behavior, or was it just based on this one particular incident?

A.S.: In meting out this punishment we did not take into account his past behavior. When the board ultimately considers his overall fitness to be an owner in the NBA, they will take into account a lifetime of behavior.

Adam, could you just explain or lay out for us what specific power in the constitution and bylaws you exercised with your ban, and what specific was it a broad violation or a specific violation, and with respect to the forced sale, what specific section of the constitution covers that, and is that a broad violation or a specific one?

A.S.: I'll let the lawyers lay out for you the specific provisions of our constitution. Let's just leave it that we have the authority to act as I've recommended.

Is the NBA considering more African American ownership at this point?

A.S.: We're always open to ownership from people of all races, nationalities, ethnicities. As you know we have an African American primary owner in the league right now. Shaquille O'Neal just became a small owner of the Sacramento Kings. David Robinson is an owner of the San Antonio Spurs. Vivek Ranadive, a person of color born in Mumbai, India, just became the primary owner of the Sacramento Kings. So I believe we have a very diverse league, but I'd always like to see it become more diverse.

What about Magic Johnson? Is that an option at this point?

A.S.: Magic Johnson knows he's always welcome as an owner in this league. He's been a part owner in the past of the Los Angeles Lakers, and he's always welcome and a close friend of the NBA family.

Did you talk to any of the players before you came to this decision? And what about Clippers' players; if they do not want to play for a team owned by Donald Sterling anymore, do they have any recourse?

A.S.: I talked to several players before rendering my decision. Coincidentally I'd had a trip planned for this weekend. I was in Memphis for a game. I was in Oakland, and then I was in Portland Sunday night for games. I had a chance to talk directly to Chris Paul. I spoke to other members of the team. I spoke extensively to Doc Rivers, and as I said, Kevin Johnson has been representing the players' interests, and he and I have been talking multiple times a day.

So I believe the players will be satisfied with the decision and the renderings that we've made today. If a player in the future doesn't want to play for the Los Angeles Clippers and he's under contract, we'll deal with that when it happens. But that's not my sense of where we are right now.

Will this situation cause you moving forward to put new rules in place for owners from the NBA?

A.S.: I'm not sure. I mean, we're always willing to take a fresh look at our rules, our constitution and bylaws, but I believe we have appropriate rules in place right now to cover a situation like this.

Just to be clear, you said when specific evidence was brought to the league you did act. In past cases, has Donald Sterling ever been fined or suspended for racial or offensive remarks, and if not, why not?

A.S.: He's never been suspended or fined by the league because while there have been well documented rumors and cases filed, he was sued and the plaintiff lost the lawsuit. That was Elgin Baylor. There was a case brought by the Department of Justice in which ultimately Donald

Sterling settled and there was no finding of guilt, and those are the only cases that have been brought to our attention. When those two litigations were brought, they were followed closely by the league office.

Just a follow to that, one of the greatest players of all time, Elgin Baylor, accused Donald Sterling of running a plantation style franchise. Did that not concern you, and why was that not investigated? Despite the fact he lost the case, he has a prominent standing in the league and he said some very serious things.

A.S.: It concerned us greatly. We followed the litigation closely, and ultimately Elgin Baylor did not prevail in that litigation.

Obviously Carmax and State Farm withdrew their sponsorship with the LA Clippers. With you as the commissioner of the NBA, what would you tell other people who are maybe on the fence or who have withdrawn who in the future might want to invest in one of your franchises?

A.S.: I would say those marketing partners of the Clippers and partners of the entire NBA should judge us by our response to this incident, and I think we've responded appropriately, and I would be hopeful that they would return into their business relationships with the Clippers.

I'm wondering if you've spoken to Mr. Sterling about this ban or any of his representatives, and if so, what has Mr. Sterling's reaction been to the punishment?

A.S.: I did not speak directly to his representatives about this ban. They were informed shortly before this press conference. I did not hear precisely what their reaction was.

Have there been any decisions about whether the immediate members of Mr. Sterling's family, including Rochelle, will be allowed to remain in an ownership or managerial position in the league, as well?

A.S.: No, there have been no decisions about other members of the Sterling family, and I should say that this ruling applies specifically to Donald Sterling and Donald Sterling's conduct only.

As you mentioned, over a dozen sponsors have dropped the Clippers. What has been the financial impact on this franchise and on the league from this scandal?

A.S.: I don't know. This has all happened in three days, and so I'm hopeful that there will be no long term damage to the league and to the Clippers' organization. But as I said earlier, I'm outraged, so I certainly understand other people's outrage, and it will take some time this will take some time, and appropriate healing will be necessary. I can understand precisely why, whether they be people affiliated with the NBA or the Clippers for a long time or those corporate partners. I can understand how upset they are, and I'll do my best to bring them back into the NBA family.

If the owners vote three fourths vote not to force the sale, can you still under your powers institute the lifetime ban?

A.S.: The lifetime ban has been instituted. That is independent of forcing a sale of the team.

Can you share with us what your initial reaction was when you first heard the voice on the tape and what it was espousing?

A.S.: When I first heard it, I was shocked. I was hoping somehow that it was fraudulent or that it had been doctored, that possibly it wasn't indeed Donald Sterling. I've known Donald for over 20 years, so I suspected it was his voice, and we set about immediately investigating, and that was my reaction, to sort of bear down and say let's get to the bottom of this as quickly as possible.

Mayor Johnson has indicated he would like the league to undertake a full accounting of Donald Sterling's past and the failures by the NBA to act until now. Is that an account you'd be willing to undertake? And would you make any effort to mete out the personal views of other NBA owners at this point?

A.S.: I've had, as I said earlier, multiple conversations with Kevin Johnson, and I'm hoping that the actions we take today will satisfy our players. I believe they should.

Can you just tell us, you said you've known Donald Sterling for 20 years. What have your interactions over those 20 years been like with him? Have you ever seen anything like this? Have you ever felt anything like this? And what kind of man did you judge him to be prior to this?

A.S.: I have not been that close to him over the years, but there's nothing I've ever seen in his behavior that would evidence these kinds of views. I've certainly, again, because there have been a lot of public filings about his activities, I've been aware of those accusations, but there's nothing I've ever seen firsthand that would indicate that he held the views that were expressed on these audio recordings.

I'm curious, you spoke about your personal response to this. In terms of Donald Sterling self identifying as Jewish and you doing the same, as well, I'm wondering whether there was a specific kind of pain associated with that for you and if you felt a certain responsibility within the Jewish community to be responding to this in this way?

A.S.: I think my response was as a human being, and I used the word distraught before. I spoke on Saturday morning directly to Chris Paul, to Doc Rivers, and it wasn't even anger at that point. I mean, there was a certain somberness, and frankly, I felt sort of most strongly and personally for that team. While this affects every player and anyone associated with the NBA family, for those players and those coaches to go out and do what they need to do and play at the highest level in the world and have them hanging over this I think caused me to have a certain sadness I would say about the entire situation. I think this is regardless of anyone's religion, ethnicity, nationality. I think this is incredibly hurtful.

At any time during your conversation with Mr. Sterling, did he express any remorse or denial regarding these comments?

A.S.: Mr. Sterling has not expressed those views directly to me.

It's been suggested that the Clipper players be granted free agency at the end of this year as a result of this issue. Is that something that can be considered?

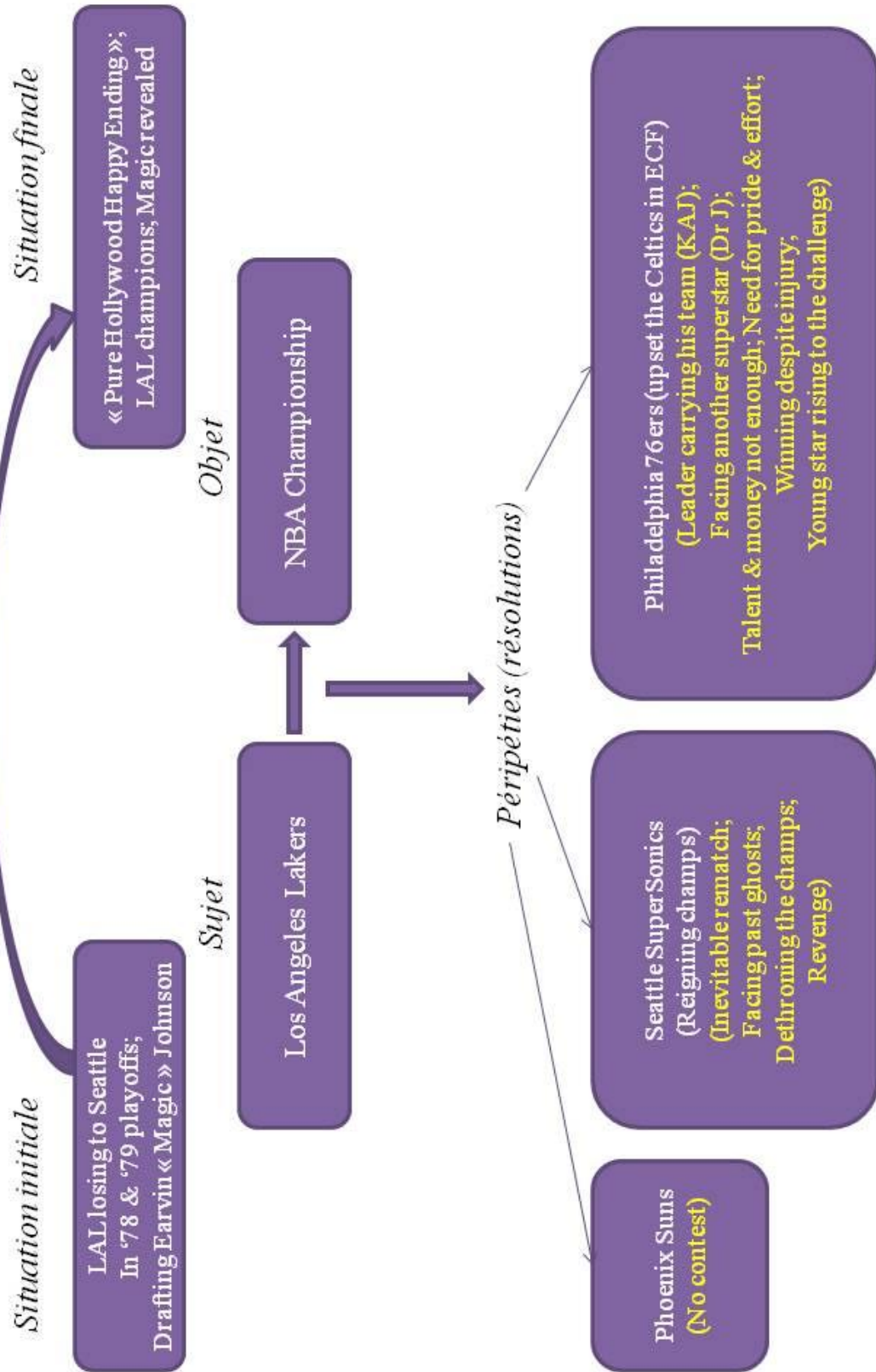
A.S.: That is not something we are considering.

If you don't get the three quarter vote that you need, is it possible that Donald Sterling could still be an absentee owner profiting from this team even though physically he's banned from doing anything with it?

A.S.: I fully expect to get the support I need from the other NBA owners to remove him.

That Magic Season: 1979-1980 Los Angeles Lakers

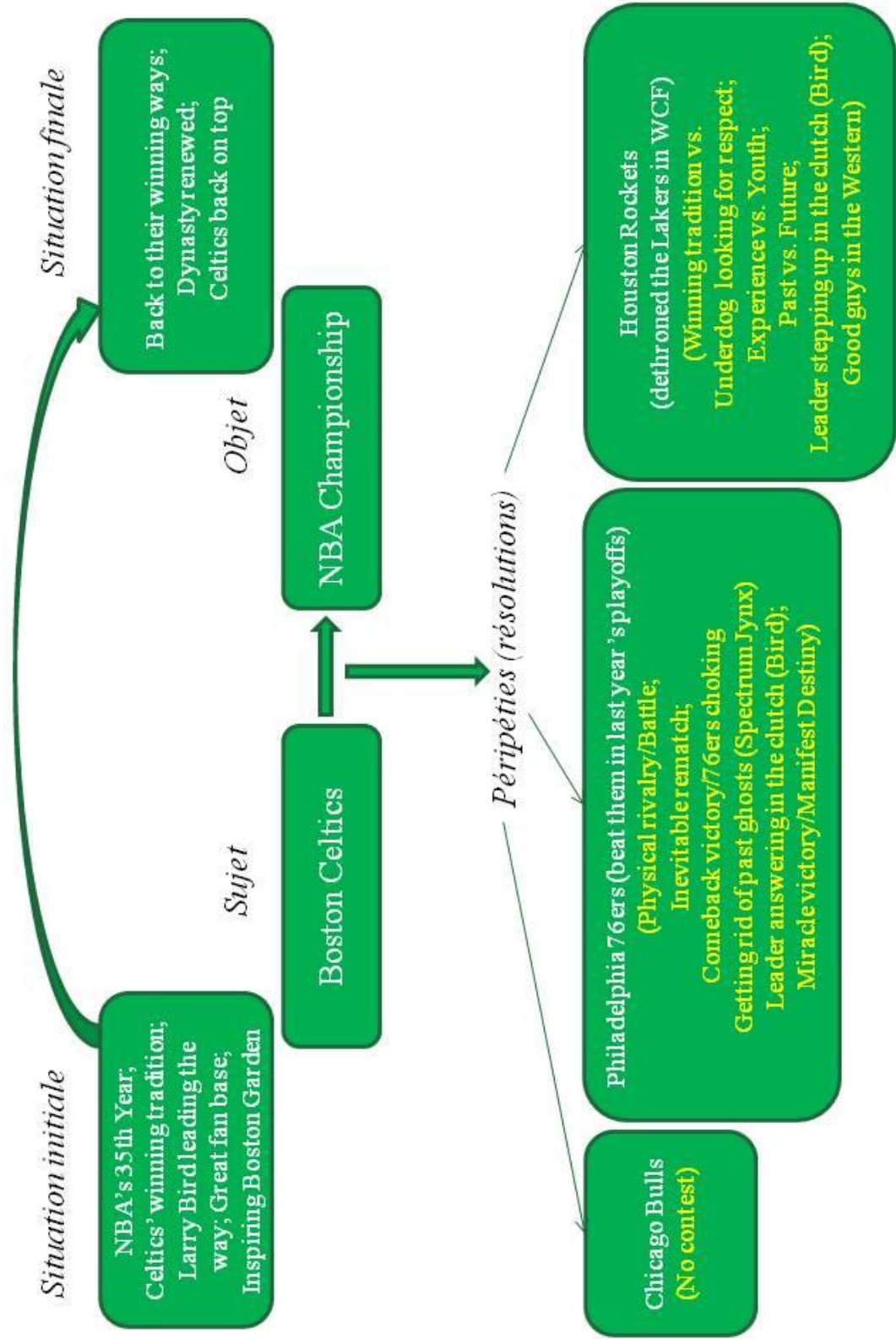
The 1980 NBA Playoffs and Championship Series



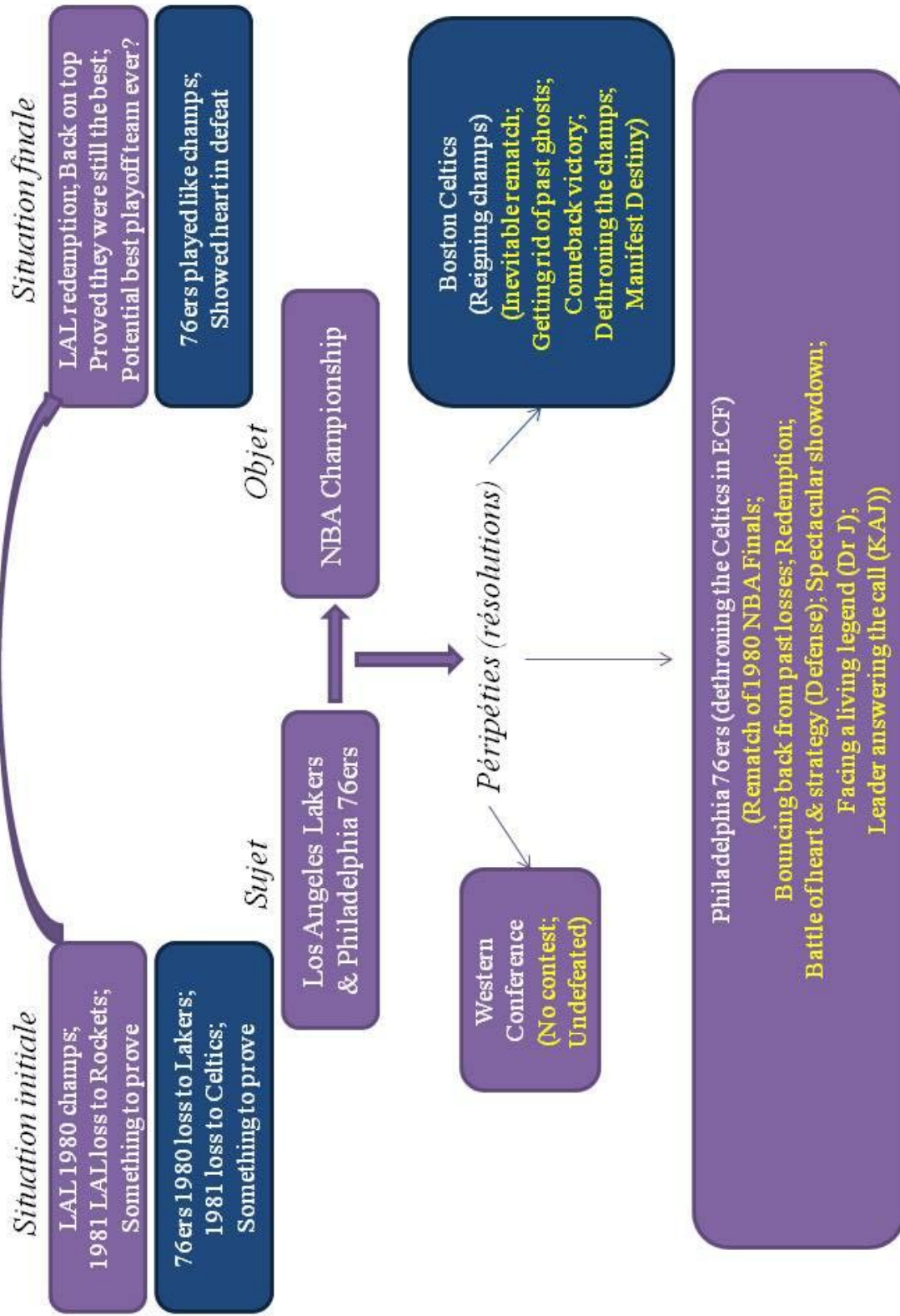
⁵

25 Years of Champions. NBA Entertainment, Warner, 2005.

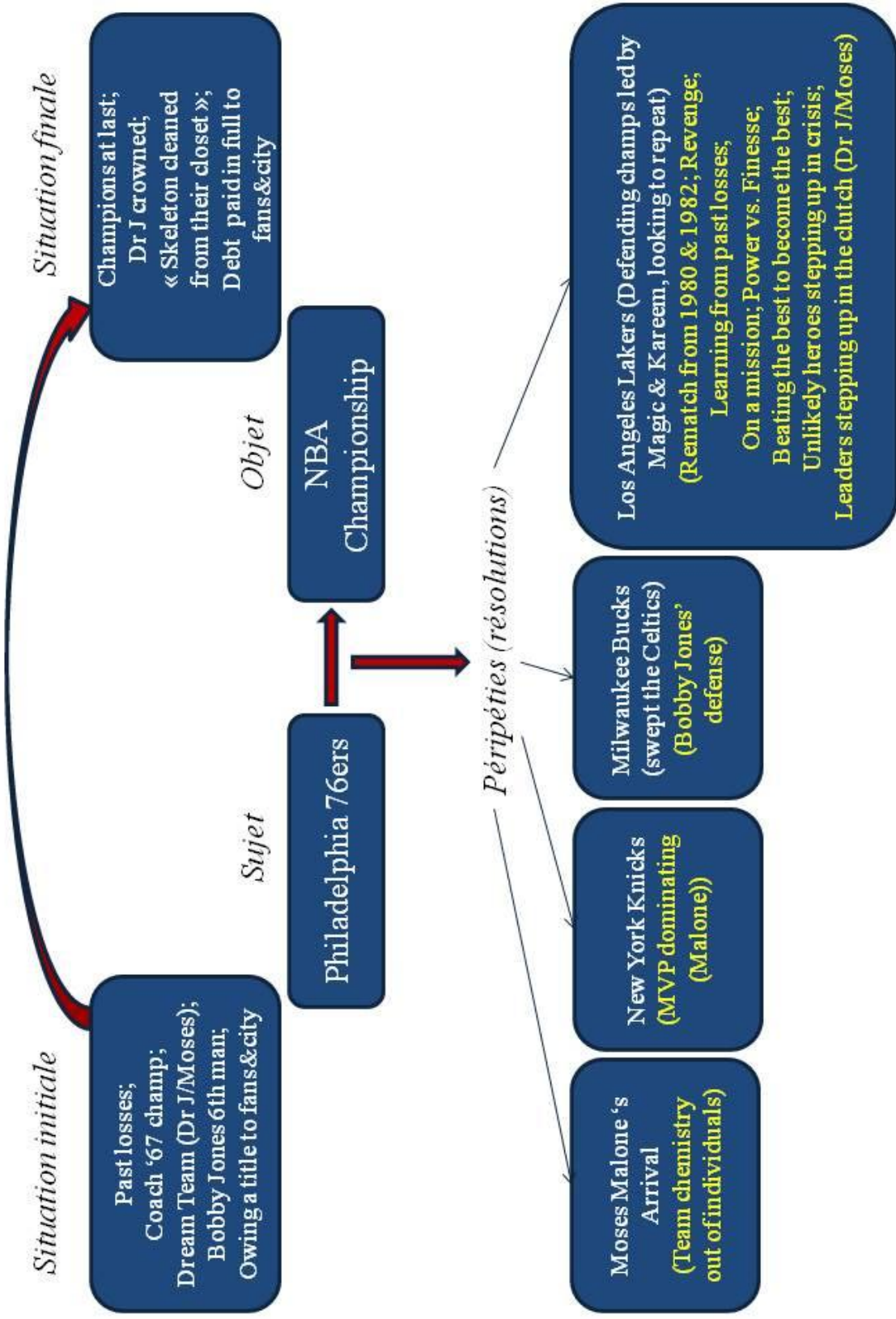
The Dynasty Renewed: 1980-1981 Boston Celtics



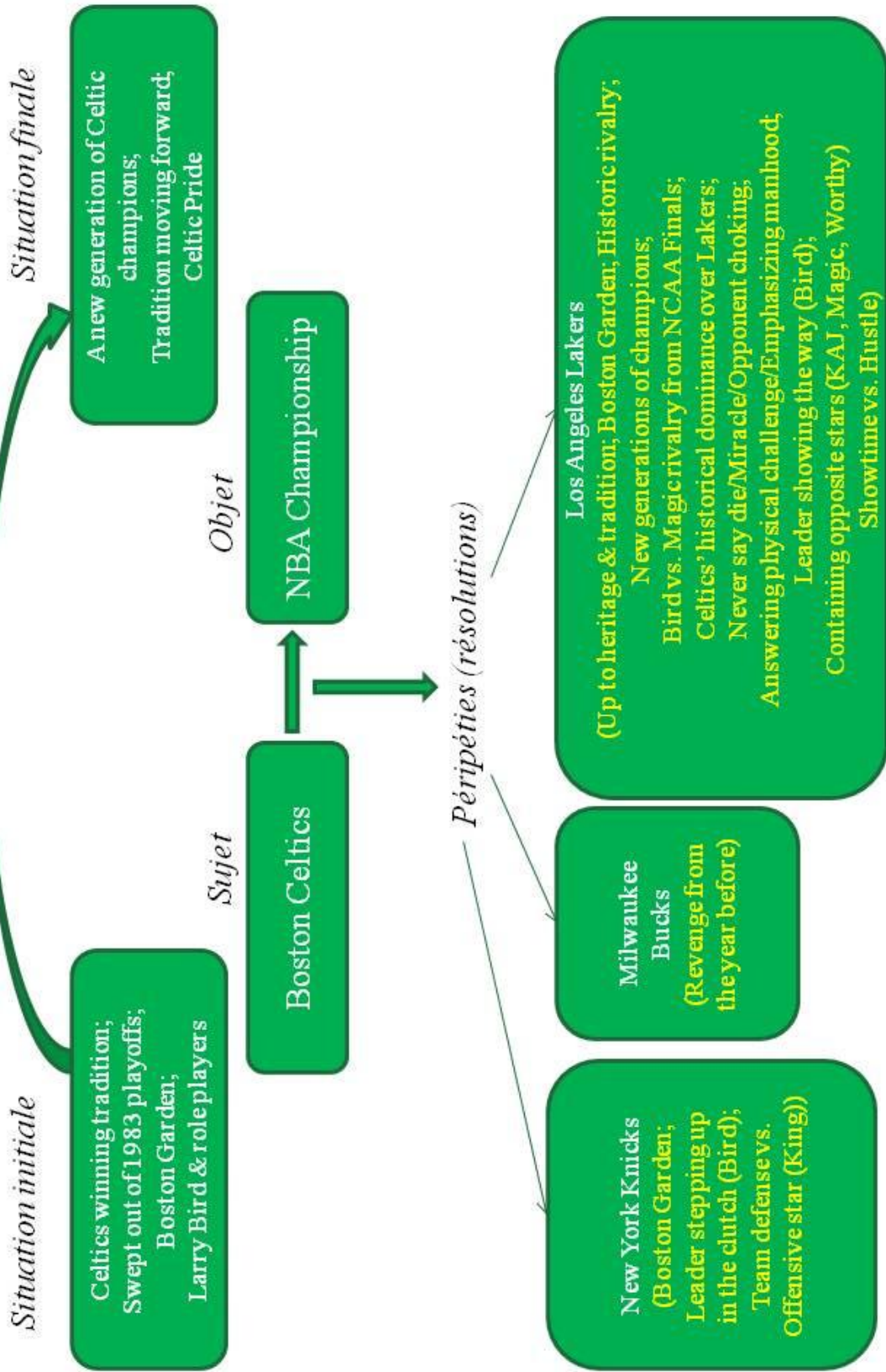
Something to Prove: 1981-1982 Los Angeles Lakers



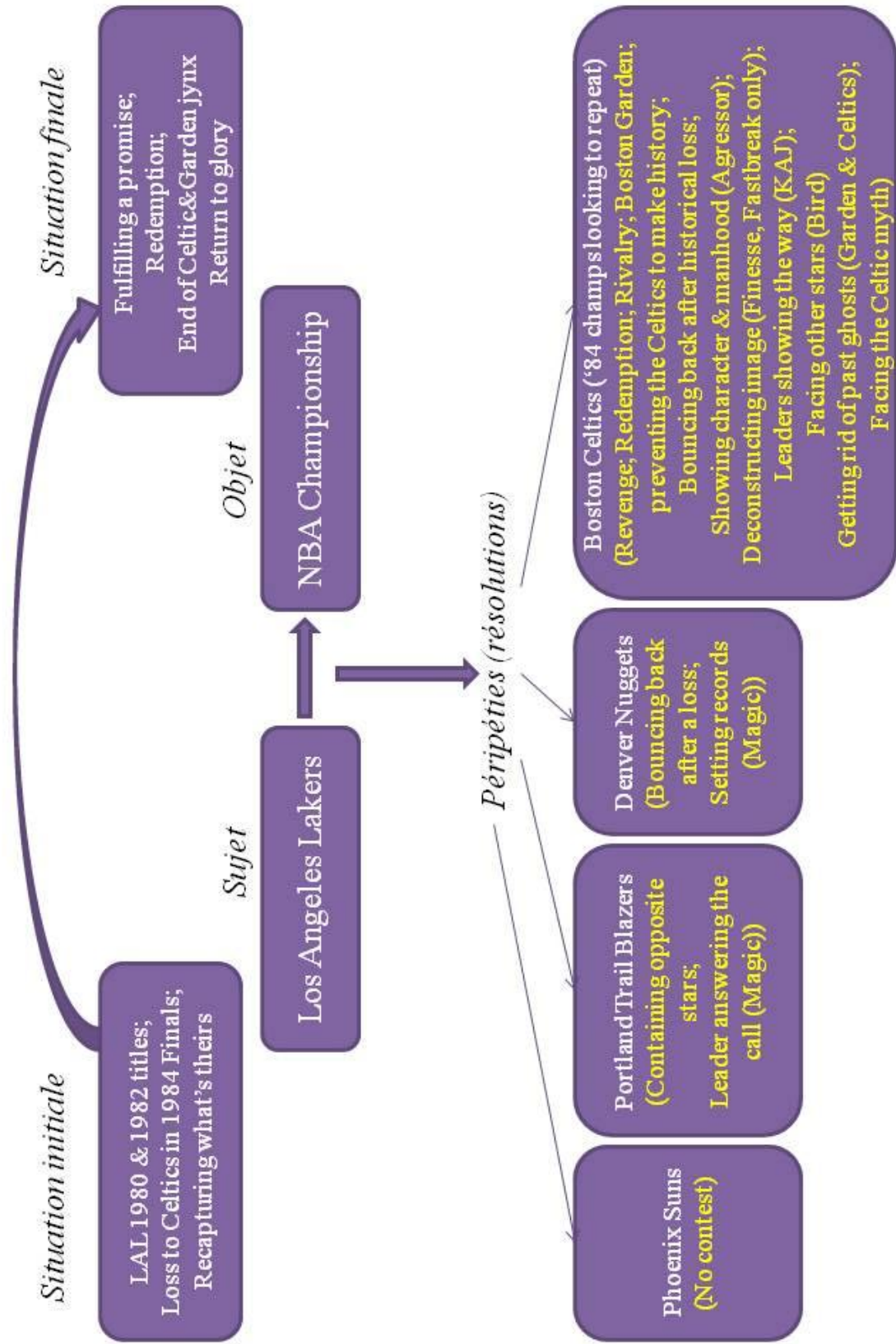
That Championship Feeling: 1982-1983 Philadelphia 76ers



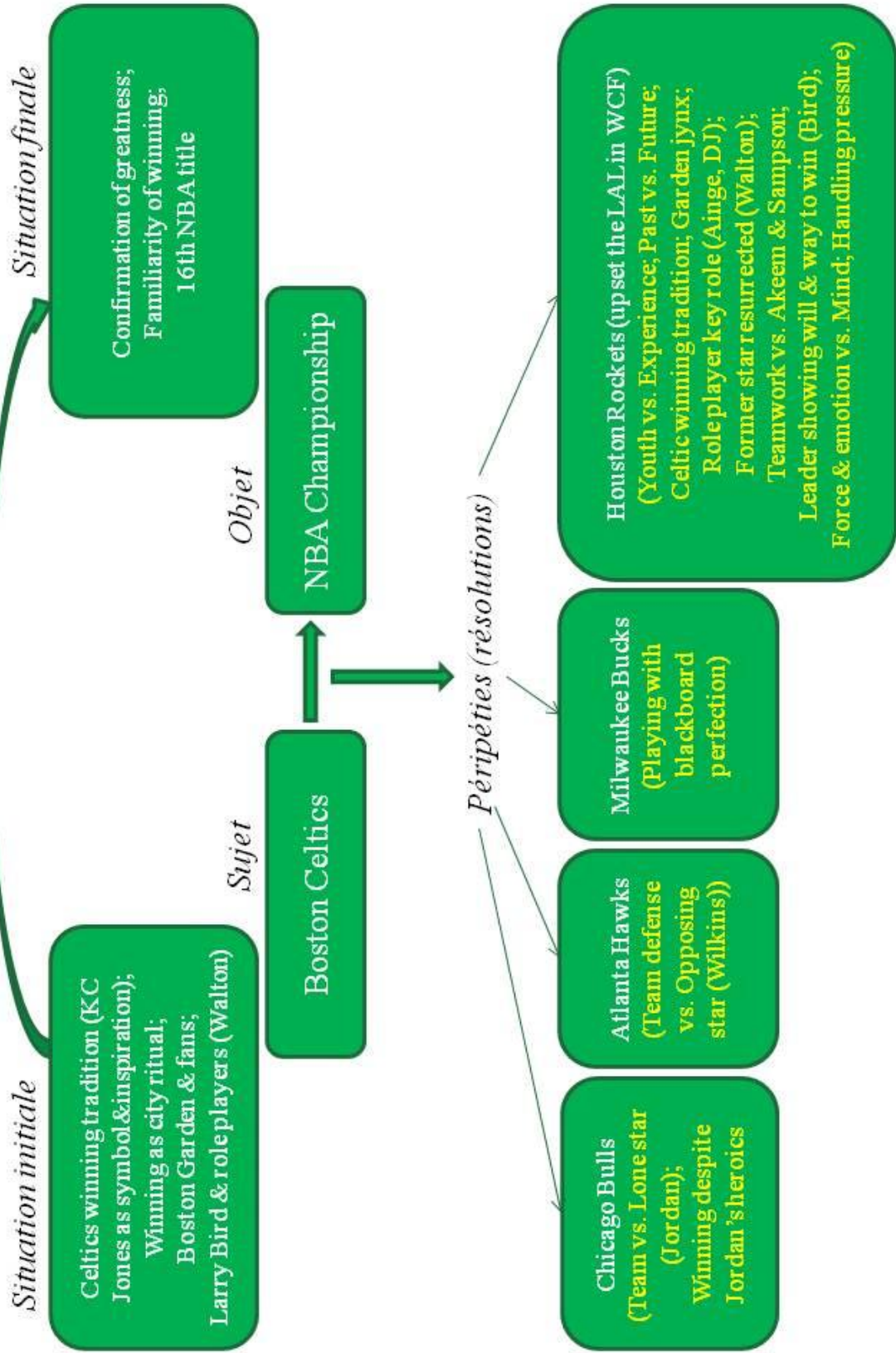
Pride & Passion: 1983-1984 Boston Celtics



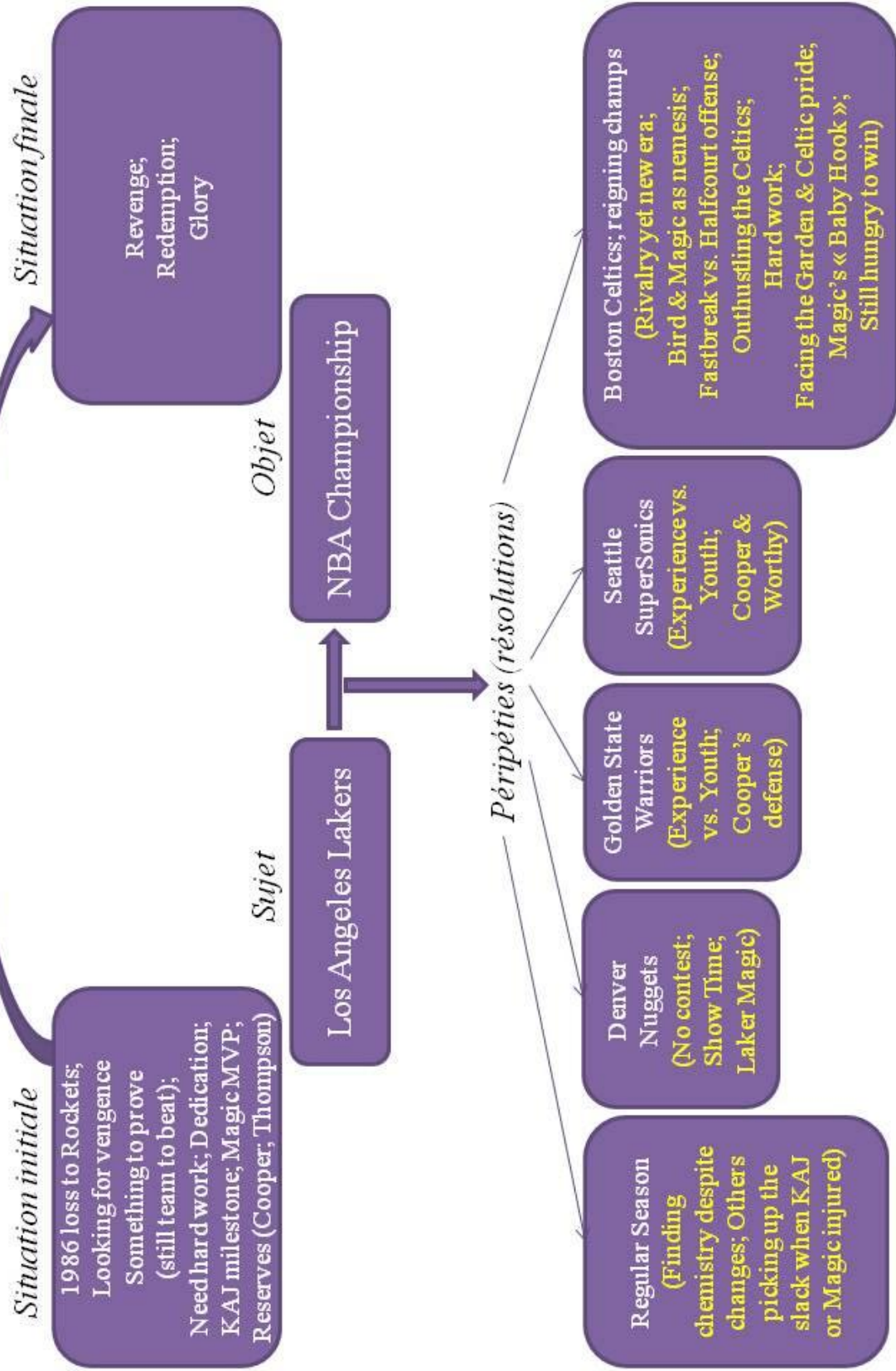
Return to Glory: 1980-1985 Los Angeles Lakers



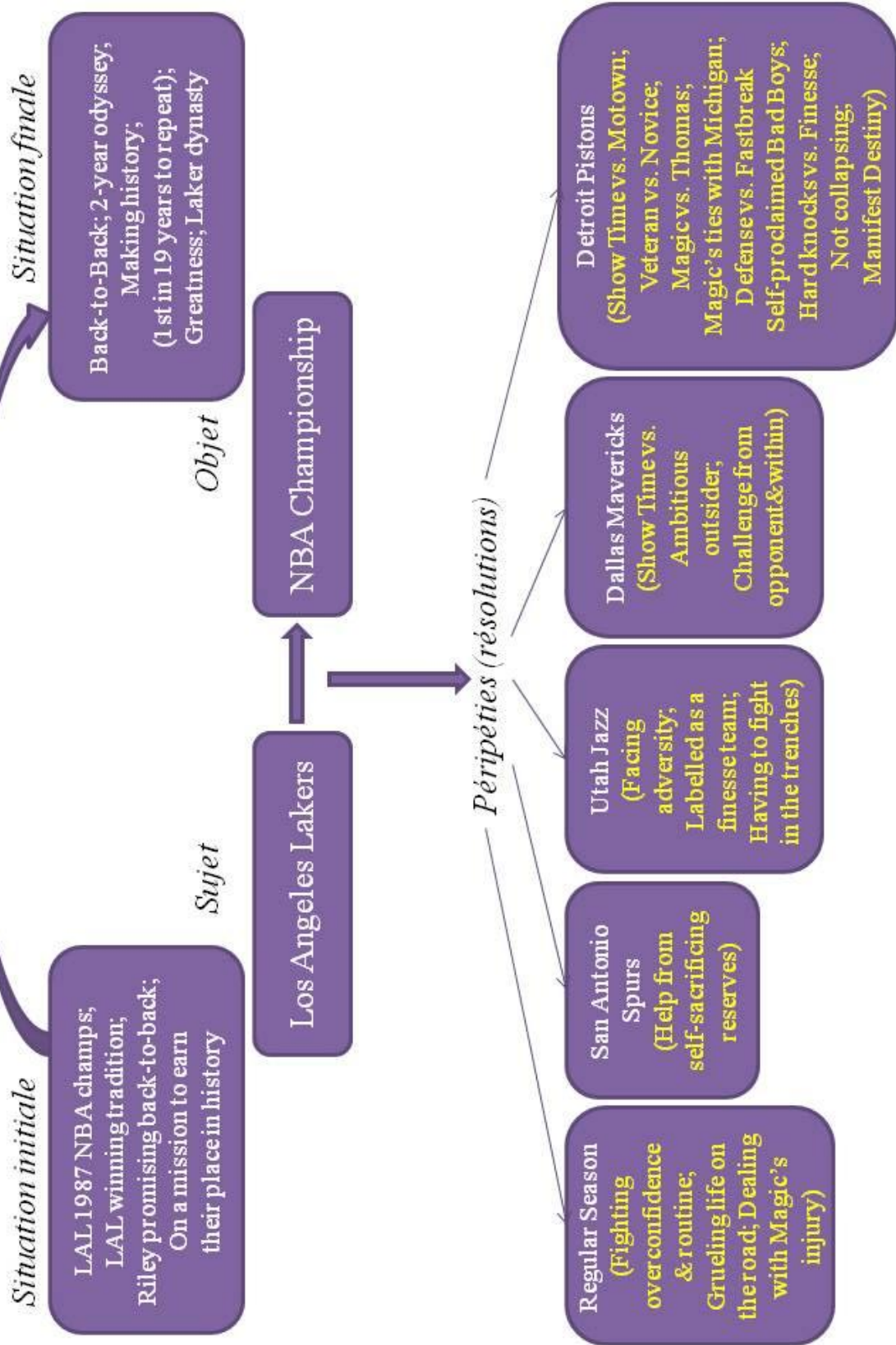
Sweet Sixteen: 1985-1986 Boston Celtics



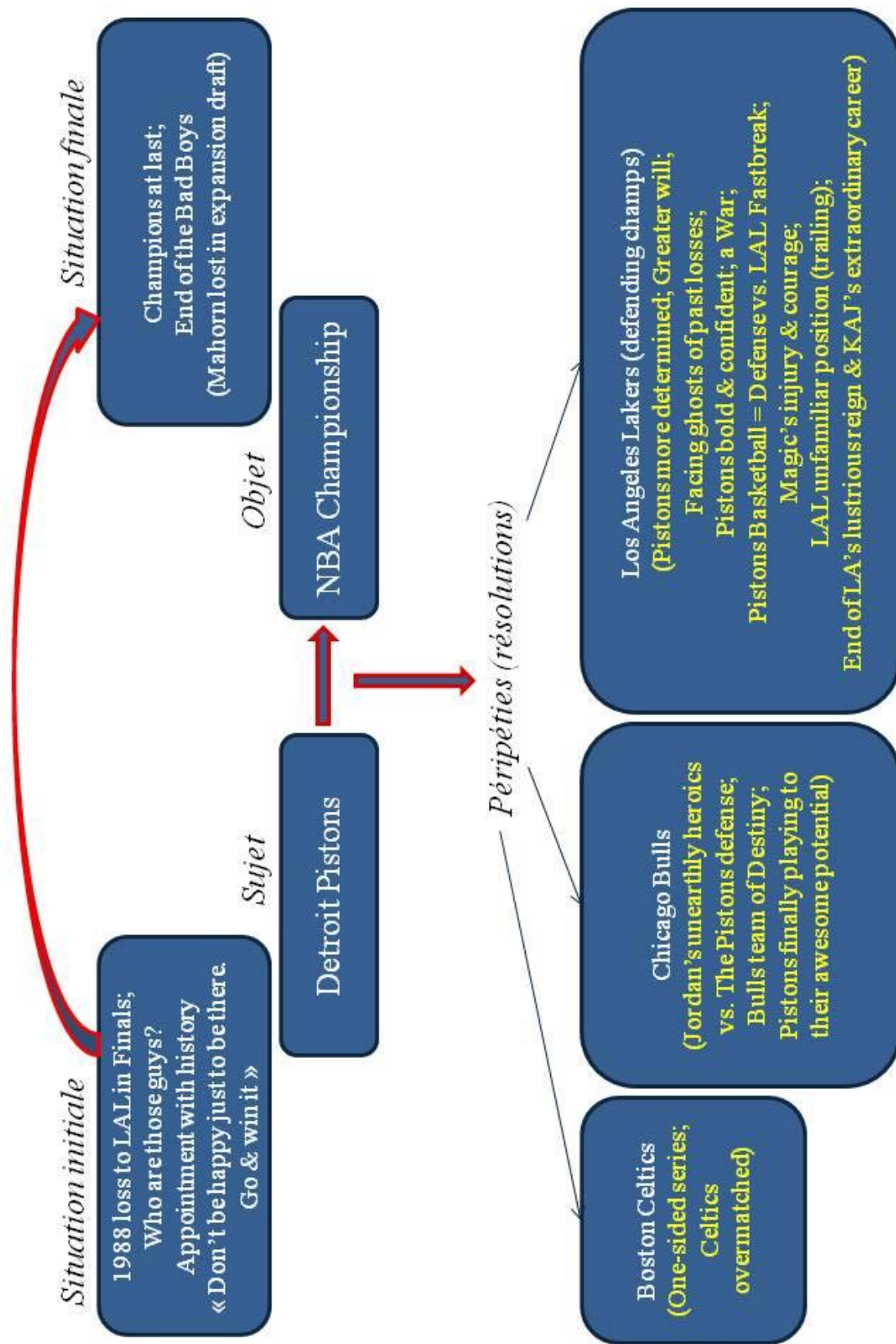
The Drive for Five: 1986-1987 Los Angeles Lakers



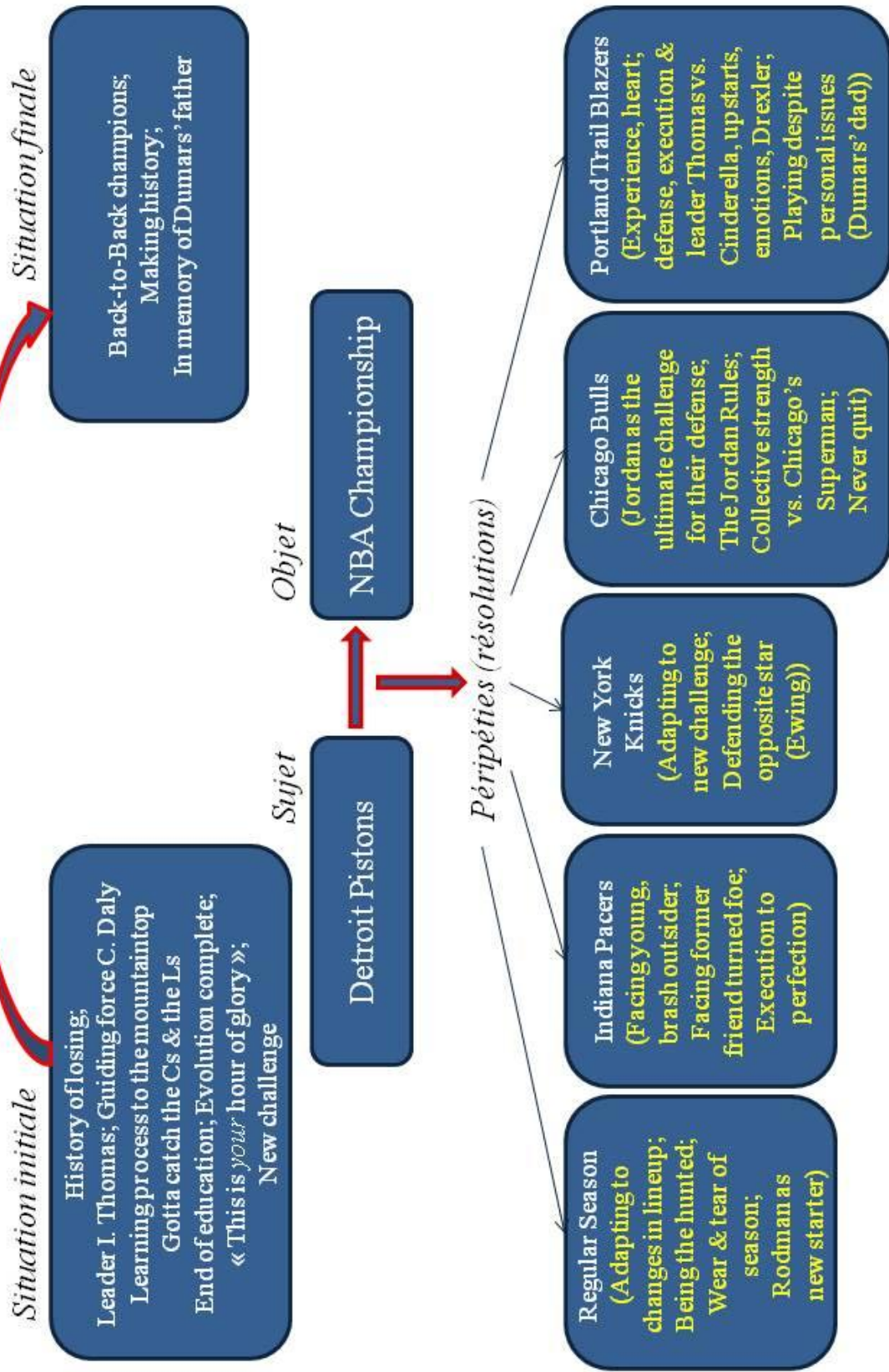
Back to Back: 1987-1988 Los Angeles Lakers



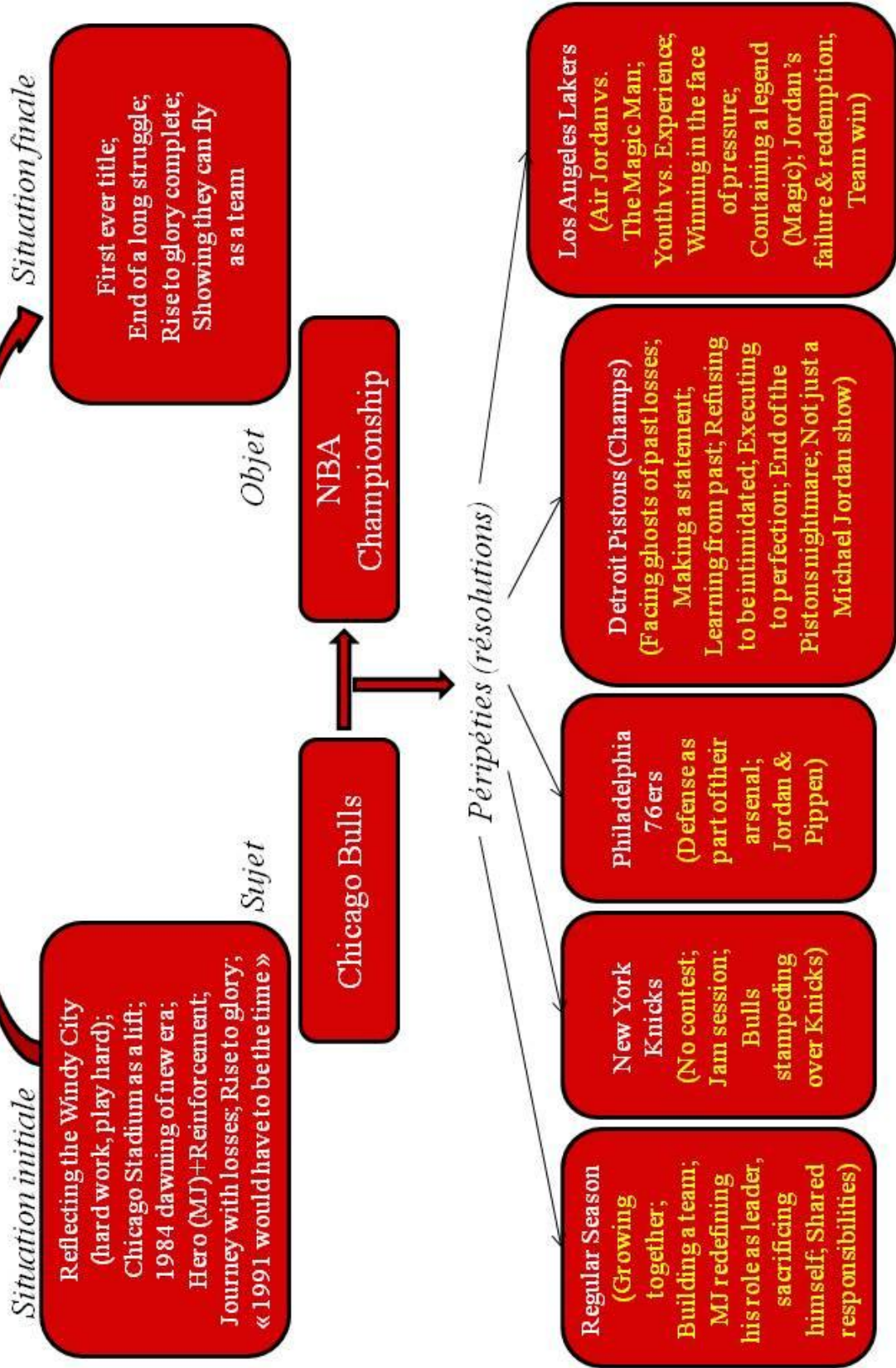
Motor City Madness: 1988-1989 Detroit Pistons



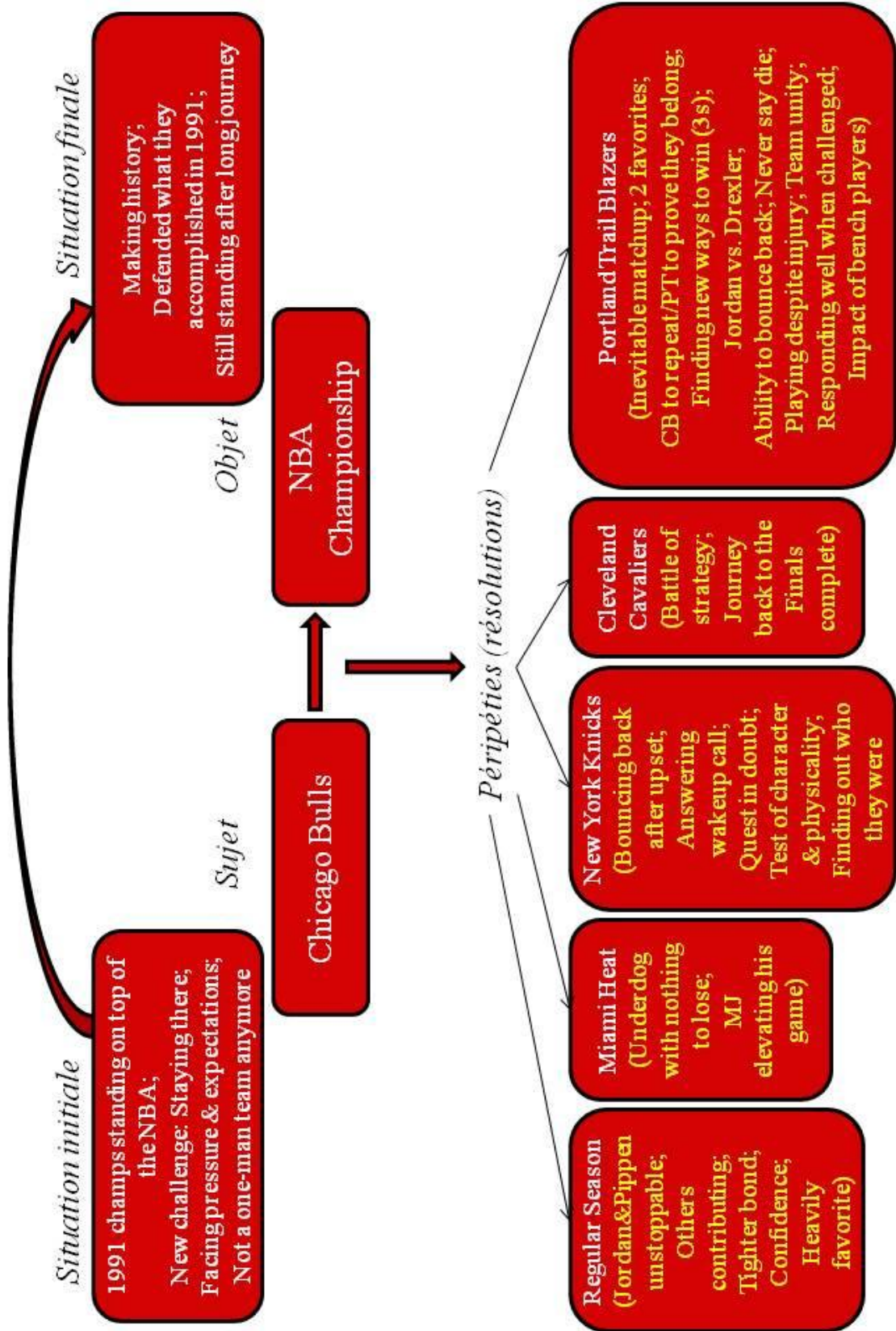
Pure Pistons: 1989-1990 Detroit Pistons



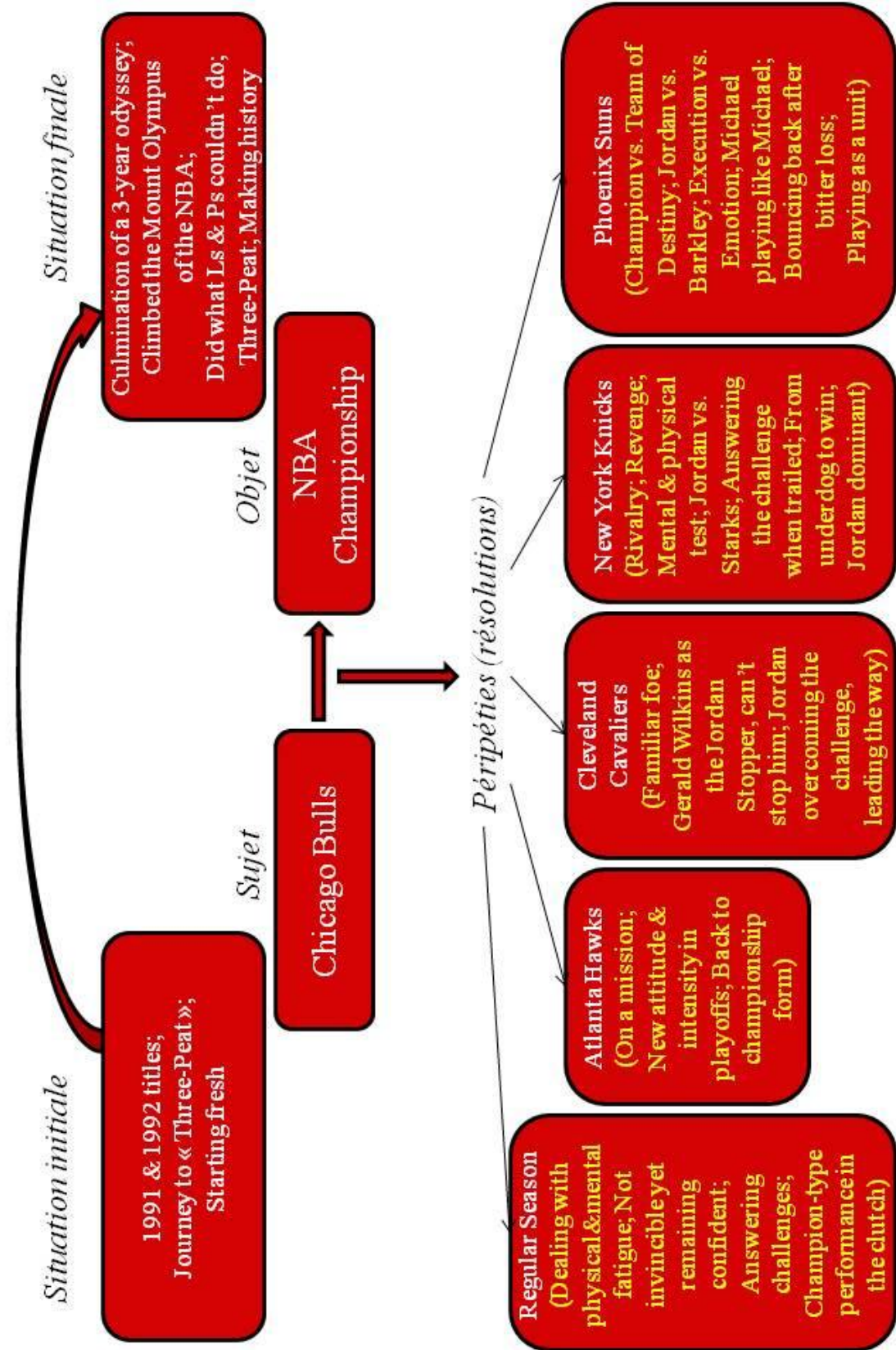
Learning to Fly: 1990-1991 Chicago Bulls



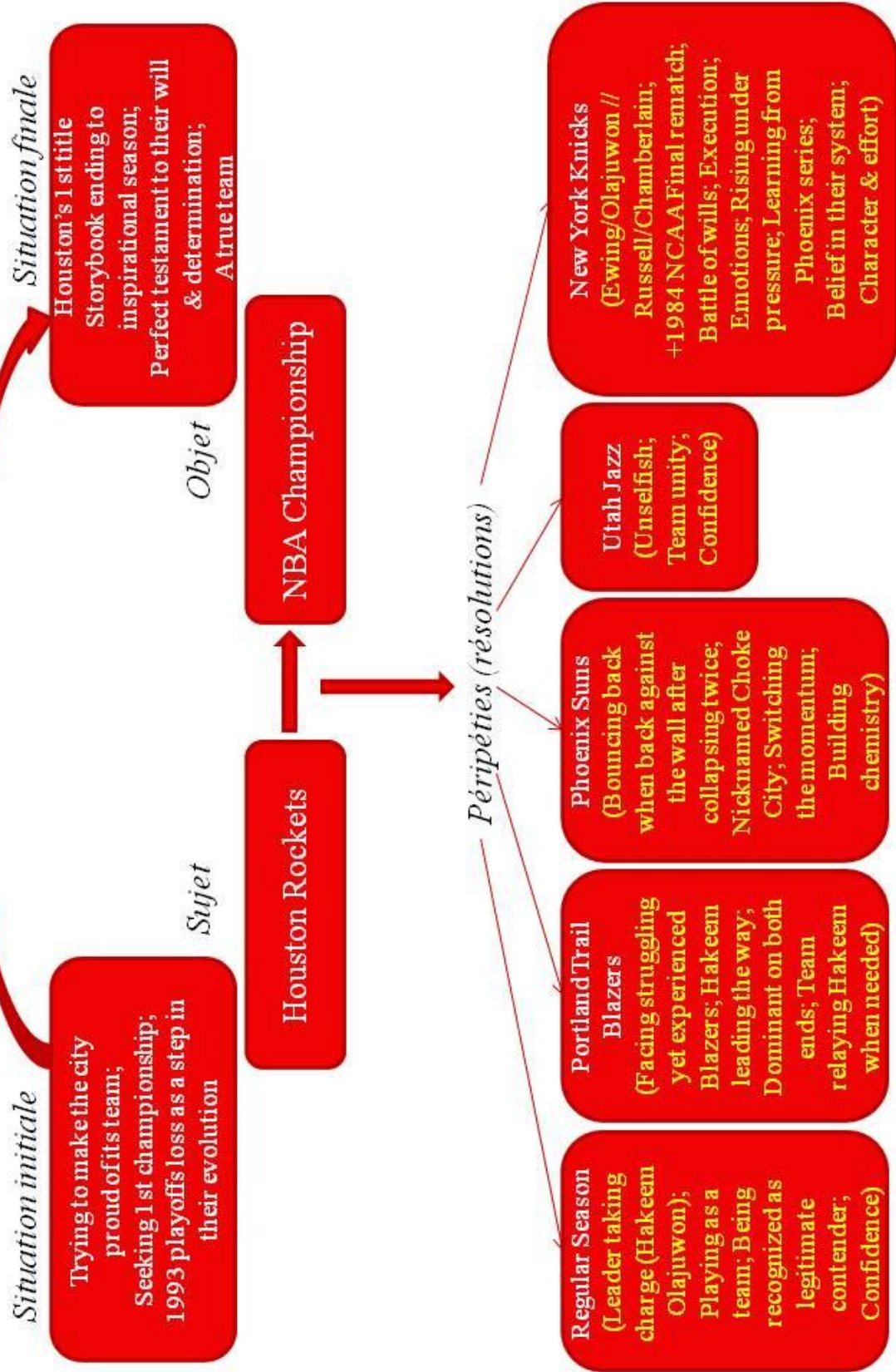
Untouchabulls: 1991-1992 Chicago Bulls



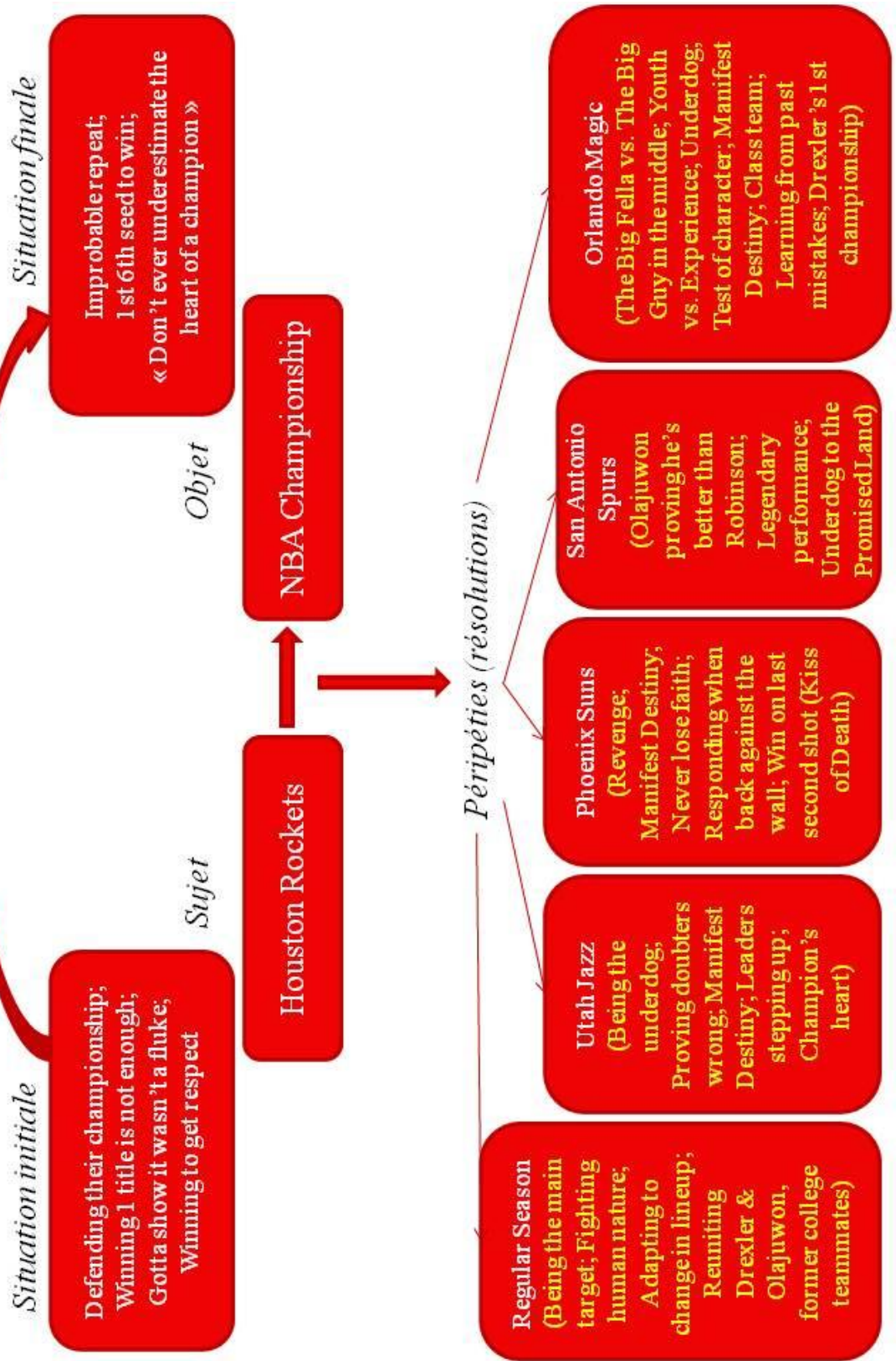
Three-Peat: 1992-1993 Chicago Bulls



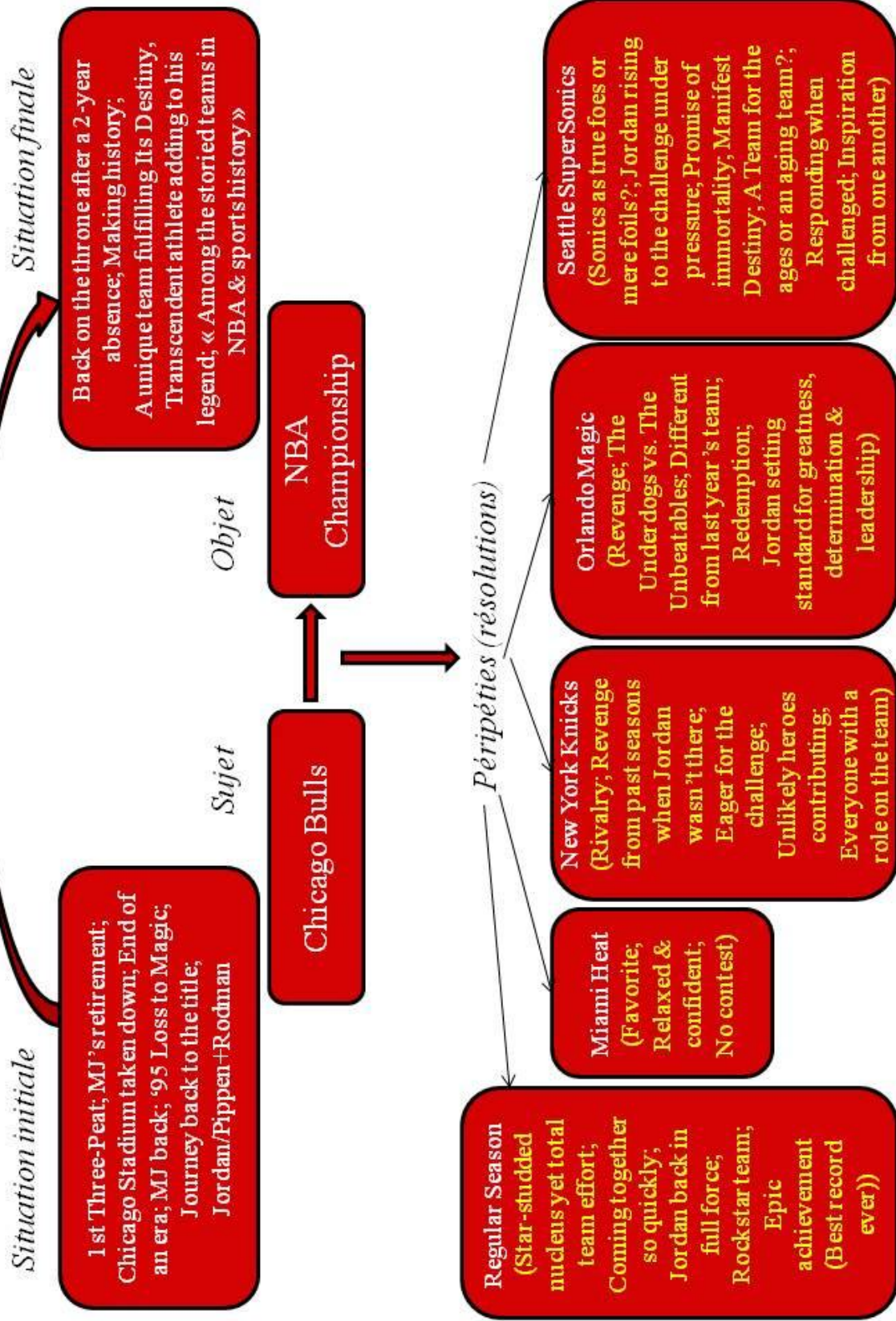
Clutch City: 1993-1994 Houston Rockets



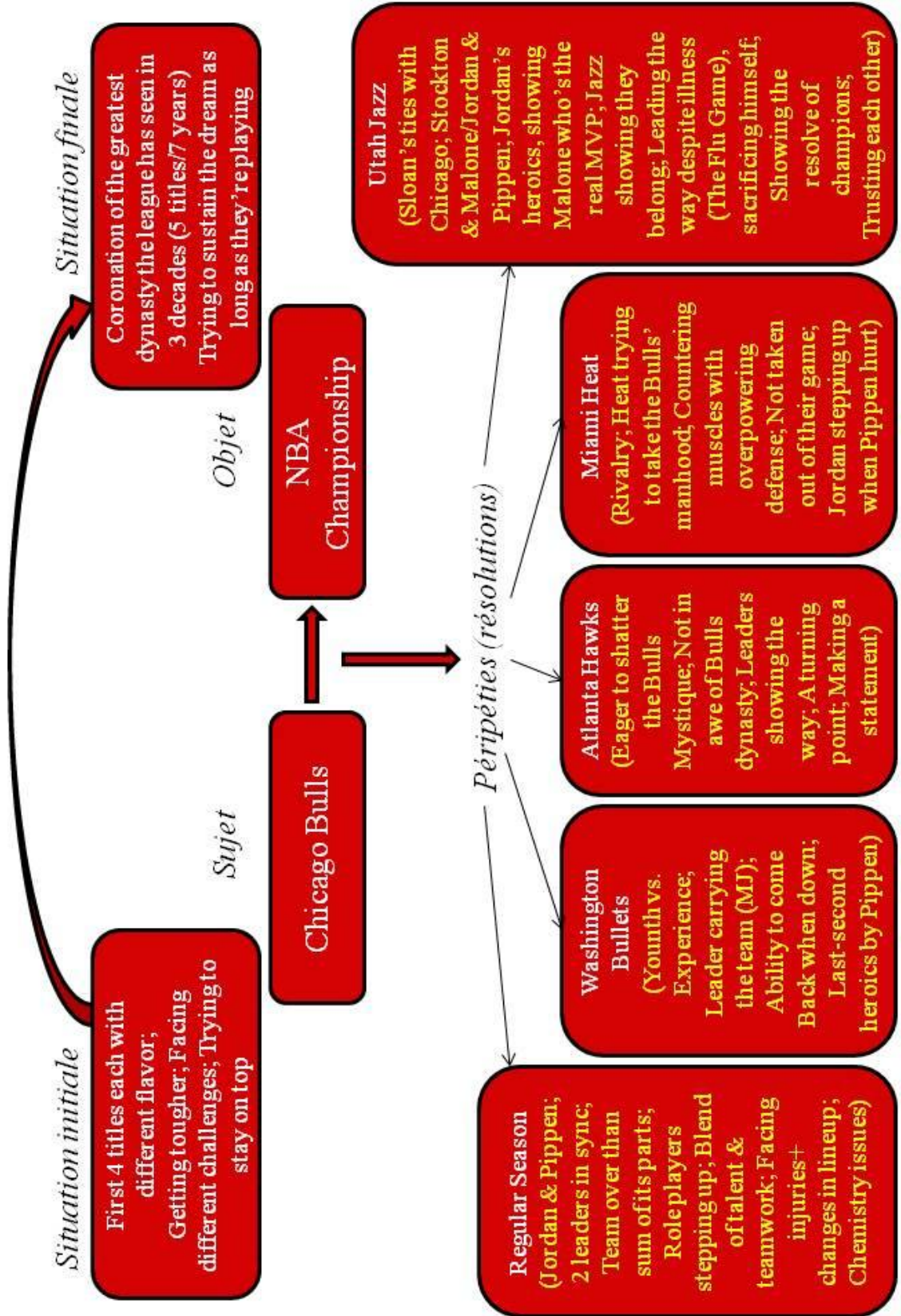
Double Clutch: 1994-1995 Houston Rockets



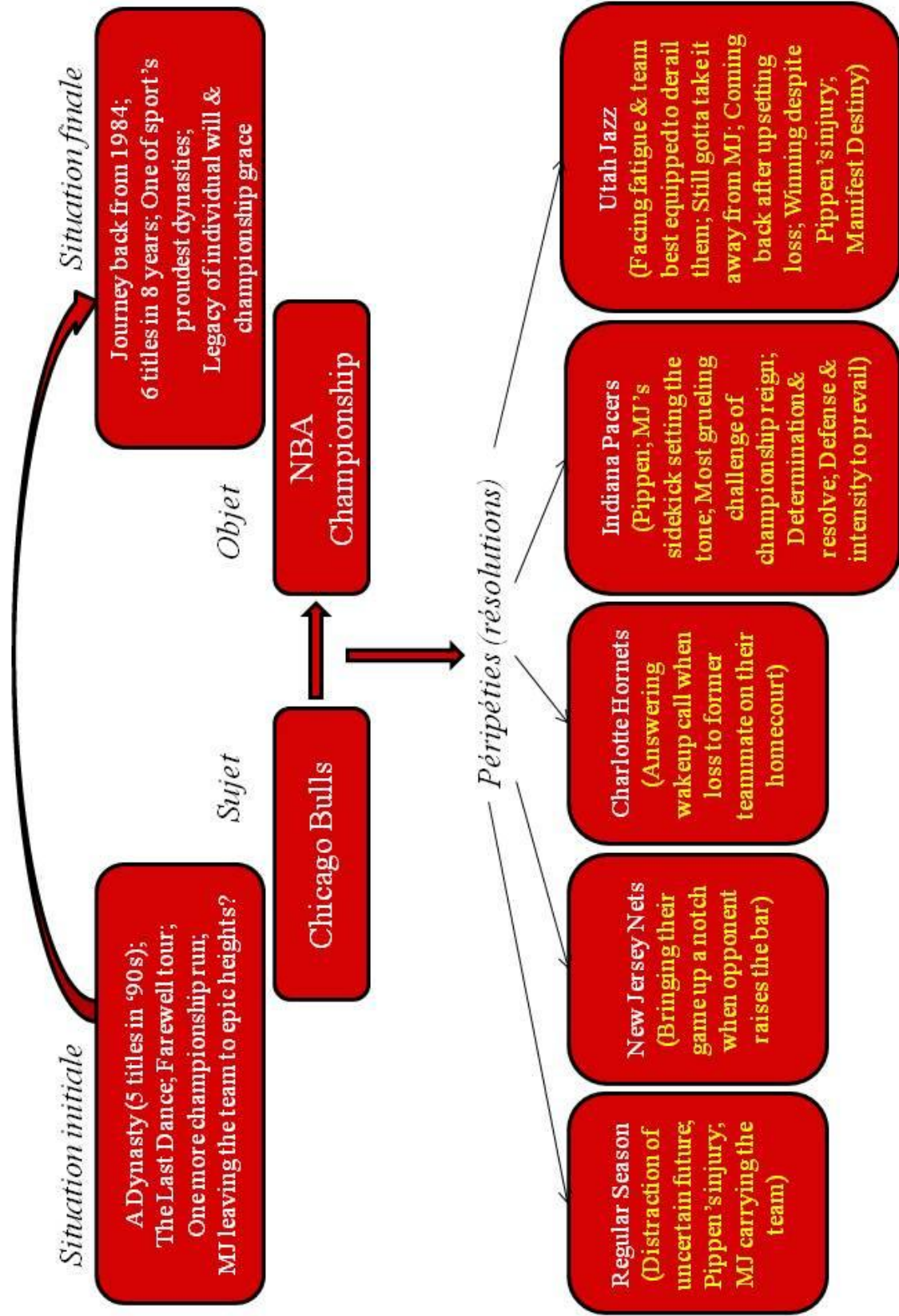
Unstop-A-Bulls: 1995-1996 Chicago Bulls



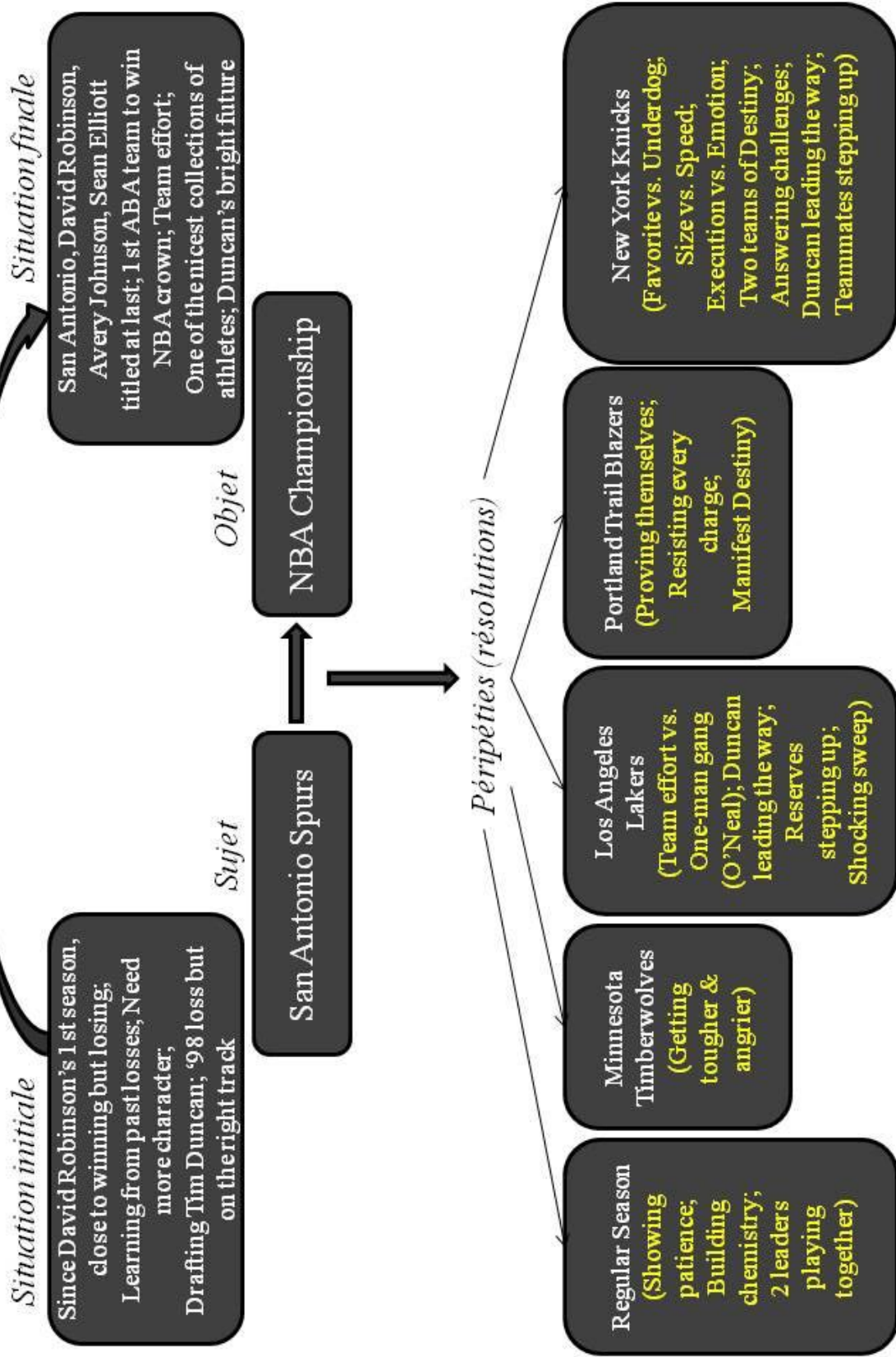
1996-1997 Chicago Bulls



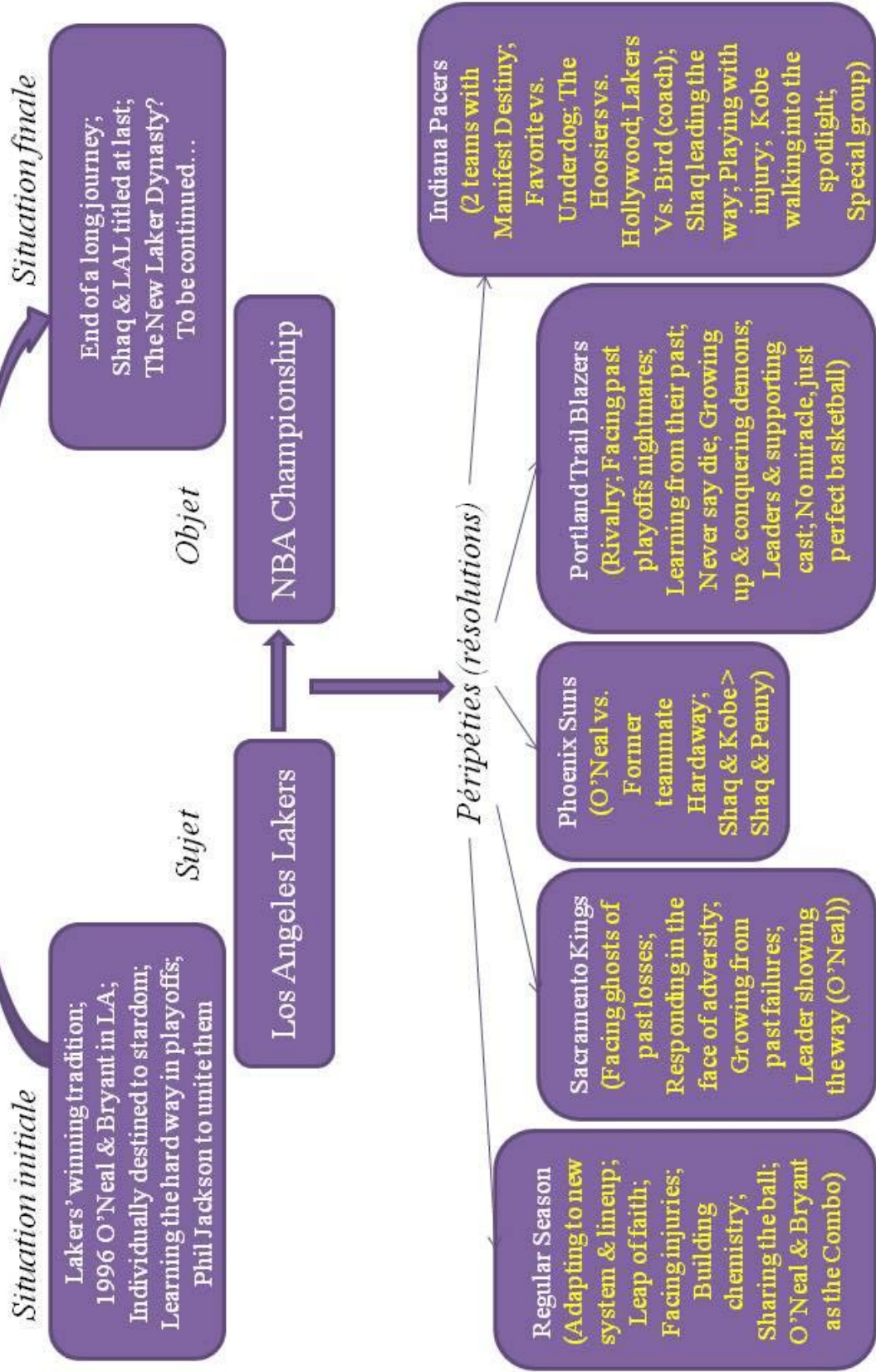
UnforgettaBulls: 1997-1998 Chicago Bulls



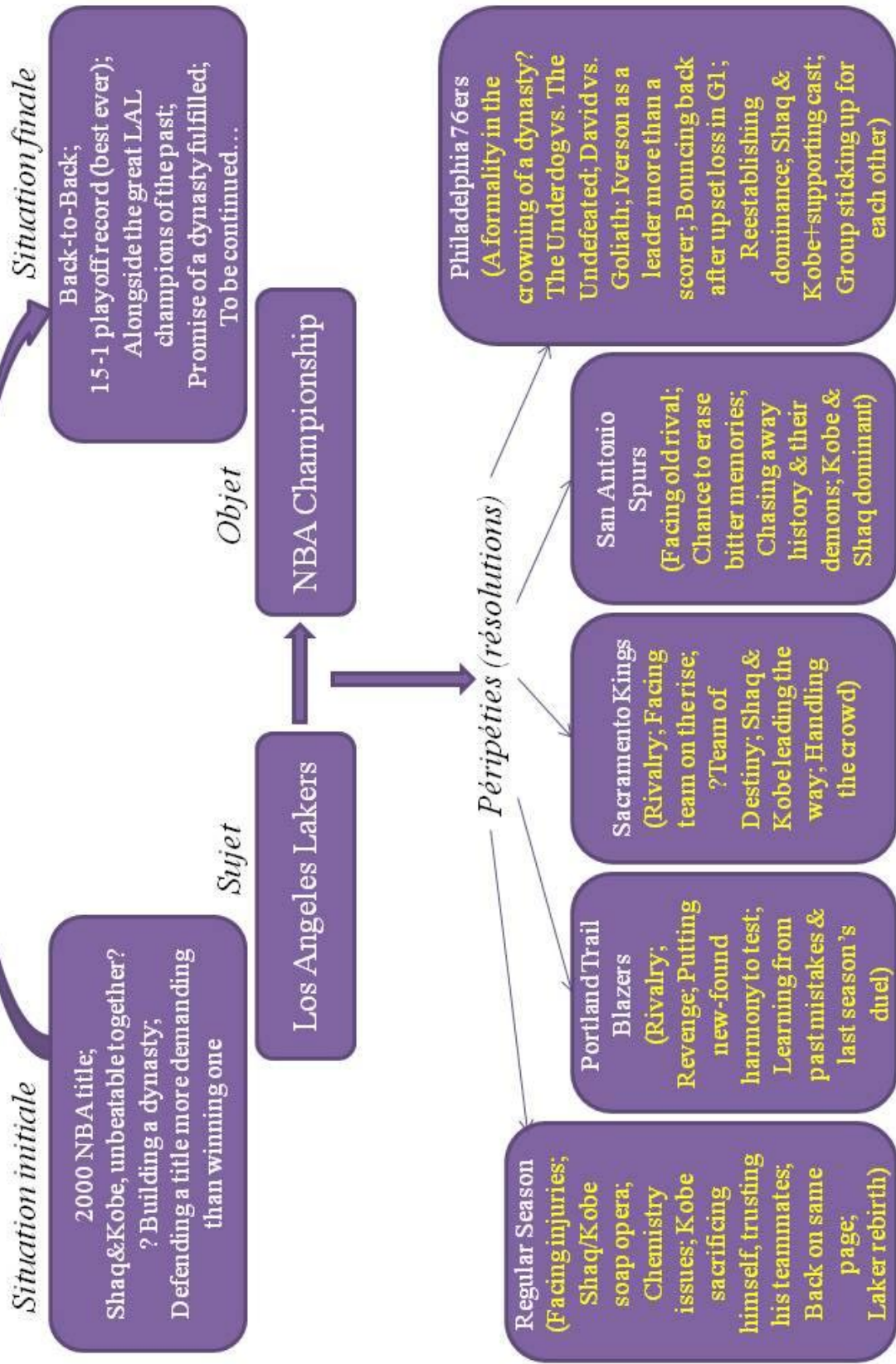
Go Spurs Go!: 1998-1999 San Antonio Spurs



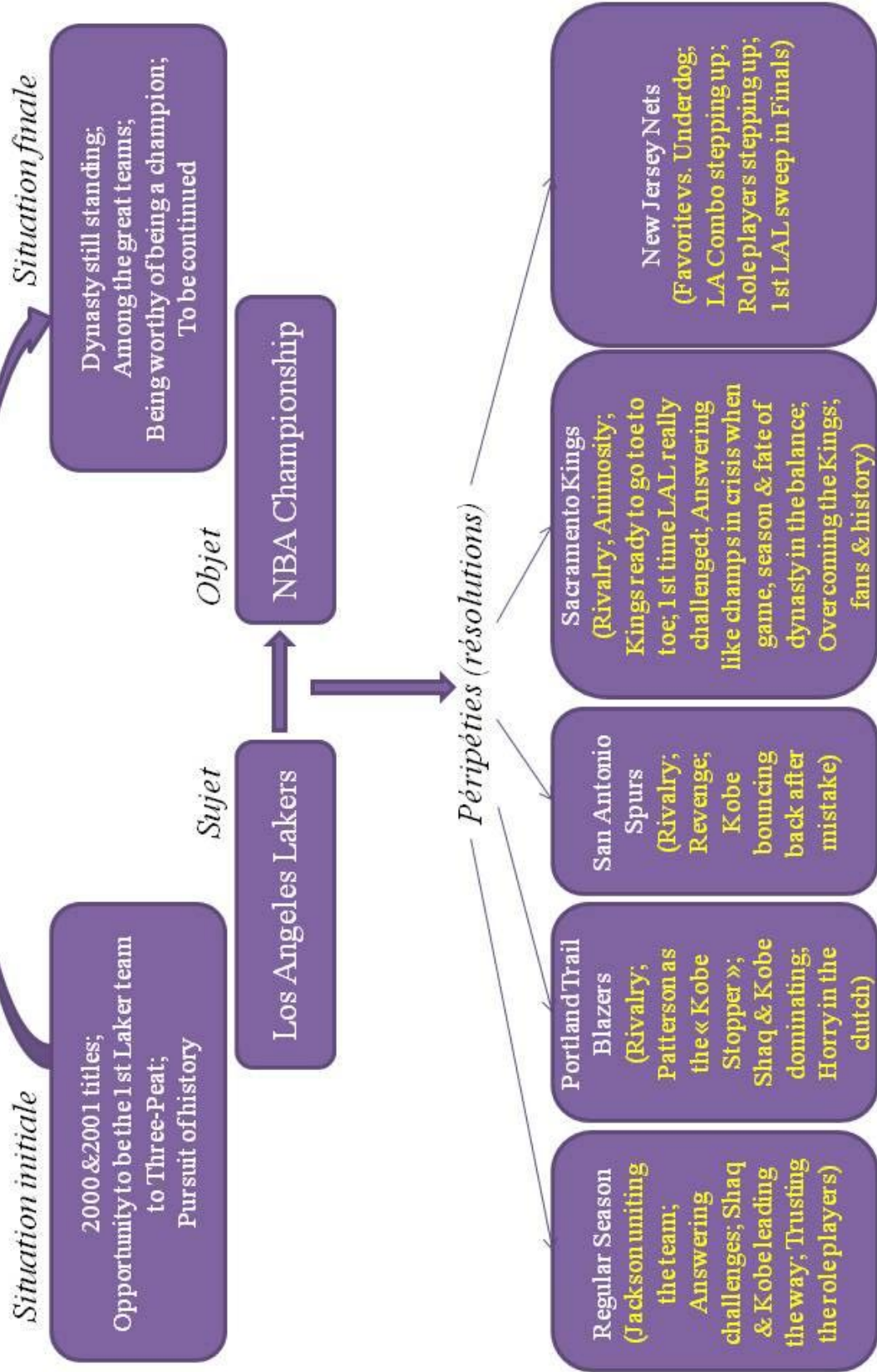
1999-2000 Los Angeles Lakers



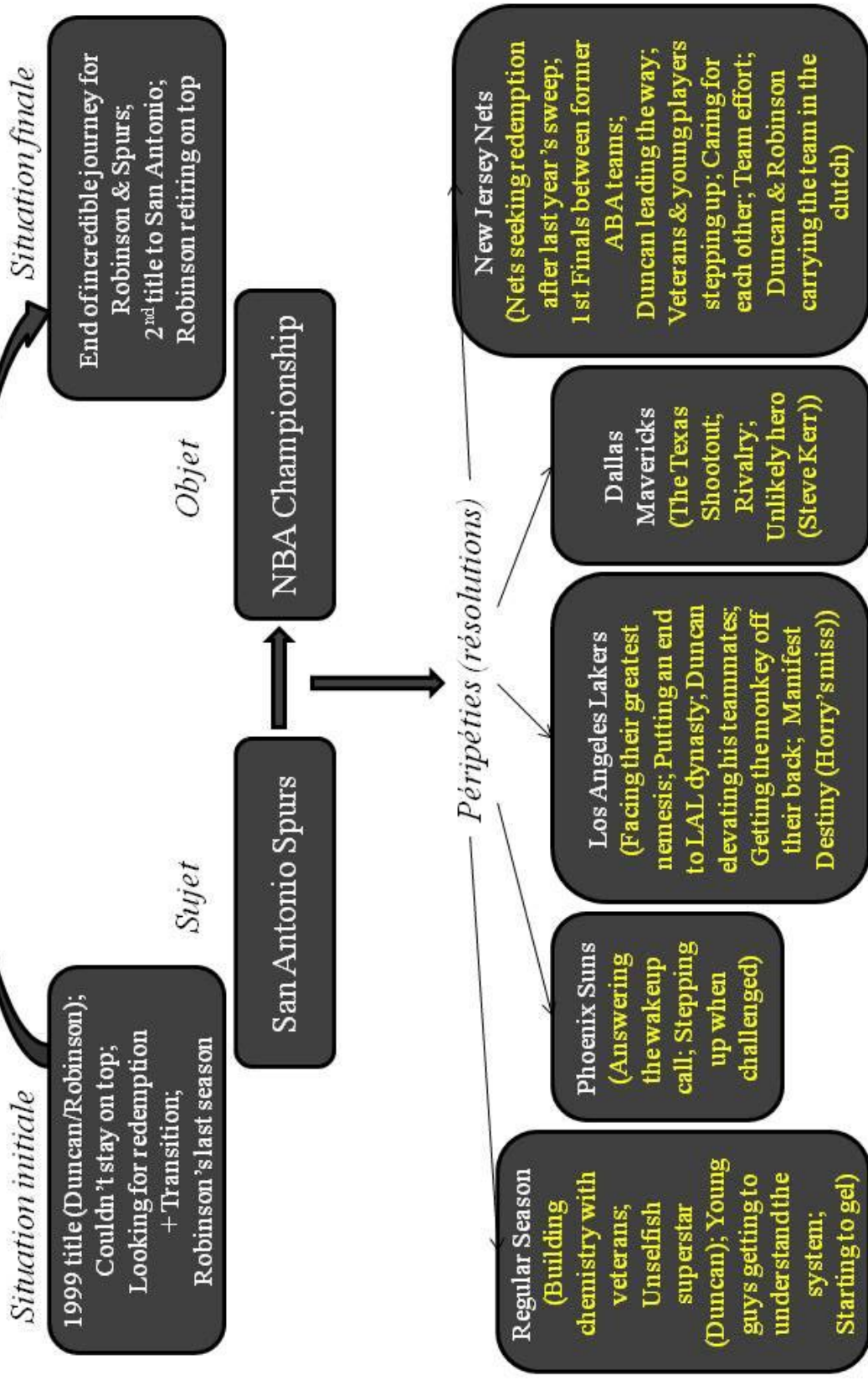
2000-2001 Los Angeles Lakers



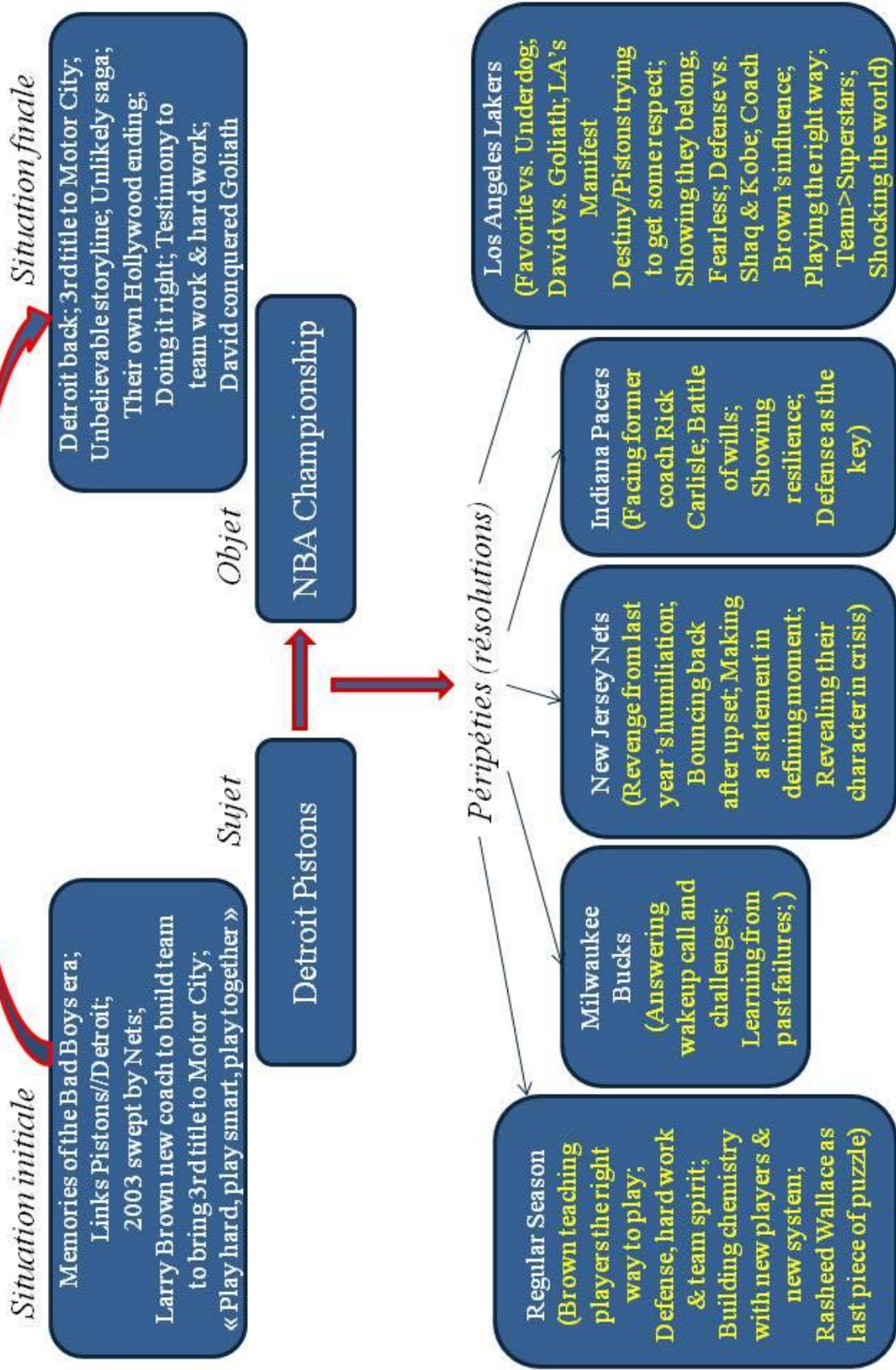
2001-2002 Los Angeles Lakers



2002-2003 San Antonio Spurs



2003-2004 Detroit Pistons



NBA Stories Revealed

The Actors

<i>Personnages récurrents</i>
Defending champion
Leader carrying his team (with his heroics)
Young star on the rise
Player sacrificing himself for the good of the team // Christ
Stars playing together / Dream Team
Coach as teacher
Role players with key role
Resurrected player // Phoenix
Unlikely hero
Rival (Superstar/Team)
Ambitious underdog
Cinderella
Team of Destiny
Friend turned foe
Team as reflection of its city
Fans/Stadium as actors



<i>Oppositions récurrentes</i>
Favorite vs. Underdog // David vs. Goliath
Good Guy vs. Bad Guy
Experience vs. Youth
Team vs. Superstars; We vs. Me
Defense vs. Offense
Emotion vs. Execution
Power vs. Finesse
Size vs. Speed
Fastbreak vs. Halfcourt Offense
Show Time vs. Hustle
Style vs. Substance
Brothers/Nemesis // Cain & Abel

NBA Stories Revealed

The Plot

<i>Scripts</i>	
Winning tradition to sustain	Losing tradition to put an end to
Defending what's yours	Dethroning the champ
Believing in your System	Redefining yourself to win
Building a dynasty/Making History	
Quest for perfection/Record	
Getting back on top/Reconquest	
Bouncing back after loss (Rise from ashes)	
Revenge/Rematch/Redemption	
Manifest Destiny/On a mission	
Rivalry	
Facing/Getting rid of past ghosts	
Learning from past losses	
Growing together	
Overcoming injury	
Overcoming time	
Something to prove (to yourself & others)	
Cinderella stories/Unlikely heroes	

Season & Title Run as Odyssey/Initiatory Journey & Rise to Glory



<i>What It Takes to Get There</i>
Respond to challenges
Never say die
Rise under pressure
Fight against yourself/Stay hungry
Team work & heart > Talent & money (Help yourself; God will help you; Sacrifice the one for the many + Substance over style)
Build chemistry/A dapt to change

Annexe n° 11 : Les Finales NBA à la télévision

Les Finales NBA à la télévision – Depuis la fusion avec la ABA (1976-2015)

NBA Finals Champion vs. Runner-up (MVP)	Réseau	Commentateurs	Audience moyenne (Nielsen Rating) ⁶ ⁷
1976 NBA Finals Celtics vs. Suns (Jo Jo White)	CBS	Brent Mussburger Rick Barry Mendy Rudolph Sonny Hill	11.5
1977 NBA Finals Blazers vs. 76ers (Bill Walton)	CBS	Brent Mussburger Rick Barry Steve Jones	12.7
1978 NBA Finals Bullets vs. Sonics (Wes Unseld)	CBS	Brent Mussburger Rick Barry	9.9
1979 NBA Finals Sonics vs. Bullets (Dennis Johnson)	CBS	Brent Mussburger Rod Hundley Rick Barry	7.2
1980 NBA Finals Lakers vs. 76ers (Magic Johnson)	CBS	Brent Musburger Rod Hundley Bill Russell	8.0
1981 NBA Finals Celtics vs. Rockets (Cedric Maxwell)	CBS	Gary Bender Bill Russell Rick Barry	6.7
1982 NBA Finals Lakers vs. 76ers (Magic Johnson)	CBS	Dick Stockton Bill Russell	13.0
1983 NBA Finals 76ers vs. Lakers (Moses Malone)	CBS	Dick Stockton Bill Russell	12.3

⁶ N.D.A. : 1 point Nielsen rating = 1 million de téléspectateurs

⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Basketball_Association_Nielsen_ratings

NBA Finals Champion vs. Runner-up (MVP)	Réseau	Commentateurs	Audience moyenne (Nielsen Rating)
1984 NBA Finals Celtics vs. Lakers (Larry Bird)	CBS	Dick Stockton Tom Heinsohn	12.3
1985 NBA Finals Lakers vs. Celtics (Kareem Abdul-Jabbar)	CBS	Dick Stockton Tom Heinsohn	13.7
1986 NBA Finals Celtics vs. Rockets (Larry Bird)	CBS	Dick Stockton Tom Heinsohn	14.1
1987 NBA Finals Lakers vs. Celtics (Magic Johnson)	CBS	Dick Stockton Tom Heinsohn	15.9
1988 NBA Finals Lakers vs. Pistons (James Worthy)	CBS	Dick Stockton Billy Cunningham	15.4
1989 NBA Finals Pistons vs. Lakers (Joe Dumars)	CBS	Dick Stockton Hubie Brown	15.1
1990 NBA Finals Pistons vs. Blazers (Isiah Thomas)	CBS	Dick Stockton Hubie Brown	12.3
1991 NBA Finals Bulls vs. Lakers (Michael Jordan)	NBC	Marv Albert Mike Fratello	15.8
1992 NBA Finals Bulls vs. Blazers (Michael Jordan)	NBC	Marv Albert Mike Fratello Magic Johnson	14.2

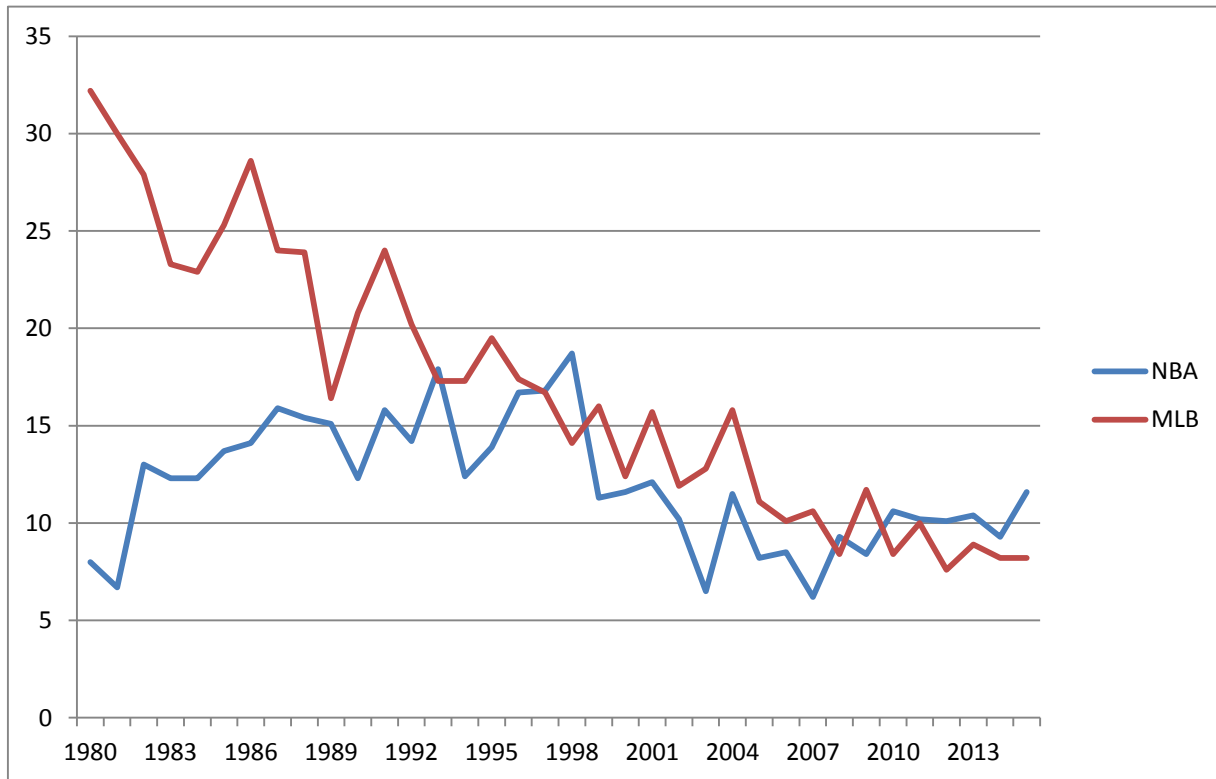
NBA Finals Champion vs. Runner-up (MVP)	Réseau	Commentateurs	Audience moyenne (Nielsen Rating)
1993 NBA Finals Bulls vs. Suns (Michael Jordan)	NBC	Marv Albert Mike Fratello Magic Johnson	17.9 ⁸
1994 NBA Finals Rockets vs. Knicks (Hakeem Olajuwon)	NBC	Marv Albert Matt Guokas	12.4
1995 NBA Finals Rockets vs. Magic (Hakeem Olajuwon)	NBC	Marv Albert Matt Guokas Bill Walton	13.9
1996 NBA Finals Bulls vs. Sonics (Michael Jordan)	NBC	Marv Albert Matt Guokas Bill Walton	16.7
1997 NBA Finals Bulls vs. Jazz (Michael Jordan)	NBC	Marv Albert Matt Guokas Bill Walton	16.8
1998 NBA Finals Bulls vs. Jazz (Michael Jordan)	NBC	Bob Costas Doug Collins Isiah Thomas	18.7
1999 NBA Finals Spurs vs. Knicks (Tim Duncan)	NBC	Bob Costas Doug Collins	11.3
2000 NBA Finals Lakers vs. Pacers (Shaquille O'Neal)	NBC	Bob Costas Doug Collins	11.6
2001 NBA Finals Lakers vs. 76ers (Shaquille O'Neal)	NBC	Marv Albert Doug Collins	12.1

⁸ Pour la 1^{ère} fois, les Finales NBA dépassent les World Series en terme d'audience (17.9 contre 17.3)

NBA Finals Champion vs. Runner-up (MVP)	Réseau	Commentateurs	Audience moyenne (Nielsen Rating)
2002 NBA Finals Lakers vs. Nets (Shaquille O'Neal)	NBC	Marv Albert Doug Collins Steve Jones	10.2
2003 NBA Finals Spurs vs. Nets (Tim Duncan)	ABC	Brad Nessler Bill Walton Tom Tolbert	6.5
2004 NBA Finals Pistons vs. Lakers (Chauncey Billups)	ABC	Al Michaels Doc Rivers	11.5
2005 NBA Finals Spurs vs. Pistons (Tim Duncan)	ABC	Al Michaels Hubie Brown	8.2
2006 NBA Finals Heat vs. Mavs (Dwyane Wade)	ABC	Mike Breen Hubie Brown	8.5
2007 NBA Finals Spurs vs. Cavs (Tony Parker)	ABC	Mike Breen Mark Jackson Jeff Van Gundy	6.2
2008 NBA Finals Celtics vs. Lakers (Paul Pierce)	ABC	Mike Breen Mark Jackson Jeff Van Gundy	9.3
2009 NBA Finals Lakers vs. Magic (Kobe Bryant)	ABC	Mike Breen Mark Jackson Jeff Van Gundy	8.4
2010 NBA Finals Lakers vs. Celtics (Kobe Bryant)	ABC	Mike Breen Mark Jackson Jeff Van Gundy	10.6

NBA Finals Champion vs. Runner-up (MVP)	Réseau	Commentateurs	Audience moyenne (Nielsen Rating)
2011 NBA Finals Mavs vs. Heat (Dirk Nowitzki)	ABC	Mike Breen Mark Jackson Jeff Van Gundy	10.2
2012 NBA Finals Heat vs. Thunder (LeBron James)	ABC	Mike Breen Jeff Van Gundy	10.1
2013 NBA Finals Heat vs. Spurs (LeBron James)	ABC	Mike Breen Jeff Van Gundy	10.4
2014 NBA Finals Spurs vs. Heat (Kawhi Leonard)	ABC	Mike Breen Mark Jackson Jeff Van Gundy	9.3
2015 NBA Finals Warriors vs. Cavs (Andre Iguodala)	ABC	Mike Breen Mark Jackson Jeff Van Gundy	11.6

Audiences comparées Finales NBA/World Series MLB⁹, 1980-2015)



Meilleurs audiences NCAA Title Games (1975-2015¹⁰)

Classement	Affiche	Audience
1	Michigan State vs. Indiana State 1979	24.1
2	Georgetown vs. Villanova 1985	23.3
3	Duke vs. Michigan 1992	22.7
4	North Carolina State vs. Houston 1983	22.3
5	North Carolina vs. Michigan 1993	22.2
6	Arkansas vs. Duke 1994	21.6
7	North Carolina vs. Georgetown 1982	21.6
8	Michigan vs. Seton Hall 1989	21.3
9	UCLA vs. Kentucky 1975	21.3
10	Louisville vs. Duke 1986	20.7

⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Series_television_ratings

¹⁰ <http://www.statista.com/statistics/219645/ncaa-basketball-tournament-games-by-tv-ratings/>

<http://www.ncaa.com/news/ncaa/article/2015-04-07/2015-ncaa-tournament-has-highest-average-viewership-22-years>

Les commentateurs des Finales NBA (1965-2015)

Commentateur	Play-by-Play Announcer Réseau	Color Commentator Réseau/Anciennes équipes	Commentateur afro-américain
Chris Schenkel	ABC (1965-1971)		Non
Jack Twyman		ABC (1965-1971) Royals	Non
Howard Cosell	ABC (1970)		Non
Keith Jackson	ABC (1972-1973)		Non
Bill Russell		ABC (1972-1973) CBS (1980-1983) Celtics	Oui
Pat Summerall	CBS (1974)		Non
Rick Barry		CBS (1974, 1976-1979, 1981) Warriors, Nets, Rockets	Non
Rod Hundley		CBS (1974, 1979-1980) Lakers	Non
Brent Musburger	CBS (1975-1980) (studio host 1980s)		Non
Oscar Robertson		CBS (1975) Bucks	Oui
Mendy Rudolph		CBS (1976) Referee	Non
Sonny Hill		CBS (1976) Eastern Basketball League	Oui
Steve Jones		CBS (1977) NBC (2002) Spirits, Blazers, etc.	Oui
Gary Bender	CBS (1981)		Non
Dick Stockton	CBS (1982-1990)		Non
Tom Heinsohn		CBS (1984-1987) Celtics	Non
Billy Cunningham		CBS (1988) 76ers	Non
Hubie Brown		CBS (1989-1990) ABC (2005-2006) Bucks, Colonals, Hawks, Knicks, Grizzlies	Non

Commentateur	Play-by-Play Announcer	Color Commentator	Commentateur afro-américain
	Réseau	Réseau/Anciennes équipes	
Marv Albert	NBC (1991-1997, 2001)		Non
Mike Fratello		NBC (1991-1993) Hawks, Cavaliers, Grizzlies	Non
Magic Johnson		NBC (1992-1993) Lakers	Oui
Matt Guokas		NBC (1994-1997) 76ers, Bulls, Rockets, etc..	Non
Bill Walton		NBC (1995-1997) ABC (2003) Blazers, Clippers, Celtics	Non
Bob Costas	NBC (1998-2000) (studio host 1990s)		Non
Isiah Thomas		NBC (1998) Pistons	Oui
Doug Collins		NBC (1998-2002) 76ers, Bulls, Pistons, Wizards	Non
Brad Nessler	ABC (2003)		Non
Tom Tolbert		ABC (2003) Hornets, Warriors, Magic, Clippers	Non
Al Michaels	ABC (2004-2005)		Non
Doc Rivers		ABC (2004) Hawks, Clippers, Knicks, Spurs, Magic, Celtics	Oui
Mike Breen	ABC (2006-2015)		Non
Mark Jackson		ABC (2007-2011, 2014- 2015) Knicks, Clippers, Pacers, Warriors, etc.	Oui
Jeff Van Gundy		ABC (2007-2015) Knicks, Rockets	Non

Annexe n° 12 : Listes des matchs analysés

1969 NBA Finals, Boston Celtics vs. Los Angeles Lakers, Game 7
1970 NBA Finals, New York Knicks vs. Los Angeles Lakers, Game 7
1979 NCAA Championship Game, Michigan State vs. Indiana State
1979 Regular Season Game, Los Angeles Lakers vs. San Diego Clippers
1980 NBA Finals, Los Angeles Lakers vs. Philadelphia 76^{ers}, Game 6
1981 Eastern Conference Finals, Boston Celtics vs. Philadelphia 76^{ers}, Game 7
1982 NCAA Championship Game, University of North Carolina vs. Georgetown University
1982 Eastern Conference Finals, Philadelphia 76^{ers} vs. Boston Celtics, Game 7
1982 NBA Finals, Los Angeles Lakers vs. Philadelphia 76^{ers}, Game 1
1983 NBA Finals, Philadelphia 76^{ers} vs. Los Angeles Lakers, Game 4
1984 Eastern Conference First Round, New York Knicks vs. Detroit Pistons, Game 5
1984 NBA Finals, Boston Celtics vs. Los Angeles Lakers, Games 4 & 7
1985 Regular Season Game, Boston Celtics vs. Atlanta Hawks
1985 NBA Finals, Los Angeles Lakers vs. Boston Celtics, Games 1-6
1986 Eastern Conference First Round, Boston Celtics vs. Chicago Bulls, Game 2
1986 NBA Finals, Boston Celtics vs. Houston Rockets, Games 1-6
1987 Eastern Conference Finals, Boston Celtics vs. Detroit Pistons, Game 5
1987 NBA Finals, Los Angeles Lakers vs. Boston Celtics, Games 4
1988 Eastern Conference Semi-Finals, Boston Celtics vs. Atlanta Hawks, Game 7
1988 NBA Finals, Los Angeles Lakers vs. Detroit Pistons, Game 7
1989 Eastern Conference Finals, Detroit Pistons vs. Chicago Bulls, Games 1-6
1989 NBA Finals, Detroit Pistons vs. Los Angeles Lakers, Games 1-4
1990 Regular Season Game, Chicago Bulls vs. Cleveland Cavaliers
1990 Eastern Conference Semi-Finals, Chicago Bulls vs. Philadelphia 76^{ers}, Game 3
1991 NBA Finals, Chicago Bulls vs. Los Angeles Lakers, Games 1-5
1992 All-Star Game, West vs. East
1992 Regular Season Game, Boston Celtics vs. Portland Trail Blazers
1992 NBA Finals, Chicago Bulls vs. Portland Trail Blazers, Game 1
1993 Eastern Conference Finals, Chicago Bulls vs. New York Knicks, Game 2
1993 NBA Finals, Chicago Bulls vs. Phoenix Suns, Games 4 & 6
1994 Eastern Conference Finals, New York Knicks vs. Indiana Pacers, Game 5
1994 NBA Finals, Houston Rockets vs. New York Knicks, Games 1-7
1995 Eastern Conference Semi-Finals, New York Knicks vs. Indiana Pacers, Game 1
1996 NBA Finals, Chicago Bulls vs. Seattle SuperSonics, Game 6
1997 NBA Finals, Chicago Bulls vs. Utah Jazz, Game 5
1998 Eastern Conference Finals, Indiana Pacers vs. Chicago Bulls, Game 3
1998 NBA Finals, Chicago Bulls vs. Utah Jazz, Game 6
1999 Eastern Conference Finals, New York Knicks vs. Indiana Pacers, Game 3
2000 NBA Finals, Los Angeles Lakers vs. Indiana Pacers, Game 4
2001 NBA Finals, Los Angeles Lakers vs. Philadelphia 76^{ers}, Games 1 & 5
2002 Western Conference Finals, Los Angeles Lakers vs. Sacramento Kings, Game 7
2006 NBA Finals, Miami Heat vs. Dallas Mavericks, Games 1-6
2008 NBA Finals, Boston Celtics vs. Los Angeles Lakers, Games 1-2 ; 4 ; 6
2010 NCAA Championship Game, Duke vs. Butler
2010 NBA Finals, Los Angeles Lakers vs. Boston Celtics, Games 1-7
2011 NBA Finals, Dallas Mavericks vs. Miami Heat, Games 1-6
2012 NBA Finals, Miami Heat vs. Oklahoma City Thunder, Games 1-5

Annexe n° 13 :
Lettre ouverte de Dan Gilbert¹¹, propriétaire des Cleveland Cavaliers,
en réaction à « The Décision »

Dear Cleveland, All Of Northeast Ohio and Cleveland Cavaliers Supporters Wherever You May Be Tonight;

As you now know, our former hero, who grew up in the very region that he deserted this evening, is no longer a Cleveland Cavalier.

This was announced with a several day, narcissistic, self-promotional build-up culminating with a national TV special of his "decision" unlike anything ever "witnessed" in the history of sports and probably the history of entertainment.

Clearly, this is bitterly disappointing to all of us.

The good news is that the ownership team and the rest of the hard-working, loyal, and driven staff over here at your hometown Cavaliers have not betrayed you nor NEVER will betray you.

There is so much more to tell you about the events of the recent past and our more than exciting future. Over the next several days and weeks, we will be communicating much of that to you.

You simply don't deserve this kind of cowardly betrayal.

You have given so much and deserve so much more.

In the meantime, I want to make one statement to you tonight:

"I PERSONALLY GUARANTEE THAT THE CLEVELAND CAVALIERS WILL WIN AN NBA CHAMPIONSHIP BEFORE THE SELF-TITLED FORMER 'KING' WINS ONE"

You can take it to the bank.

If you thought we were motivated before tonight to bring the hardware to Cleveland, I can tell you that this shameful display of selfishness and betrayal by one of our very own has shifted our "motivation" to previously unknown and previously never experienced levels.

Some people think they should go to heaven but NOT have to die to get there.

Sorry, but that's simply not how it works.

This shocking act of disloyalty from our home grown "chosen one" sends the exact opposite lesson of what we would want our children to learn. And "who" we would want them to grow-up to become.

But the good news is that this heartless and callous action can only serve as the antidote to the so-called "curse" on Cleveland, Ohio.

The self-declared former "King" will be taking the "curse" with him down south. And until he does "right" by Cleveland and Ohio, James (and the town where he plays) will unfortunately own this dreaded spell and bad karma.

Just watch.

Sleep well, Cleveland.

Tomorrow is a new and much brighter day....

I PROMISE you that our energy, focus, capital, knowledge and experience will be directed at one thing and one thing only:

DELIVERING YOU the championship you have long deserved and is long overdue....

Dan Gilbert
Majority Owner
Cleveland Cavaliers

¹¹ <http://sports.espn.go.com/nba/news/story?id=5365704>

Annexe n° 14 :
Réaction de Jesse Jackson suite à la lettre ouverte de Dan Gilbert
au sujet du départ de LeBron James pour Miami
11 juillet 2010, rainbowpush.org¹²

Mr. Dan Gilbert's accusations, expressed in an open letter to LeBron James after his announcement that he will play next year's NBA season for the Miami Heat, have legal and social implications for the league, its union and the character of LeBron James. By saying that he has gotten a free pass and that people have covered for him way too long, Gilbert suggests that LeBron has done something illegal or illicit.

He speaks as an owner of LeBron and not the owner of the Cleveland Cavaliers. His feelings of betrayal personify a slave master mentality. He sees LeBron as a runaway slave. This is an owner employee relationship--between business partners--and LeBron honored his contract.

He must know the Curt Flood suit, which changed plantation rules and created free agency; and the Spencer Haywood suit that changed eligibility rules.

If he believes that LeBron quit in games 2, 4, 5 and 6 of the 2010 Eastern Conference semifinals, then, why did he fire the coach? If he believes that LeBron intentionally quit, determining the outcome of those games, why did he pursue him and offer him an additional \$120 million to stay in Cleveland?

These accusations endanger LeBron. His jersey is being burned in effigy, and he is being projected as a betrayer by the owner.

When players or coaches speak disrespectfully to or about referees, they are fined. If Mr. Gilbert cannot prove that LeBron changed games by quitting, he defames his character. He should have to face a challenge by the NBA and the players association. LeBron has every right to an apology.

Other players cannot just watch this as if it is LeBron's personal problem. This is an attack upon players in general.

LeBron is not a child, nor is he bound to play on Gilbert's plantation and be demeaned. He has been a model citizen and has inspired the children of Akron, Cleveland, the State of Ohio and the United States.

He has conducted camps for children, helped to win a gold medal for our nation and his public deportment has been excellent.

Mr. Gilbert's statement is mean, arrogant and presumptuous.

I hope that LeBron will speak up and speak out clearly and forcefully.

¹²¹² <http://www.rainbowpush.org/news/single/rev.jesse.l.jackson.sr.reactstodan.gilberts.open.letter>



BEFORE ANYONE ever cared where I would play basketball, I was a kid from Northeast Ohio. It's where I walked. It's where I ran. It's where I cried. It's where I bled. It holds a special place in my heart. People there have seen me grow up. I sometimes feel like I'm their son.

Their passion can be overwhelming. But it drives me. I want to give them hope when I can. I want to inspire them when I can. My relationship with Northeast Ohio is bigger than basketball. I didn't realize that four years ago. I do now.

Remember when I was sitting up there at the Boys & Girls Club in 2010? I was thinking, This is really tough. I could feel it. I was leaving something I had spent a long time creating. If I had to do it all over again, I'd obviously do things differently, but I'd still have left. Miami, for me, has been almost like college for other kids. These past four years helped raise me into who I am. I became a better player and a better man. I learned from a franchise that had been where I wanted to go. I will always think of Miami as my second home. Without the experiences I had there, I wouldn't be able to do what I'm doing today.

I went to Miami because of D-Wade and CB. We made sacrifices to keep UD. I loved becoming a big bro to Rio. I believed we could do something magical if we came together. And that's exactly what we did! The hardest thing to leave is what I built with those guys. I've talked to some of them and will talk to others. Nothing will ever change what we accomplished. We are brothers for life. I also want to thank Micky Arison and Pat Riley for giving me an amazing four years.

I'm doing this essay because I want an opportunity to explain myself uninterrupted. I don't want anyone thinking: *He and Erik Spoelstra didn't get along. . . . He and Riles didn't get along. . . . The Heat couldn't put the right team together. . . .* That's absolutely not true.

I'm not having a press conference or a party. After this, it's time to get to work.

When I left Cleveland, I was on a mission. I was seeking

I'M COMING HOME

+
BY
LEBRON
JAMES

As told to Lee Jenkins

championships, and we won two. But Miami already knew that feeling. Our city hasn't had that feeling in a long, long, long time. My goal is still to win as many titles as possible, no question. But what's most important for me is bringing one trophy back to Northeast Ohio.

I always believed that I'd return to Cleveland and finish my career there. I just didn't know when. After the season, free agency wasn't even a thought. But I have two boys, and my wife, Savannah, is pregnant with a girl. I started thinking about what it would be like to raise my family in my hometown. I looked at other teams, but I wasn't going to leave Miami for anywhere except Cleveland. The more time passed, the more it felt right. This is what makes me happy.

To make the move I needed the support of my wife and my mom, who can be very tough. The letter from Dan Gilbert, the booing of the Cleveland fans, the jerseys being burned—seeing all that was hard for them. My emotions were more mixed. It was easy to say, "O.K., I don't want to deal with these people ever again." But then you think about the other side. What if I were a kid who looked up to an athlete, and that athlete made me want to do better in my own life, and then he left? How would I react? I've met with Dan, face-to-face, man-to-man. We've talked it out. Everybody makes mistakes. I've made mistakes as well. Who am I to hold a grudge?

I'm not promising a championship. I know how hard that is to deliver. We're not ready right now. No way. Of course, I want to win next year, but I'm realistic. It will be a long process, much longer than it was in 2010. My patience will get tested. I know that. I'm going into a situation with a young team and a new coach. But I get a thrill out of bringing a group together and helping them reach a place they didn't know they could go. I see myself as a mentor now, and I'm excited to lead some of these talented young guys. I think I can help Kyrie Irving become one of the best point guards in our league. I think I can help elevate Tristan Thompson and Dion Waiters. And I can't wait to reunite with Anderson Varejão, one of my favorite teammates.

But this is not about the roster or the organization. I feel my calling here goes above basketball. I have a responsibility to lead, in more ways than one, and I take that very seriously. My presence can make a difference in Miami, but I think it can mean more where I'm from. I want kids in Northeast Ohio, like the hundreds of Akron third-graders I sponsor through my foundation, to realize that there's no better place to grow up. Maybe some of them will come home after college and start a family or open a business. That would make me smile. Our community, which has struggled so much, needs all the talent it can get.

In Northeast Ohio, nothing is given. Everything is earned. You work for what you have.

I'm ready to accept the challenge. I'm coming home. □

**Annexe n° 16 : Discours de Kevin Durant
en marge de la remise du trophée de Most Valuable Player
6 mai 2014¹³**

Wow. Wow. Thank you guys so much. I'm usually good at talking, but I'm a little nervous today. First off, I'd like to thank God for changing my life. It let me realize what life is really all about. Basketball is just a platform in order for me to inspire people and I realize that.

I come from a small county outside of Washington D.C. called PG County. Me, my mom, my brother – we moved so many different places growing up. It felt like a box. It felt like there was no getting out. My dream was to become a rec league coach. That's what I wanted to do. I wanted to stay home and help the kids out and be a coach. I love basketball so much and I love playing it. I just never thought I would make it to college, the NBA or stand up here today in front of you guys and be the NBA MVP. It's just a surreal feeling.

I had so much help. So many people believed in me when I didn't believe in myself. So many people doubted me and motivated me every single day to be who I am. I fell so many times and got back up. I been through the toughest times with my family, but I'm still standing.

In the game of basketball, I play first off because I love it. I love to have fun. I love to run up and down the court. I told Grant Hill back there – I just got done playing against him – as a second grader I had a Pistons Grant Hill jersey. That was the first time I walked into a gym. That's when I fell in love with the game. My mom, I think she just wanted to get me and my brothers out of the house for a few hours. When I walked into the gym, I fell in love with the game. I didn't fall in love with it just because it was me playing. I fell in love with it because I've got guys like this – like these guys every single day that push me to be the best that I can be.

I want to single them out. Vets of this team. Fish, Nick, Perk, Thabo, Caron, Serge, Hasheem. I just want to say thank you to you guys, man. Y'all mean so much to me just because I could walk in and have a terrible day and I can see Hasheem smiling at me at 7-3 with small pants on. That'll change my day.

Or I can see Fish, just a button-up like a mayor, like a president. Just demands so much from his teammates, has played with so many great players but still respects everybody. He's 38 years old – nothing else to prove – I said, "Fish, you want to come get some shots with me?" First thing he says is "yes" because he always wants to learn even though he's done so much in this league, played with so many great players. He always wants to learn and that motivated me to know that it's never a point where you can stop getting better. He's the guy that made me realize that.

Perk, from the minute you got here...I hated you before you got here. The moment you got here, man, you just changed my whole perception of you. Just one of the best teammates I ever had. I just thank you so much. The late night calls after tough games, you texting me, telling me I'm the MVP. That means a lot to me, man. Thank you.

Sorry. I'm going to keep going.

Nick, you know, the first guy I met when I first got to Seattle as an 18 year old. You took me in. You believed in me from the beginning. You knew that I had potential. Every single day, I know I can look at you and know that you respect me as a man, as a player and you're going to ride with me to the end. And I thank you.

Thabo, when you came to the team, man, I didn't know if you spoke English or not, so I didn't know how to approach you. You were always so quiet, but I could tell you were about the team first. You came in and you went to work from Day 1. You also believed in me, always gave me confidence. When I'm having a tough stretch, you always come to me and hit me on my chest,

¹³¹³ <http://newsok.com/kevin-durant-the-oklahoma-city-thunder-stars-complete-mvp-speech/article/4815027/?page=2>

just tell me “let’s go,” and I know what that means from you. I appreciate you so much, man. You being here, being a part of this journey with me means a lot. I thank you.

Caron, even though you just got here a few months ago we’ve grown so close over these last few weeks and I can remember when you first got here you wrote a piece of paper in my locker ... I don’t know why I’m crying so much, man ... you wrote a piece of paper in my locker and it said, “KD MVP.” And that was after we lost two or three straight. I don’t really say much in those moments, but I remember that. I go home and I think about that stuff, man. When you got people behind you, you can do whatever. I thank you, man. I appreciate you.

Serge, my ex-next door neighbor. You still can’t speak English, but I know what you’re talking about. Our relationship is definitely like a brother relationship where I squared up with you one day in practice ready to fight you. The next day as soon as we got back into the locker room, we were hugging. We were talking about how we were going to be better the next game. And when Russell was out, you stepped your game up for me, for the team. There were nights where you made me look way better than I am. You clean up so many of our mistakes, man, and we appreciate that. From everybody on the team, we appreciate that, man, and I thank you so much for giving me confidence when I didn’t have it, for always being there when I wanted to talk to you, when I wanted to call, for arguing with me all the time, making me better and realizing I’m not always right. Thank you, man. I appreciate you.

I can’t forget about my young guys. We had a group text after Game 5 and I forgot to put my young guys in there and they felt some type of way about it. Jeremy, Perry, Andre, Steve and Reggie, Grant. You guys make me so much better without even knowing, man, because I know I set an example for y’all. I know there are days where I have my bad days. I say some words I’m not supposed to say sometimes, but when I need an extra push, you guys are there, man. I appreciate that. I appreciate that because I’m not always the best leader. I’m not always the best player. I don’t always shoot the best in the games. But our little handshakes we do before games, that gets me going.

Andre, you are one of my favorite teammates ever and I thank you so much, man. Your spirit, just your smile. It means a lot to me.

Perry, Jeremy ... man, just knowing you guys look up to me and I can help you out so much. I can pull you to the side when we’re working out and just as much as you think I’m making you better, you’re elevating my game.

Reggie when I first met you, you didn’t say two words to me. I didn’t know who you were, but we instantly clicked. You became one of my best friends, man. Words can’t explain how much I care about you, your well-being, how you’re feeling. Not even just basketball, but off the court, making sure you’re alright. You’re such a humble person, man. You do everything for the team. You always put yourself last and I learn a lot from you. Thank you, man. Thank you.

Steven, Big Kiwi. I didn’t know who you were when you first got here, but you made me realize with the screens you set in practice ... you elbow me when I come down the lane. You let your presence be known, man, and you’re just such a fun, spirited person. Never change who you are, man. You mean a lot to me. You inspire me, too. You’ve been through so much at a young age and I relate to that. I know your story. I don’t really talk about it a lot, but I know. Keep being who you are, man, because you’re a hell of a person. Thank you.

Grant, when we drafted you, once again I didn’t know who you were. But when we got together in the summer time, I seen how talented you were. I seen how much you wanted to learn and I wanted to be on-point every single day because I know how much you were watching me. I thank you for your support, just your kind heart, your spirit, everything, man. I appreciate you. Even though you’ve been here for a few weeks, you mean so much to our team. I’m glad you’re a part of it.

I love all you guys.

I know you guys think I forgot Russ. But I could speak all night about Russell. An emotional guy who will run through a wall for me. I don’t take it for granted. There’s days when I just want to tackle you and tell you to snap out of it sometimes, but I know there’s days when you want to do

the same thing with me. I love you, man. I love you. A lot of people put unfair criticism on you as a player and I'm the first to have your back, man, though it all. Just stay the person you are. Everybody loves you here. I love you. I thank you so much, man. You make me better. You know, your work ethic, I always want to compete with you. I always want to pull up in the parking lot of the arena, or the practice facility, and if you beat me there I was always upset. I always wanted to outwork you. You set the bar. You set the tone. Thank you so much, man. Thank you. You have a big piece of this. You're an MVP-caliber player. It's a blessing to play with you, man.

Thank all you guys, I know we have a bigger goal in mind. We have a tough game tomorrow, but this means the world to me that you guys are here with me celebrating with me. Thank you. Thank you. I can't express it enough.

I'm sorry. I'm almost done. Give me a couple more minutes.

Thank you to the organization for drafting me and believing in me from the beginning that I can be an MVP player.

Mr. Bennett, just giving me this opportunity. I thank you for always being there when I need you. Every time I see you under the basket for a game, I feel confident. No matter how the game is going, I look at you and I can tell, "If our owner is behind us, we can do it all." I thank you so much for giving me this opportunity.

Sam Presti, thank you, sir. Your texts late night after a good game, after a bad game. I appreciate those. From the beginning, your support means a lot to me. I thank you for putting together such a great team and doing so much for us. Our community is blessed to have you. Our franchise is blessed to have you. Thank you.

Troy Weaver. Somebody I've known for such a long time. God directed our paths to work together and it's been everything and more, man. Our relationship has grown day by day and I thank you for believing me and for always being on top of me and just keeping it real with me no matter what, always supporting my family. I thank you, man. Words can't express how much you mean to me. Such a great man to your family, to this team, to this community. We all appreciate you.

To all the staff, I can't name all you guys. All the staff members that take care of us every single day from Donnie Strack, Joe Sharpe, Tony (Katzenmeier), Dave Bliss, Josh Longstaff, Will (Dawkins), Wilson (Taylor), (Mark St. Yves), Dwight (Daub). I could go down the line. All you guys have made me a better player. I wish I had a Sharpie so I could write all your names on here because you had a hand on this. You made me believe in myself. You made me a better person, a better player. Your words of encouragement, your love, your positivity got me through. And I thank you guys.

Coaching staff, I know there's days when you want to look at that film and kill me for not playing defense, for taking bad shots, getting too many techs. But you always believe that I can be the guy. Through the tough times, you guys never left my side. Always wanted to help me get better. Always wanted to push me to new limits. Always work with me. Took time out of your summers to come work with me. Took time out of your nights to come work with me. And it's something I really appreciate. I never want to take you guys for granted. I thank you so much for being a part of my life, not just on the basketball court, but giving me talks about growing as a man first and a basketball player next. I thank you so much.

Scott Brooks, you mean the world to me. I love you. You as a man. I never met anybody like you, so selfless. You don't take the credit for nothing, even though you deserve all of it. I love you and your family for always taking me in, believing me, texting me late at night when I was going crazy. Thank you. Thank you.

Beautiful fans of Oklahoma City, I can't say enough about you guys. All the support you give our team. The home-court advantage we have is the best I've ever seen. We disappoint you sometimes, but we try our best every single night to win for you guys. And we want to win a championship for you guys. This city, all they want us to be is ourselves. You love us how we

are. We're all a work in progress as men and you still love us and I thank you so much for embracing us.

Last but not least my family. My brother Tony, I love you. Thank you for beating me up when I was a kid. I always wanted to follow in your footsteps. I pray for you every night. You've taught me to feel confident in myself, believe in myself that I can do it when I didn't think I could do it. Dad, it's been an up-and-down road for all of us, but you've always been there supporting from afar, texting me Bible verses every single day, telling me you love me every single day. That builds me up and I thank you so much. I love you. I'm just glad you're part of this journey with us.

My little brother Rayvonne, you always followed after my footsteps. I always want to set a good example for you, man. Thank you for all the support. I love you.

All my friends, Cliff (Dixon), Charlie (Bell), Vernon (Dixon), Tay (Young), Randy (Williams), Ryan (Lopez). You keep me sane every single day. There's days where I come home upset from a game or practice and you just brighten my day up. I thank you guys. You mean the world to me. I wouldn't be here without all you guys. This is your trophy, too. I appreciate it. Thank you.

All the support from all my family, all my friends, over the years I appreciate it. My grandma couldn't be here. I know she's watching. She's going to text me as soon as I get off the stage. Thank you so much for picking me up from school when I was a kid, fixing me peanut butter and jelly sandwiches every day, texting me after every single game, telling me I need to stop getting techs and loving me unconditionally.

And last, my mom. I don't think you know what you did. You had my brother when you were 18 years old. Three years later, I came out. The odds were stacked against us. Single parent with two boys by the time you were 21 years old. Everybody told us we weren't supposed to be here. We went from apartment to apartment by ourselves. One of the best memories I had was when we moved into our first apartment, no bed, no furniture and we just sat in the living room and just hugged each other. We thought we made it.

When something good happens to you, I don't know about you guys, but I tend to look back to what brought me here. You wake me up in the middle of the night in the summer times, making me run up a hill, making me do pushups, screaming at me from the sidelines of my games at 8 or 9 years old. We wasn't supposed to be here. You made us believe. You kept us off the street. You put clothes on our backs, food on the table. When you didn't eat, you made sure we ate. You went to sleep hungry. You sacrificed for us. You the real MVP.

Last, I'd just like to thank God again. You're the first and the last, alpha and omega. I thank you for saving my life.

I appreciate everybody. Thanks to all the writers for voting for me.

The end.

Annexe n° 17 :
Martin Luther King Jr., « De l'importance du jazz »
Discours inaugural du Festival de Jazz de Berlin 1964¹⁴

God has wrought many things out of oppression. He has endowed his creatures with the capacity to create – and from this capacity has flowed the sweet songs of sorrow and joy that has allowed man to cope with his environment and many different situations.

Jazz speaks for life. The Blues tells the story of life's difficulties, and if you think for a moment, you will realize that they take the hardest realities of life and put them into music, only to come out with some new hope or sense of triumph.

This is triumphant music.

Modern jazz has continued in this tradition, singing the songs of a more complicated urban existence. When life itself offers no order and meaning, the musician creates an order and meaning from the sounds of the earth which flows through his instrument.

It is no wonder that so much of the search for identity among American Negroes was championed by Jazz musicians. Long before the modern essayists and scholars wrote of racial identity as a problem for a multiracial world, musicians were returning to their roots to affirm that which was stirring within their souls.

Much of the power of our Freedom Movement in the United States has come from this music. It has strengthened us with its sweet rhythms when courage began to fail. It has calmed us with its rich harmonies when spirits were down.

And now, Jazz is exported to the world. For in the particular struggle of the Negro in America there is something akin to the universal struggle of modern man. Everybody has the Blues. Everybody longs for meaning. Everybody needs to love and be loved. Everybody needs to clap hands and be happy. Everybody longs for faith.

In music, especially this broad category called Jazz, there is a stepping stone towards all of these.

¹⁴¹⁴ <http://wcll.com/dr-martin-luther-king-jr-importance-jazz#stream/0>

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Résumé

« Am I Black Enough for You? » Basket-ball, médias et culture afro-américaine aux États-Unis (1950-2015)

Fait interculturel et transmédiateur mondialisé, le basket-ball reste toutefois lié à une identité pré-supposée afro-américaine, malgré son américanité de naissance et d'essence. Qu'est-ce qui réside derrière cette acculturation à rebours par une minorité d'un sport de la majorité ? En quoi l'afro-américanité du basket-ball est-elle un construit politique, culturel et social ? Quel rôle les médias jouent-ils dans la représentation de ce lien établi entre culture afro-américaine et basket-ball ? Et dans quelle mesure ce lien se retrouve-t-il dans les autres éléments de la culture populaire afro-américaine ?

Cette démarche fait appel à différentes disciplines, de l'histoire culturelle aux études médiatiques, en passant par la sémiologie. Elle s'appuie sur un corpus complexe comportant principalement une étude de terrain, des analyses des commentaires de matchs, des documentaires sportifs et des productions audiovisuelles (films, séries TV, musique). Elle vise à exposer le dispositif de storytelling de la NBA, ainsi que la mise en images, en paroles et en musique de l'afro-américanité du basket-ball.

La recherche met en évidence diverses phases dans l'évolution du sport, du Politique au Corporate en passant par le Symbolique, avec une récente phase Progressiste de retour du politique. L'analyse des commentaires des Finales NBA révèle la représentation de l'athlète noir à travers le prisme des médias. Mêlée au storytelling, la question raciale donne lieu à une mythologie sportive américaine où se joue le rapport à l'autre par le biais de la performance sportive et raciale des athlètes. L'étude des productions de la culture populaire fait émerger l'importance visuelle du corps de l'athlète noir et la figure du Basketteur noir dans l'imaginaire collectif américain. Le processus d'acculturation et d'appropriation culturelle se révèle ainsi partiellement à l'initiative de la communauté afro-américaine mais les médias et la culture populaire qu'ils véhiculent jouent un rôle essentiel dans le cadrage de la figure du Basketteur noir dans le grand récit du vivre-ensemble américain.

Mots clés : *acculturation, afro-américanité, basket-ball, civilisation américaine, crossover, culture populaire afro-américaine, études médiatiques, médias, patrimoine, playground, storytelling.*

Abstract

“Am I Black Enough for You?” Basketball, Media and Afro-American Culture in the US (1950-2015)

As a global cultural phenomenon, basketball is portrayed as a “black” sport, in spite of its origins in Mainstream America. What lies behind this acculturation in reverse, whereby a minority appropriates a sport of the majority? In what sense is the Afro-Americanness of basketball a political, cultural and social construct? What role do the media play in the representation of this link established between Afro-American culture and basketball? And to what extent does this link find itself reflected in the other elements of the Afro-American popular culture?

The research methodology calls on various disciplines, from cultural history to media studies, including semiology. It relies on a complex corpus that includes ethnographic observation, the analyses of the comments of NBA matches, documentaries as well as audiovisual productions (movies, TV series, music). It aims at revealing the storytelling constructed by the NBA, as well as the representing in words and music of the Afro-Americanness of the basketball.

The research highlights several phases in the evolution of the sport, from Political to Symbolic to Corporate with a recent Progressive phase of return to politics. The analysis of the comments of the Finales NBA reveals the representation of the black athlete through the media prism. Mixed with this storytelling, the issue of race is elaborated within an American sports mythology where the relation to the Other is mediated by the athletic and racial performance of the players. The study of popular culture underlines the visual importance of the black body and the figure of the Black Baller. The process of acculturation and cultural appropriation is thus partially related to the initiative of the Afro-American community but the media and the popular culture they convey play an essential role in the framing of the black Basketball player within the narrative of American togetherness.

Keywords: *acculturation, Afro-Americanness, basket-ball, American civilization, crossover, Afro-American popular culture, media, media studies, heritage, playground, storytelling.*

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