### Cultural Context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Is this my anchor text?</th>
<th>Which character am I focused on?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The World of the text</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>You answer!</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Tour De France [TDF]</td>
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**What relationship is most influenced by the CC?**

http://amateurreviewspace.blogspot.ie/2015/12/stop-at-nothing-lance-armstrong-story.html

This link will help you become more familiar with the story.

The world of the text proves to be competitive and ruthless, but the public within it are assumed to delight in the illusion of ‘the fairy story that goes on and on’.

But this tale of triumph is ultimately a ‘fraud’ as Betsy claims. It’s a story of abusing ‘all the glory, all the sponsorships and all the profits that went with that’, according to investigator Travis Tygart US anti-doping CEO. He calls the fraud ‘a conspiracy that pulled off this grand heist that defrauded millions of sports fans and his fellow competitors’.

‘Racing bikes in Europe is bad for you, it’s not healthy. You sacrifice a lot to be successful’—a quote from one voice that typifies the ruthless and damaging cultural context of professional cycling.

‘You’re so deep into it that you don’t have time to take a half step back and look at the big picture’—Tyler Hamilton.

There is a deep falsehood about how the world of cycling celebrates itself. ‘At some point someone is going to have to tell the kids, Santa Clause isn’t real’—former doper Landis near the end of the film.

### Values in the story

The pursuit of success at all costs: including breaking of all rules, performance enhancement [see any image of a needle in the film], unjust treatment of associates and rivals, making gains by unfair advantage, cheating and concealment of misdeeds. So many episodes and moments in the film illustrate corrupt self-advancement at the expense of community and society.

Lance traded on a lie: ‘I’ve proven my class from day one’—a reference to his first victory in America when he actually bribed his competitor. ‘We have the oldest secret in the book, hard work’. If only. But the world body of cycling so needed a hero that they stood by Armstrong in a crucial statement of support. Therefore, the cultural context supported his deception.
Another value, one which makes a mould for these negative values to flourish in, is the modern adulation of the celebrity super-hero, the iconic success story that transcends all obstacles. ‘Lance was snowballing the American Media’ - Betsy A. There are many moments where Armstrong is feted by Presidents and at high profile media events that demonstrate society’s craving for conquering heroes. ‘Stop at nothing’, as in victory at all costs, is the true underlying value that drives the main character. He prospered in a culture that loves winners. However, the honesty and incorruptible attitude of Betsy Andreu stands against the corrupted values and eventually help defeat their exponent, Armstrong.

### Role/ Status of women and girls/Authority structures

Lance’s mother plays a pivotal role in establishing his bone fides and status as a hero: ‘The success that Lance has seen and of course will continue to see makes me very proud. There’s not a better gift.’ Homespun values create a family sort of image for the American audience. It serves to disguise the ruthless nature of the sport’s competitive nature. Armstrong plays up the influence of his mother, also a tactic to enhance his public image: ‘She didn’t raise a quitter’. Ultimately though, she is used to put a gloss on a corrupt operator and in this sense, she is subservient to her son’s commercial needs: ‘I’m so proud to be the mother of Lance Armstrong’. Lance’s wife Kirstin, on the other hand, compromises herself completely: ‘She just doesn’t care.’

Two women play a very significant part in bringing out the truth behind Armstrong’s image. Betsy Andreu shows courage, intelligence and unwavering persistence in depositions and interview moments that illustrate her fearless, decent and honest qualities: ‘It was a fraud’ she repeated. She lives in a society where what matters is her evidence; unlike some other texts, her gender does not count against her credibility or status. Similarly, Emma O’Reilly is a witness whose evidence is what matters rather than her gender. Armstrong admits to her that she has the power to destroy him with what she knows in 1999, but she chooses silence then. When circumstances change, she has a story to tell.

Yet women are a minority presence in a world where male sporting prowess is dominant, where the predominance of male politicians and press investigators is striking. Emma O Reilly feels demeaned by being described as ‘an alcoholic prostitute’. Within the media Armstrong had the power to crush the women who struggled to tell the truth against him. Stephanie McIlwaine’s lying to keep her job undermined the attempts of other women to tell the truth, but this showed the power Armstrong could wield over women.

### Role of Men Authority structures

Lance Armstrong, the protagonist, is a high achiever, a cool operator with an invincible air around him. He believes in this almost to the end. He uses sport, celebrities, powerful politicians and the media to create this aura of power around him. The story shows that ultimately, he is a
narcissist who cheated. But he had a talent for exploiting the media to serve his own plan for dominance in his sport. He feeds off the energy of his public popularity. Armstrong has created a personal myth as all-powerful in his sport and as a celebrity figure. His successive victories in the Tour and clips of him with Obama on his Hope and Change campaign and his description of Bill Clinton as a friend, construct an aura of authority around him.

He also seems empowered by how desperately the public embrace the inspirational quality of Armstrong as a cancer survivor who overcomes overwhelming odds.

He exercises total power over the team: ‘He had control over who was hired, fired’, stated Frankie A, as Armstrong emerged from a limousine for a tv show.

### Family/Sense of belonging

The cycling team replicates the role of family, which is useful for comparison purpose. The culture where the team is primary is expressed negatively when Gaggioli admitted he had no choice but to take the bribe in the opening race of the story in the US, perhaps a weak defence: ‘when you have eight team mates you can’t go against the team’.

In Armstrong’s first TDF his team acted positively to get him up the final climb to be in a position to utilise his sprinting prowess to snatch his first stage victory. The ’99 postal team was ‘a close-knit group or riders’ according to Frankie A. ‘We would do anything for each other’.

For example, on the day he won the Sestriere stage in 1999, Frankie said ‘we had a job to set up Lance to keep him as fresh as possible til the final climb’.

Compared to other texts, his team is more supportive of him than many families, until events turned them into whistle-blowers! Tyler H found it stressful when he left the US Postal team to have to organise his own doping arrangements, outside of his new team: ‘it wasn’t the team handling it’

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Homespun values create a family sort of image that disguise the ruthless nature of the sport’s competitive nature.

Stephanie McIrwainne’s vulnerability as a mother of an autistic son meant that her care concerns for her family put her in the position of having to lie to protect Armstrong.

### Education and class

An early witness, Bob Roll spoke of poverty as a motivation for Armstrong to seek wealth by using his cycling talent: ‘Always in the back of Lance’s mind is that great fortunes can be made in road racing...for a poor kid growing up ....in Texas’.

Armstrong claimed that in sacrificing his education, his pursuit of money was justified.

### Money as a pathological influence

‘He (Armstrong) went after those bonuses, like tooth and nail’. Commerce is therefore central to the cultural context.

‘He is on the juice’, translated from the French by Greg LeMond.

‘There was a train here dripping with gravy and these guys [US Postal team] were desperate to mop up as much as they could for themselves’—David Walsh.
‘Everybody had a stake in Lance being a success’—David Walsh. So, the financially driven cultural context was, in a sense, built around Armstrong. It was a closed world—‘anyone who accused him was deemed an enemy of the sport.’ By the end he had made over one hundred million dollars.

| The special role of health and medical treatment in the story. | Cancer and medicine is used in the story to glamorise the central character and to help distract from and disguise the unanswered questions about his triumphs, his amazing progress in his sport. Ex-President of US George Bush endorsing Armstrong’s work for cancer is an example of this. It helps to explain the dropping of the Federal investigation against him. Compare this against special cultural factors that influence the progress of characters in other stories e.g. post war situations, war. It can even be compared to religion as that is often used as a reference point to influence the status of characters and sometimes as a cover up. |
| Add another aspect |  |