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Women's football: sexed bodies and interfering discourse : if gender is the social organisation of sexual difference through various social practices, discourses, and politics of representation, to what extent can the media popularisation of female soccer in South Africa be read as an interference in the hegemonic organisation of gender relations and heteronormativity?

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Masters Dissertation

TITLE :

WOMEN'S FOOTBALL: SEXED BODIES AND INTERFERING DISCOURSE

If gender is the social organisation of sexual difference through various social practices, discourses, and politics of representation, to what extent can the media popularisation of female soccer in South Africa be read as an interference in the hegemonic organisation of gender relations and heteronormativity?

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2012

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INTRODUCTION

Imagine if you can a female sport.
Picture a sport which is, or at least predominantly imagined as, played only by women.
Picture a sport which is distinct and stands alone, having no relatable male equivalent.
Netball is out – too similar to men's basketball. Badminton, Tennis out – co-ed.
Now do the same with men's sport. That is incredibly easy.

"The reason why we started the soccer teams was we wanted lesbians to feel comfortable. In a way relieving and releasing the stress by kicking the ball." - Ndumie Funda,[1] founder of Luleki Siziwe, a community based organisation in the Western Cape for lesbians who are victims of homophobic attacks and rape.

I was told in casual conversation with Leigh-Ann Naidoo,[i] an iconic South African sports personality and a self-identified black, lesbian, woman that 95% of female soccer players in South Africa are gay. However since homophobia is rife in organised structures, for many athletes sexuality is something best kept in the closest and not brought to the field. Interestingly though, several pro-lesbian and feminist organisations in South Africa, such as the Forum for the Empowerment of Women (FEW), to which Naidoo is affiliated, and People Opposing Women Abuse (POWA), have opted to employ soccer as a personal and political mobilisation tool. The opening quote is testament to this. I was intrigued. What were the associations? Do many of the women who play soccer turn out to be homosexual? Would it be more appropriate to question why Lesbian Gay Bisexual Trans Intersex (LGBTI) organisations specifically chose soccer? How have soccer and sex(uality) been interconnected, and what implications can and do these connections have? On the one hand, is there simply popular buy-in from society at large to the

[i] Leigh-Ann Naidoo was a member of the first South African beach volleyball team to compete in the Olympics (2004). She is the first African ambassador for the Gay Games, and was the keynote speaker for the Gay Games VII Closing Ceremonies in Chicago in 2006. She campaigns for racial equality in sports (following in the footsteps of her father, Derrick Naidoo, an early activist for athletic desegregation in South Africa), and promotes the rights of LGBTI athletes (most recently as a mentor to the soccer team, the Chosen FEW.)

assumption that lesbians are 'mannish': so the 'cause' behind a woman's wanting to participate in 'male sport' must by extension imply the presence of her other 'deviant' (sexual) desires? Or on the other hand, have civil society organisations undertaken an 'agenda' to 'politicise' soccer in order to promote an acceptance of alternative sexualities which would be less resisted by the population at large through tapping into the nationwide soccer frenzy? Clearly both these readings are hyperbolically extreme, not to mention superficial, but in juxtaposition they do somewhat delineate the poles of the field. By looking between these two polarised views, one takes the position of recognising a more complex understanding of power, and one can begin to offer a more critical explanation of the relationship between soccer and sex(uality) and its intersection with power.

One thing is definite, the politics of sport have been entwined with plays for power for decades. Notably within traditional paradigms the importance of the field of sport as a crucial means of formatting society has been acknowledged by thinkers like Anderson[2] and is extensively covered in works by Bourdieu who recognised sport as 'doing politics.'[3] Consequently, it was understood that to effect a desired change in the political, one could intentionally affect the social organisation of the field of sport. Historically in South Africa, sport has been a relevant field of power contestation. Soccer has a long standing history of being tied to a political struggle in relation to race (and concomitantly class) during the Apartheid years.[4] Korr & Close's text *More Than Just a Game: Soccer Vs. Apartheid: The Most Important Soccer Story Ever Told* (2008) details the way that soccer was used by black[ii] men in South Africa as an active force to challenge the oppressive Apartheid regime. Within a postmodern paradigm in which such a causal definition of Power is compromised, can sport still be seen to be deeply politically relevant? Within such a paradigm could a subversive politic, rather than the idea of intentionality, fit more appropriately since the conception of the political is itself unstable and dynamic? I will not be able to do justice to all these questions in this work. Nevertheless they do instantiate an interesting theoretical trajectory from which to

[ii] I am using the term 'black' to refer collectively to people of African, Asian and coloured identities based on the convention developed by the Black Consciousness Movement, although it is worth noting that in South Africa black 'African' men are primarily is associated with soccer.

investigate soccer in a post-Apartheid era, to see if the game's historic political aspects can extend and make room for the field to become one in which issues of gender/sex politics may now be contested.

AIMS

It has been coined that football is 'more than just a game' in South Africa. It is an institution that has helped to facilitate and shape the distribution of political and economic power.[5] Historically soccer has been marked as male territory – in South Africa moreover as black male territory (see Alegi[6]) – and has been a site for what Hargreaves[7] describes as "rigid expressions of chauvinist masculinity." As such it follows that there has been a comprehensive historical exclusion of women from the sport. The growing popularity of women's soccer, coupled with the increasing academic reflection on women's participation in the sport as a site of gender politics, compels further reflexive study in South Africa. As such this research seeks to question monolithic, 'impenetrable' structures of power (such as patriarchy, heteronormativity, gender hierarchy) and reframe such structures as permeable, mutable constructions in order to promote a reading of power dynamics as a complex network which can be intentionally and unintentionally resisted, subverted and/or reified.

In spite of sport scholars' increased attention to multiracial feminist theorising, there are still few empirical studies that focus on other non-dominant (in terms of race – which remains strongly associated with class privilege also – and sexuality and gender performance) women athletes in non-western contexts.[8] This study directly addresses this gap by looking at women playing soccer in South Africa with a particular focus on queer[iii] women. Naidoo[9] notes that with regards to South Africa, there is very little that has been

[iii]Queer generally indicates opposition to identity-based categories and signals a strong antipathy for 'heteronormativity' (roughly: the taken-for-granted social and sexual arrangements in a heterosexual-centered world-view) and also rejects a 'homonormativity. As such it follows that 'queer' should not be taken to be a synonym for LGBTI communities. It is more accurate to think of queering, as with any project of postmodern discourse, as centred on disturbing fixed identity and promoting a reflexive atmosphere in which we question what we assume to be 'normal.' As such I am using the term not as representative of any particular identity, but liberally as an imposed marker to signify women who do not align with dominant expectations of 'femininity,'and/or body type, and/or sexuality. Please see the section on Queer Theory for a more elaborate discussion of this term.

written about sexuality in the field of women's football. Conducted in the context of the Global South, specifically South Africa, this research contributes towards offsetting once-dominant paradigms focused, almost exclusively, on the experiences of white, middle-class, Western women. That said however, one of the key approaches of this thesis rests on the queer impulse to destabilise normative thinking around categorisation and a central tenet behind this work is to call into question the value of viewing the world through binary prisms like men-women, black-white, heterosexual-homosexual, femme-butch.

South African women's football makes a particularly relevant political case study because the recent global expansion of women's soccer coincided with the emergence of a national discourse around gender equality in South Africa.[10] As a broad-based women's movement emerged during the early 1990's and gender equality became recognised as an autonomous aspect of democratisation of post-Apartheid South Africa, the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) started sponsoring World Cup competitions for women's soccer. The convergence of these processes meant a shift in the opportunity structures for organising women's soccer in South Africa. 2010 marks the hosting of the FIFA World Cup (an exclusively male showcase event) in South Africa. Specifically at this point in time it seems pertinent to investigate the relationship between football, given the mobilisation around FIFA 2010, and the broader struggles which women (particularly those women on the triple-subaltern cusp of a gender, race, sexuality intersect) face when contesting local and national power dynamics. Even with the spin-off attention garnered from the World Cup, women's soccer remains more or less sidelined in South Africa, with all-female teams having desperately to seek charitable donations to fund participation at the Gay Games and the Women's Soccer World Cup in Germany in 2011.

This research aims to focus on the elements of sex[iv] integration-segregation. As such the research takes cognisance of the importance to write women[v] into discourse on cultural

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[iv] Since conceiving of the physiological body outside of gendered language is impossible, I am resorting to the term 'sex.' However I am using the term in line with Butler and others' conception that sexual difference is socially constructed, and whenever we discuss the body, we are also always representing it in culturally specific ways. As such 'sex' should be understood as being informed through culture and is as much a site of political contestation as gender. This concept will be discussed in detail in the chapter Shifting Bodies and

theory – not simply by inserting their activities as a divergent experiential category to the norm – but by aiming to be a component in elucidating some sites of political contestation specific women face, not as a separate category, but in relation to the contiguous feminine-masculine gender experiences of any person. I am looking at representations of women's soccer generally, with the specific interest of applying a queer reading to the phenomenon. As such I will look at representations particular to both institutionalised women's soccer and less formalised civil society organised teams. This decision comes as a compounded result of the political nature of civil society organisations; the political context in which institutionalised women's sport gained acceptance nationally; the often made media inference surrounding individual national team (Banyana Banyana) members' sexuality; the apparent popularity of soccer within Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) civil society organisations in South Africa; and my own theoretical interest in deconstructionist understandings of gender and sexuality. It is not my intention to compare or contrast the representations of the two forms of women's soccer as a study, but I will make mention if there are divergences between the modes of representing institutionalised and civil society organised women's soccer which affect how one may interpret the representation of women's soccer generally. Additionally this research aims to expand and complicate normative definitions, challenging the way we think about categories such as women, gender and sexual bodies.

To conclude, while investigation into the study of the political implications of soccer in South Africa is still considerably new, and necessitates further research, past analysis has predominantly focused on either a male conception of the sport and its potential to contest political structures in the form of 'new' nationalism against Apartheid; or when women's

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Boundaries. Should further clarification be sought please refer to the Feminist Theory section dealing with 'biological sex' contained in the Theoretical Framework of this thesis.

[v] While the term 'women' is most often understood as a relational gender category, for the purpose of this research the term can be taken to imply biological differentiation and here is closely synonymous with the term 'female' allowing for the incorporation of a variety of gendered performances under the umbrella of 'woman.' It should be acknowledged that it is social biology (socially constructed meanings which are associated with anatomy), rather than an ill-conceived notion of 'raw' biological differentiation, which play the major role in how society hierarchically gives meaning to, defines and categorises people.

soccer is specifically looked at, it has been in the context of race relations and the tenuous position of black women within the current 'progressive' democracy. My research will draw on this but will, however, add other dimensions of intersectionality, with a focus on the reporting of women in sport as well as its relation to broader structures of dominance such as patriarchy and heteronormative gender and sexuality binaries. My ambition is to decode a reading of power and engagement which acknowledges the ambiguous and transitive ground of intentional, as well as unintentional, resistance, subversion and reification.

BACKGROUND TO SOCCER IN SOUTH AFRICA

Race, Gender and Class: Masculine omnipotence

Soccer in South Africa, as in much of the world, has been explicitly gendered as a male sport. The historical exclusion of women in South African soccer was instituted at the time British colonialists first introduced the sport to the country in the nineteenth century.[11] The centrality of soccer to nation building and citizenship[12] in South Africa over the past century, particularly for Black South Africans, has relied on and been deeply shaped by the fact that it is constructed as a symbol of idealised masculine camaraderie[13] and aspiration. As such, Pelak argues that soccer served as a figurehead for a certain type of dominant masculinity; functioning as an ideological and material cornerstone for the maintenance of men's omnipotence (physically, economically, and socially) over women in South Africa.[14] In the South African context then, while soccer has been an arena for contesting racial segregation,[15] sex segregation in the sport has only begun to be collectively challenged far more recently.[16] Although individual women and girls have undoubtedly participated in male teams prior to the late 1960's, it was not until then that South African women collectively challenged the gendered boundaries within the sport and formed their own teams.[17]

Evidently the major rents in race and class in South Africa has meant that women in soccer do not necessarily share the same experiences or form a homogenous set. South African women's access to, and assimilation within, organised soccer has been largely determined by an individual's racial and class location within society, as well as by the shifting political opportunities for women collectively to challenge structural paradigms such as race, gender, and class hierarchies.[18] In South Africa, the first women to play

organised soccer, in the late 1960's and early 1970's, were white and from middle-class backgrounds.[19] It is noted that in the 1960's some Black women did play sporadically, but that predominantly coloured and black women gained access to organised football only a decade later, in the late 1970's and early 1980's.[20] Importantly, in this time frame, the gross inequalities of Apartheid meant that very few Black women had the opportunity to participate in sport, for a myriad of political, social and economic reasons. It follows then that Apartheid privileged white, middle-class women in urban areas with access to sporting opportunities, over poor, Black women living in rural (or urban) settings.[21]

It was not until the early 1990's with the dismantling of the Apartheid regime, coupled with the increasing influence of what Pelak refers to as 'the mass women's movement' in South Africa that a context was created in which Black women sought new sporting opportunities in soccer.[22] It is significant, in the context of South Africa, that women's access to soccer in the country has been an outcome of both liberal feminism (as in many other parts of the world) and the 'racial' liberation struggle.[23] As such women's increased access to institutionalised soccer occurred in two discrete waves in South Africa – the first in the 1970's which was primarily limited to racially and economically privileged women, and the second in the 1990's which extended these opportunities across racial and class barriers. The majority of South African women did not have access to either the leisure time or the material resources necessary to participate in organised sport, particularly a male-typed sport like soccer.[24] However the dominance of white, middle-class women in soccer during its early developmental years as a women's sport suggests that structures of privilege, i.e. race and class, necessarily helped facilitate entry into another privileged and hierarchical structure, male-dominated sport.

History of Organised Women's Soccer in South Africa[25]

In the early 1970's, the South African Women's Football Association (SAWFA) was formed as the national governing body for women's soccer in the country. However this organisation was formed exclusively for whites and coloureds. Yet owing to women's outsider position in soccer and the limited scope of women's soccer during these developmental years, it became perceived as a non-racial organisation, with racial integration taking place even during the Apartheid years of the late 1970's. At this time there were no solely Black teams and African and coloured women who did participate were scattered throughout numerous teams; yet several all-white teams did exist. It was

only in 1991 that the South African Women's Soccer Administration (SAWSA) was formed by a group of Black women and aligned with South African Soccer Association (SASA). In 1992, SAWFA was essentially replaced by SAWSA when the two organisations merged. In 2000, SAFA gained full control over women's soccer. Although some athletes and administrators opposed the changes, most supported the move because of the possibility of increased resources for women's soccer.

In 1992, a Women's Desk was established at the National Sports Council, the leading sports organisation associated with the incoming democratic government. In 1994 the advocacy group, Women's Sports Foundation, was formed and two years later the umbrella organisation, Women and Sport South Africa (WASSA), was launched. These efforts represented a progressive move toward valuing gender equality within sports. Nevertheless, given the serious problems facing South African women in other areas (such as poverty, poor access to health care, high instances of domestic violence) there was a general lack of urgency among women's rights activists to organise around sexism and heterosexism in sports.

While most in the national SAFA leadership rhetorically supported increasing women's leadership capacities, the process of dismantling male dominance within soccer has yet to be embraced and institutionalised. As more women showed up at their local soccer pitches – highly gendered spaces – more overt power struggles between women and men emerged. Some men acted violently to defend their perceived right to control the sport. In the context of the growing popularity of women's soccer and the influx of monies, an intense set of problems erupted between 1994 and 1996 in the Johannesburg area. The Pickard Commission found that the male-dominated SAFA was extremely tardy and negligent in paying attention to problems that women's teams were experiencing. Judge Pickard advised SAFA to increase resources for women's soccer and create structures to develop the women's game. As part of an effort to resolve the conflicts, women's soccer indabas were held in 1997 and 1999. At the 1999 meeting a decision was made to change the organisational relationship between women's soccer and SAFA. Specifically, women's soccer became a subcommittee of SAFA rather than simply affiliated with the organisation. As a subcommittee, the larger male-led governing body had total control over, and fiscal responsibility for, women's soccer. Thus it would seem that while women's soccer was being fiscally promoted, simultaneously the sport was institutionally

subordinated to its male counterpart in accordance with the general principles of patriarchal hierarchies

Agitated by the historically discriminatory effect of dominant gender prescriptions, which view 'maleness' and 'femaleness' as mutually exclusive opposites, I am determined that more nebulous interpretations may provide solace. So the question emerged: could 'queering' the politics of soccer present a challenge to dominant gender relations in sport? By 'queering' I refer to the definition suggested by Corber & Valocchi[26], to disrupt dominant cultural understandings. Typically queer disruptions have looked to question the naturalness of heterosexuality, and also conventional gender relations based on a narrow dual-sex[vi] model. In this sense queering soccer points not only towards the phenomenon I used to introduce this paper, the reported liaison between lesbian players and the sport – but moreover towards a vital consideration of the relatively new appropriation by, and relationship(s) of, female players regardless of sexuality, to the beautiful game. It was my personal love affair with visual culture and language, an engagement with the politics of representation, which lead me down a specific road and in so doing informed the unconventional, or what could itself be called 'queer,' method and approach of this thesis.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Since the 1970's, building from the linguistic tradition of structuralism suggested by de Saussure and as a consequence of postmodernity and ensuing poststructuralist theory, there has been a decisive turn within the Humanities towards recognising the importance of language as an agent of structure. This has been popularly termed 'the linguistic turn' and influential theorists of the trend include Judith Butler, Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Roland Barthes, and Jacques Lacan. In many respects, postmodern discourses are "all deconstructive" as Flax[27] explains in that "they seek to

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[vi]A growing number of cultural and social practices, activist and scholars challenge the dual-sex model. Laqueur points out in *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (1990) that the 'common sense' dual-sex model of sex difference developed with the rise of modernity and is in fact very young having only been in operation for the last 200 years or so. Prior to the Enlightenment the stereotypical understanding of sex difference conceived of a one-sex model encompassing 'males' and 'lesser males' – who were believed to have an 'inverted penis' (now called a vagina) and 'internal testes'(now called Fallopian tubes).

distance us from and make us skeptical about beliefs concerning truth, knowledge, power, the self, and language that are often taken for granted." Flax also points out that postmodernity was birthed in response to a growing uncertainty within Western intellectual circles concerning the appropriate grounding and methods for explaining and/or interpreting human experience. In response to such radical uncertainty the postmodern project, and more specifically the linguistic turn, signalled a shift towards viewing cultural sources, as opposed to solely more traditional, tangible data, as meaningful. This has meant a turn towards acknowledging, among other things, *representation* as a valid source. Notable contributors to this field include Stuart Hall, Philip Auslander, Griselda Pollock, Ien Ang, and also Theodor Adorno's influence on debates around aesthetics and Culture Industry. It is to this tradition of thought which, whilst emerging, is still rather under-represented in South African institutions, that this thesis aspires to add.

This research has a particular focus on South African representations of women in sport, specifically in soccer. The research topic is grounded in the disciplines of Cultural Studies, Feminist Theory and Queer Theory with an interest in their specific investment in the analysis of contemporary Body Politics. I aim to examine representations of gender and sexuality in South Africa by reading into *how* we read bodies, informed by critically examining the ways in which we are *socialised* to *read* the (re)presentation of bodies. As such this thesis is also an exercise in what Flax terms thinking about thinking.[28] To further draw from Flax[29], I agree that:

> by studying gender we can hope to gain a critical distance on existing gender arrangements ... [through looking at] how gender relations are constituted and experienced and how we think or, equally important, do not think about them. ... This critical distance can help clear a space in which reevaluating and altering our existing gender arrangements may become more possible ... by understand[ing] and (re)constitut[ing] the self, gender, knowledge, social relations, and culture without resorting to linear, teleological, hierarchical, holistic, or binary ways of thinking and being.

As such this research aims to read concrete textual and visual representations, as well as social and cultural practices, against the intersecting theoretical palimpsest of the aforementioned knowledge systems in order to look at relations of power, attempts to negotiate societal conventions and representations of people's positionality within certain social hierarchies and structures.

Cultural Studies

Historically linked with the Birmingham School in the United Kingdom, Cultural Studies is strongly associated with Stuart Hall, whose work, along with that of pioneering colleagues, created an international intellectual movement in the 1970's. The Birmingham School (later called the Birmingham Centre) tended to incorporate diverse streams such as Marxism, post-structuralism, feminism, and critical race theory, with more traditional methodologies such as sociology and ethnography in order to create an interdisciplinary approach to the study of culture.[30]

Some of the study areas often associated with Cultural Studies include subculture, popular culture, and media studies; revealing the discipline's aim of examining a 'common' (read not high brow) subject field – soccer or mass-produced media say – in terms of cultural practices and their relation to power. Yet simultaneously it has the reflexive objective of understanding culture in a complex form and of analysing the social and political context in which culture manifests itself. As a multi-disciplinary academic field, Cultural Studies forms a useful basis in the case of this research because the inter-disciplinary style of Cultural Studies methodologies encourages complex and multiple meaningful understandings of how the phenomenon of women playing sport, and of the discourse(s) articulating this phenomenon, can relate to power (on a meta-theoretical level of ideas around body and sexual politics); as well as to issues of representation (by expanding and/or subverting) of how notions are to be/can be read. Underlying the Cultural Studies Model is the understanding that people read, receive, and interpret cultural texts[vii] in different ways; and also that as people produce and re-produce cultural practices, they appropriate and (re)shape practices, and are simultaneously (re)constituting or (re)shaping themselves through performing[viii] certain practices.

[vii] 'Text' is to be understood in a broad sense, following the post linguistic turn in the tradition of discourse analysis, and may comprise many modes of cultural artefacts, including visual, mixed-media and performance in addition to 'written' texts.

[viii] During my undergraduate studies at the University of Cape Town (2004-2005) we were presented with an interpretation of a particular translation of a Heraclitus (ca 500 B.C.) quote: "No man ever steps in the same

Cultural Studies understands 'culture' as a key channel through which political and social management is inscribed within a society because the very cultural norms or socially accepted ways of being must be *ipso facto* assimilated and enacted by and through society. To elaborate in rudimentary terms, understanding culture as a mode of social regulation means that social 'control' is not maintained solely through coercive forces such as the police, prisons, repression, or the military, but that in addition to these obvious institutions there also exist ideological forces or 'structures of power' which a society may not be intentionally aware of but which influence how people act. This is due to the very fact that ideologies inform and constitute the everyday 'culture' of people. Lash puts it this way, "Hegemony means domination through consent as much as coercion. It has meant domination through ideology or discourse..."[31]. Quite clearly Cultural Studies has been strongly influenced by earlier notions such as cultural hegemony, an economic class analysis coined by Gramsci,[32] which posits that a culturally diverse society can be dominated by one social class (the bourgeoisie), who by manipulating the societal culture (beliefs, practices, institutions, values) impose their ruling-class worldview as the societal norm, which then is perceived as a universally valid ideology and status quo beneficial to all of society, whilst in effect benefiting only the ruling class.

The theoretic application of Gramsci's cultural hegemony, which insists that prevailing cultural norms of society must not be perceived as natural and inevitable, but must be recognised as social constructs that should be investigated to discover their roots as social oppression, is still central to the discipline of Cultural Studies – However more-recently emerging approaches recognise that society, power and thus the praxis of cultural hegemony, is not a monolithic imposition by one dominant group upon others but rather that power operates across complex layers and social structures. As Butler[33] explains, hegemony emphasises the ways in which power operates to inform our everyday understandings of social relations: it is the dance of consenting to, and reproducing, the unspoken relations of power... "[p]ower is not stable or static, but is reconstituted at several junctures in everyday life." The prevailing knowledge systems of culture are composed according to power; but our notion of common sense also stems from power.

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river twice, for it's not the same river and he's not the same man," which for me felt like an appropriate visual analogy for understanding this thesis of Cultural Studies.

The modern model of Cultural Studies is concerned with formulating a conception of society and culture inscribed by increased differentiation, extolling counter culture, alternative culture, oppositional culture, etcetera which is particularly relevant for my analysis. Subsequently, it is preferable to imagine hegemony operating across 'horizontal' networks, which involve complex relationships between various groups and individuals, in which power emanates in a multi-directional manner, through all social relations. Social transformation therefore occurs not merely with revolutions of the masses, but more exactly through the ways in which daily social relations are rearticulated and new conceptual horizons are opened up by different or subversive practices.

Sports Feminism

Feminism, is a twofold theoretic and political project, which arose alongside and out of the Women's Movement of the 1920's struggles for equal rights and just social relations among men and women.[34] Feminism has been concerned fundamentally with seeking to understand, critique, *and* change social relations in which women are oppressed and disadvantaged. There have been and continue to be many different feminist positions and distinctive strands within feminist thought. I will tease out some of the major strands of feminism which have been relevant to a feminist analysis of sports, or what is termed sports feminism. It would be a mistake however, to imagine these strands as totally distinct from each other as there are many overlaps and shifts between different feminist schools of thought.

In the early 19th century women were banned from sport, because it was imagined that physical exertion could have all kinds of detrimental effects on women.[35] Having outlined the ontology of feminism, it is then evident that the field of sport represents another site in a long tradition of woman struggling for inclusion. Scranton and Flintoff[36] relay that the underlying assumption of a liberal feminist approach to sport is that sport is basically sound and encapsulates a positive experience to which girls and women need access.[37] It is argued that differences in female sport participation are the results of socialisation practices carried out by institutions such as the family, school, media and laws. Girls thus are socialised into 'feminine' activities like netball and a 'feminine' physicality while boys are socialised into 'masculine' sports like rugby and into a 'masculine' physicality.[38] Furthermore discriminatory practices prevent women equal access to sport opportunities in the form of facilities and resources. In addition women are under-represented in higher

leadership and decision making positions in institutionalised sports. Liberal feminists placed these issues on the agenda of sports organisations and through pressure and advocacy have been influential in opening up opportunities for women – with issues of equity and equality being included on mainstream sports' agendas.

These early feminist critiques coming out of the 1970's and 1980's, comment Scranton and Flintoff, are valuable for their rejection of biological explanations for women's subordination in sport, and for establishing that gender is socially constructed. They are also important for documenting real distributive inequalities between men's and women's sport and for highlighting the significance of women role models, both as participants and decision makers in sport. However, as Scranton and Flintoff point out, the liberal feminist focus on socialisation and sex-role difference, is now viewed as problematic as it tended to be preoccupied with differences between men and women and ignored the differences *among* women and so constructed women as a homogenous group. Specifically in South Africa this is a relevant point since race and class divergences have meant women have had very different experiences of the social. Another short coming of this approach is that sport, and the power relations which govern sport, are not questioned. The aim of this approach is for women to gain access to the same opportunities as men, without interrogating the inherent dynamics of the phenomena itself. In this sense the liberal sports feminist approach is said to be concerned with reform – the reform of sports and sporting policies, rather than having a transformative approach to sport as an institution.

Whereas the liberal feminists' concern is with unequal access, radical feminists working in sport are primarily fixated upon understanding power, as exercised over women by men. They have therefore, say Scranton & Flintoff, paid significant attention to the role of sport in the social construction of male dominance and female subordination. Radical feminists have contributed greatly to our understandings of the strong associations between gender and sexuality in sport. As such, some of the major fields of inquiry within this strand of feminism have looked at how sportswomen are typically marketed and objectified by the media through an emphasis on their appearance, sexuality, and their role in the family; how within sport female athletes have been encouraged to develop an acceptable

'femininity'[ix] premised on heterosexual attractiveness and availability; and how lesbians in sport have been constructed as deviant and abnormal. There has also been an application of radical feminists' work to male violence perpetrated against women and the continuum of this violence into the sporting arena, this can include anything from sexually derogatory comments to sexual abuse and rape.

As Scranton and Flintoff express it, the radical feminist approach to understanding sport emphasises the importance of consciousness raising and has sought to challenge gender discrimination and homophobia. Furthermore this strand highlights the need to reconstruct sport into forms which celebrate women's values rather than those more traditionally associated with masculine aggression, competition and dominance.

While radical feminism was vital in the birth of new conceptual frameworks and produced alternative critical insights for explaining and understanding the socially constructed relations (particularly around sex/sexuality) at play in sport, the movement can at times be criticised ironically for a lack of discursivity and a tendency towards essentialism and biological reduction. As Scranton and Flintoff note, there is a very real danger that in celebrating 'women's values' one supposed notion of femininity is reified and becomes fixed and reduced to a biological explanation.

Biological explanations presuppose that sex is distinguishable from 'cultural' gender. This is incorrect. The work of Kessler and McKenna[39] from the late 1970's is especially remarkable for its early broad use of 'gender' to apply even to biological sex in order to indicate the implication of sex within cultural interpretation and practice. In line with Kessler and McKenna and drawing from Bettcher,[40] I take the position that sex is not " 'the hardware' on which the program of gender is run", but rather "sex is itself thoroughly cultural" for the reasons which follow. As many feminists (Spencer, Bock, Butler), and theorists from other disciplines, have indicated, the self does not exist outside of the realm of culture and as such the self is irrevocably immersed in the cultural institutions of

[ix] I will be distinguishing femininity – a generally accessible, broad performance – from 'femininity' – a supposed idea which holds that there is a 'manner in which one should behave by virtue of being a woman.' I employ the term 'femininity' to signal conservative, narrow and stereotyped assertions associated with and to being a woman.

gendering and representing. Butler[41] says: "To speak of the biologically sexed body as somehow prior to particular discourses about it is to, in so doing, nonetheless ironically speak about it *within some particular discourse* and hence to represent in some way." Our reading of sex therefore – how we are taught to recognise and understand sexed difference – is, and will always be, a cultural interpretation. To give a possibly more digestible example, society seems broadly willing to concede the claim made by some trans people of 'being born in the wrong body' – this is in fact testament to the idea that it is conceivable for one's sex to be at odds with one's biological body, proving that sex and biology cannot be synonymous. Another case in point can be found if there is serious contention about 'what sex a person is' – I will deal with this concept in the chapter Shifting Bodies and Boundaries. Butler[42] points out that when contention occurs typically a panel of experts will examine a person's genitalia, chromosomes, hormones and psychological disposition in an effort to arrive at a consensus of – in other words they socially construct – a person's biological sex. The process described is an extreme form of reading sex, but the same methodological procedure, though with less scrutiny and arguable not as invasive, is applied when sexing any non-ambiguous presenting bodies too.

Whereas in this thesis I shall draw resources from both liberal and radical feminism in relation to examples of gender discrimination in sport, my own thinking is best located within the considerations of post-structural feminist thought. Post-structural feminism in turn rejects the view that any single explanation, be it lack of equal access (liberal) or patriarchy (radical), successfully explains women's oppression. Instead poststructuralist impulses focus on difference and diversity and argue that, to quote Wearing (1998)[43] : " if ... the concept of 'women' is open to diversity, to change and to redefinition, there is the possibility of rewriting the script for women."

Queer Theory

As Stam[44] elucidates, feminist theory together with psychoanalytic theory, (popularised as I have mentioned previously through the advent of poststructuralism) "spoke of 'the other' but itself 'otherized' gays and lesbians. Indeed, 'queerness' seemed to be the blindspot common to virtually *all* the theories."

The project of 'queering' is both political and theoretical. The historiographic emergence of the term followed on from the achievements of both gay and lesbian activism in the wake of the 1968 Stonewall riots in New York, in which gays, lesbians and trans people resisted the routine harassment of police. As an upshot of this 'rebellion' many theorists began developing what Stam calls, a "gay and lesbian approach to culture generally." "The movement was first called Gay Liberation, on the model of Black and Women's Liberation" says Stam. Ironically this terminology is itself guilty of 'othering' as it privileges gay and lesbian experience over other sexualised ways of being which are then further marginalised. Subsequently as gay and lesbian activism itself stretched to incorporate first bisexual experience and later trans and intersex experience so the 'umbrella' term queer, originally a pejorative slur against sexual minorities, gained purchase.

Importantly though, queer, as a theoretical *and political* aspect, belongs more accurately to the general project of postmodern discourse, centred as it is on disturbing fixed identity. Consequently because queer is always a politicised term it should not be mobilised as an uncritical description, and used interchangeably with LGBTI. This is a common mistake in South Africa, where civil society organisations concerned with a narrow political project of promoting the human rights of lesbian and gay people automatically describe themselves (incorrectly) as queer. As Bettcher[45] points out queer "generally indicates opposition to identity-based categories and signals a strong antipathy for 'heteronormativity' (roughly: the taken-for-granted social and sexual arrangements in a heterosexual-centered world-view)." However because queer theory is opposed to identity-based categorisation it necessarily also rejects a 'homonormative' perspective and 'queer' can be a label setting queer-identifying people apart from dominant / mainstream LGBTI communities.[46] It follows, that as a postmodern impetus, queering, reveals an alternative which allows us to question what we assume to be 'normal.' As such I am using the term liberally as an imposed marker to refer to women who do not align with dominant expectations of 'femininity,'and/or body type, and/or sexuality.

Queer theory is a field of critical theory that emerged in the early 1990's out of the fields of LGBTI studies and feminist studies. Queer theory, derived largely from poststructuralist theory, foregrounded the deconstruction of identity, as well as expanding notions around the multiplicities of sexuality.[47] Thus Queer theory develops

models and practices promoting what Stein describes as a "non-normative sexuality which transcends the binary distinction of homosexual/heterosexual[.]"[48] Heavily influenced by the work of Michel Foucault and his recognition of the plasticity of sexuality, Queer theory builds both upon feminist challenges to the idea that gender is part of the essential self and upon gay/lesbian studies' close examination of the socially constructed nature of identities. Queer theory's main project is exploring the contestation of the categorisation of gender and sexuality, with theorists like Judith Butler further decentring ideas around identity by way of reappraising the *perceived* binary oppositions of sex/gender.[49] Major aspects of a Queer theory based critique include discussion of the role of performance in creating and maintaining identity; the basis of sexuality and gender; the way that these identities change or resist change; and their power relations vis-a-vis heteronormativity.

A queer theory paradigm is essential to this thesis because, as I have said previously, this work is an exercise in metatheory, in thinking about thinking, in that it has an underlying project which revolves around the questioning of categorisation. The scholarly reception of queer theory, while already existent in South Africa with several established individuals long since working in the field remains, however, peripheral to what has been nationally instituted as the academic mainstream. It is thus reasonable to see this kind of work as challenging and 'new' yet the relevance of the discipline is desperately called for since, as mentioned, 'queer' is so frequently misconstrued in general South African parlance.

METHODOLOGY

Critical Theory

According to Bohman,[50] critical theory has a narrow and a broad meaning in philosophy and in the history of the social sciences. In both the broad and the narrow senses, says Bohman, a critical theory "provides the descriptive and normative bases for social inquiry aimed at decreasing domination and increasing freedom in all their forms." Critical theory is often thought of narrowly as referring to the Frankfurt School that begins with Horkheimer and Adorno and stretches to Marcuse and Habermas. Horkheimer however distinguishes a "critical" theory from a "traditional" theory according to a specific practical purpose: a theory is critical to the extent that it seeks "to liberate human beings from the circumstances that enslave them."[51] Consequently, argues Bohman, any philosophical approach with similar practical aims could be called a "critical theory,"

including feminism, critical race theory, and forms of post-colonial criticism. My specific theoretical perspective, employing feminist theory and queer theory as it does, necessitates an association with the methods of critical theory. As a consequence of the interdisciplinary nature of Cultural Studies, my thesis will render a transdisciplinary account of political studies. Such a relationship of culture to the political can be dealt with well in a mixed method approach, combining elements from literary studies, performance studies, and feminist theory, as popularised at junctures in the critical theory tradition, significantly through feminist media studies. One can expect such a mixing of methods to yield a not-uncomplicated, but a layered, nuanced and complex research subject. It is precisely through the oscillating interaction of layers that the method of this thesis comes into its own and it becomes an exercise in metatheory.[x]

The term critical theory has two different origins and histories: one originating in sociology and the other in literary criticism. Critical theory in literary studies is defined by Culler[52] as being, knowledge gained via interpretation to understand the meaning of human texts and symbolic expressions—including the interpretation of texts which are themselves implicitly or explicitly the interpretation of other texts. By contrast, according to Charmaz,[53] critical social theory is understood to be a form of self-reflective knowledge involving both understanding and theoretical explanation to reduce entrapment in systems of domination, expanding the scope of autonomy and reducing the scope of domination. However practices such as feminist media studies provide conceptual frameworks for understanding the relationship of media representation (a text) with reality, other disciplines, individual readers, and society at large. Feminist media studies hold that there is a vital interconnection between representation and social analysis. In order to illustrate this connection, I will return to a discussion on the movement to combine the methods of both streams of critical theory in a mixed approach.

Following the Linguistic Turn, as I have previously mentioned – and with the expansion of the mass media – popular culture, language, symbolism, text, and meaning came to be seen as appropriate subjects of critique in the Humanities and Social Science. This meant

[x] For more clarity on this please see 'A note on how to read this thesis' at the end of the Chapter Outline section.

also a convergence of social/ cultural criticism and literary criticism and a blending of methods from both genres of critical theory.[54]

The result is that present critical social theory derives understanding and explanations from interpretations of texts, which then are self-reflectively communicated to society at large with the aim of reducing society's entrapment in systems of domination whether society at large had or had not previously been aware of the logic of such systems. At the same time the basis of this new knowledge, the interpretation of text, in Boham's[55] view, is not reliant on the possession of particular knowledge, but interpretation is concerned rather with *making* meaning. Presumably the meanings mobilised in critical theory's interpretation of texts must be informed by experiences in, and knowledge of, broader society – broader society which is of course remade according to the critical consequences interpreted through the text. It follows thus that society at large informs our reading of texts. And cultural representations – or texts – inform our reading of society. Acclaimed critical theorists working in this vein include Homi K. Bhabha, Hélène Cixous, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, and Angela Davis. Therefore texts and society are both self-referencing and mutually constitutive of one another. Another useful way to think about the interconnection around representation's relationship to reality can be found in de Lauretis's account of subjectivity as a product of "being subject/ed to semiosis": in other words "making meanings and being made by them."[56] This understanding also helps to resolve the foreseeable theoretic tension between personal agency and structure in terms of the misconception that people are simply 'dictated' to by the media.

The initial level of my enquiry will be the analysis of already existing academic research on the topics of women in sport and gendered representation in the media. Much of this secondary research has been drawn from firsthand interviews and fieldwork conducted abroad and in South Africa. For the purposes of this project primary interviews are not a helpful resource owing to the fact that the intention of this thesis is not to record oral history, nor attempt to document an unwritten history, nor 'uncover a Truth.' I am not looking at the players or organisers themselves as a primary unit of analysis because I am not concerned with whether people in their own right as individual historic subjects, are trying to change the system, or whether they are or are not aware that they may be subverting hegemonic relations through play, or whether they are meaning or not meaning to reproduce structures of power. 'Intention' is not a primary consideration of this paper.

In fact this lies outside the ambit of this research. What I wish to examine is the way(s) in which, even *without* meaning to, the very language we use to frame popularised topics around women's football in South Africa reinforces/challenges/subverts hegemonic relations of gender and sex organisation.

My research, as I have said, is located within the context of previously existing sports feminism theory which deals predominantly with gender (Hargreaves, 2000; Scranton & Flintoff, 2002; Messner, 2007; Aitchison, 2007). From this position I can attest that certain recurring themes have continued to engaged sports feminists and gender theorists looking at sport sociology:

Hierarchies of gender asymmetry and sexism – female athletes continue to be viewed as 'less than' in relation to their male counterparts (Hargreaves, 2000; Scraton & Flintoff, 2002). Typically women sports people are shown less approval. They receive less economic support, less social popularity (Dworkin & Messner, 20002; Naidoo, 2006) and more criticism of their bodies (Hargreaves, 2000).

Role played by the media – Contemporary mainstream media generally both accommodates and resists women's entry into sports simultaneously. Feminist Media Studies (van Zooyen 1993, Gamble 2001) reflect on the relationship between audience agency in relation to structure. The content of sports media, however is typically not about 'making meaning' but 'is made' to accord to exterior meaning, and therefore in general perpetuates 'appropriate' hegemonic gender images (Messner & Duncan, 1993; Kane & Greendorfer, 1994; Duncan & Hasbrook, 2002). This occurs particularly in relation to female athletes who are understood to be transgressing conventional gender roles through their involvement in sport (Birrell & Cole, 1994; Russel, 2007).

Sexualisation and sexuality – Characteristically female athletes are represented as sexual objects within heteropatriarchally structured forms of desire (Creedon, 1994, Messner, 2007) and consequently, hierarchies of heterosexism are still very much at play in sport (Hargreaves 2000; Pronger, 2000; Naidoo 2006).

Upon under taking this thesis, I had the intention of looking at a general population of representations of women playing soccer in select media. Then through establishing reoccurring discursive trends I would be able to conject, broadly speaking, certain particular features common to the construction of women soccer players by the media in South Africa which were relevant to an analysis of gender politics.

However in the course of 2010 there were some particularly poignant events in which the themes of the women's soccer and gender politics overtly converged in the media. The most notable was the accusation of 'gender cheating' during the Confederation of African Football's (Caf)'s Women's Championships held in South Africa. This situation was hauntingly reminiscent of, what had become colloquially termed, the 'Semenya Debacle.' In 2009 Caster Semenya, a South African woman athletics star, won gold at the International Association of Athletics Federations World Championships (IAAF) held in Australia and controversy erupted over "rumors that Semenya may be a man, or more specifically, was not entirely female."[57] The speculations and scandal over the insidious 'gender testing' which ensued hit a nerve (indeed several different nerves) among South African (and international) audiences from politicians (official statement from African National Congress Youth League spokesperson;[58] Young Communist League South Africa statement in *Caster Deserves Public Apology – YCLSA*, July 8 2010), news media (*Caster Agony Set to Continue*, November 18 2009, *Semenya Case Shakes up IAAF Rule Book, December* 13 2009;) popular culture ('make-over' in You Magazine, 10 Sept 2009; New Yorker, 'Either/Or' November 30 2009), academics (Butler, 2009; Schuhmann 2009) and civil society organisations (media statements from Gender DynamiX, and Intersex Society of South Africa (ISSA))[59] alike.

Consequently, rather than doing a broad overview of representations of women soccer players in the media, I selected specific events which took place in 2010 and could clearly be framed in relation to women's soccer – implications of the FIFA World Cup for Banyana Banyana, the gender cheating accusation in the Caf Women's Championship, the participation of a South African soccer team in the Gay Games. I selected these specific events to analyse based on their having occurred within the year long timeframe I designated, because they were prime sites to which to apply an interpretation of sports feminist theory, they took place in a South African context, and they gained mainstream media attention within South Africa. These events should be viewed as moments, within the South African socio-political landscape, of gender politics in 'crisis' which present an opportunity for gender relations to be (re)written.

I deconstruct a representation of each of these crises. Through a rereading of the texts, and the addition of discourse analysis, I position the texts as vignettes through which to view

the figuring of gender politics and women's soccer, as reflections of the social political landscape at a specific point in time – in an analogous fashion to reflections done on the Semenya case.

In this approach I am acknowledging that media reflects society and that the social produces, and reproduces itself in and through, media (in line with Media Studies theorists such as van Zoonen, 1994; Gamble, 2001; Devereux, 2007); and that media (or more accurately, discourses) as a reproduction of society "shape(s) both perceptions of reality and the concrete reality that is perceived"[60] and so simultaneously (re)produces the social, with slight possible digressions, as accepted by the disciplines of Cultural Studies and Critical Theory.

The representations which interested me were ones which were framed as *news* stories (rather than match reports[xi]) in 2010, and could be related closely to the selected events. I have previously explained that texts should be understood in sophisticated terms, however due to the constraints of this paper, I will limit the major focus of my thesis to a critical analysis of three, comparable news articles. The genre of news is frequently assumed to 'tell it like it is.'[61] Stereotypically something read in the broadsheet news, even an opinion piece, is likely to be considered 'valid' or as a more 'accurate' presentation of 'facts'[62] than say a novel, which equally stereotypically is (incorrectly) disregarded as a 'mere' fiction. More relevant to my choice of genre is the notion that news media embody and enact the comm(on)unity of a society's self imagining. I argue here in line with Anderson's seminal work, *Imagined Communities* (1983). News media, as a social institution, can therefore be seen to function as a representation of social hegemonic order par excellence.

As I have explained, much of the crux of critical theory rests on a methodology concerned with interpreting texts. I acknowledge that some critics will view interpretation as subjective and therefore deem it not a meticulous method of investigation. In order to safeguard (to the extent that it is practicable) my approach against such concerns, I am utilising a specific form of Critical Discourse Analysis with a very rigorous and

[xi] Reports are normally short and deliver little content besides team line-ups, fixtures and scores

formalistic approach to written language. I shall detail the method of this analysis later in this chapter.

The texts I selected therefore had to relate to relevant, contemporary events; appear in news media; and preferably be written. In order to work with a broad geographic reader-base sample, which may be relevant across the country, I accessed newspapers which are nationally syndicated online. For example Independent on Line (IOL), the South African news and information website, is a source for The Star (Johannesburg), The Cape Argus (Cape Town), The Mercury (Durban) and The Pretoria News (Pretoria); while The Times (Johannesburg), The Sowetan (Johannesburg), The Cape Times (Cape Town) and The Herald (Port Elizabeth) are partnered. Certain newspapers such as the Mail & Guardian are independent but still draw from the South African Press Association (SAPA). I found that typically articles related to relevant events were both syndicated and shared between syndicates, though this did not mean that all publications affiliated with the syndicate actually ran the story. Consequently rather than there being competing or numerous constructions of, for example, the Caf 'gender cheating' accusation in the public realm, a single shared narrative was being recycled by mainstream journalistic media – and that if the event was reported on at all in a specific paper.

There is in fact a surprising dirth of media commentary around these moments of gender crisis. For instance nowhere in mainstream media could I find an article reporting directly on the Gay Games in 2010 – particularly surprising given that South Africa had hoped to host the very same event and this had already been well covered by IOL publications in 2005 (Gay Games May be a Boon for the City of Gold, March 11 2005; Gay Games Venue to be Announced Soon, November 2 2005; Joburg Loses Out on Gay Games, November 14 2005). The team representing South African, the Chosen FEW, received recognition internationally (The Guardian (online), United Kingdom, *The Chosen Few Lesbian Team has Changed Lerato Marumolwa's Life*, June 20 2010; CNN, United States, *World Cup Inspires Lesbian Footballers to Play with Pride*, June 22 2010) but domestically only the Mail & Guardian mobilised to any major extent stories commenting on the Chosen FEW (*Belles of the Ball*, April 23 2010; *Lesbian Team Fight For Rights in SA*, May 5 2010).

The articles I analyse then, though by no means pervasive in the mass media, nevertheless represent the best examples of the way specific events were represented in mainstream culture. A notable feature of online sources is their continued existence in the public domain. This has relevance for the potential effect of these sources, since these particular representations can be constantly re-accessed by an ever increasing public and so can have the effect of continual reproduction. Besides existing online and being shared by divergent newspapers, the same article would usually also appear in a print version, further increasing the potential of its consumption.

As I previously stated, the aspects of contemporary feminist sports theory I draw on have in the main been generated from empirical evidence (predominantly from abroad but also applicable to, and in a few cases particular to, South Africa) often in relation to themes of sex difference, non-conforming bodies/gender presentations, and homosexuality. As such I will be using this existing theory to inform the basis of the social analysis aspect of my research. In other words I am taking the theory's current conclusion with regard to each theme as being broadly representative of contemporary socio-cultural practices. Put another way they describe hegemonic gender relations in the country. The articles are organised to correspond directly with at least one particular academic theme. The theme of gender and sex binaries and hierarchies is evident in *'Sisters still Sidelined.'* Hard to read bodies is the underlying focus in *'Caf Acknowledge Gender Complaint.'* Compulsory heterosexuality and fear of homosexuality is present in *'Lesbian Soccer Team Fight for Rights in SA.'* The analysis detailing the representation of each event (the reading of each article independently), allows one to interpret how illustrative the (re)presented event or moment is of the hegemonic gender order – in other words the representation is subversive or reinforcing by the degree to which the moment (re)presented deviates from or conforms to the existing theoretical conclusion on that theme.

Critical Discourse Analysis

In order for a study of language to reveal and elucidate a socio-cultural atmosphere Janks[63] asserts that what is needed is a critical socio-cultural theory of language which posits a systematic relationship between the social context, the functional organisation of language and the discursive production of relationships of power. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Janks advises, endeavours to explain the relationship between language, ideology and power by analysing discourse in its material forms. Rather than just being an

analysis of form within a discourse, the word 'critical' in CDA signals a focus on the role played by discourse in establishing and maintaining *relations* of domination. Relations of dominance (such as race and gender) intersect. Most assumptions of a particular discourse, not intentionally, though inherently, represent such intersections; also there are intersections and relations between different discourses (such as a discourse on race or a discourse on gender).

As encouraged in Janks's[64] work, I draw from several theorists' models of analysis in order to generate a syncretic picture of the relations at work within the texts and between particular texts and socio-cultural practices. These will include a rubric devised by Janks based on Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (1985) coupled with some notions from the modes of operation of ideology derived from Thompsons's Ideology and Modern Culture (1997); and Fairclough's model of dimensions of discourse and discourse analysis (1995).

Halliday's theory of Functional Grammar is useful for text analysis because he understands grammar to be a theory of meaning in context, an applied grammar. So by mapping different aspects of the linguistic system one can in fact articulate a situational context. In order to do this I break down the text at stake into its component clauses and map the linguistic features presented in each clause. After mapping the clauses one is able to deduce patterns presented in the text as a whole. Thus this breakdown is useful in terms of helping to explain what is significant in particular clauses, as well as elucidating an explanation of how the composite text is positioned and positioning.

Linguistic feature	Explanation of the linguistic feature
Lexicalisation	The selection/choice of wordings. Different words construct the same idea differently
Transitivity	Processes in verbs - are they verbs of • doing - material process • being or having – relational processes • thinking/feeling/ perceiving – mental • saying - verbal processes • physiological – behavioural processes • existential
Voice	Active and passive voice constructs participants as doers or as 'done-tos'. Passive voice allows for the deletion of the agent.
Nominalisation: A verb is turned into a noun	A process is turned into a thing or an event without participants or tense or modality Central mechanism for reification
Turn taking	• Who gets the floor? • Who is silent/ silenced? • Who interrupts? • Whose points are followed through? • Whose rules for turn taking are being used given that they are different in different cultures? • Who controls the topic?
Mood	Is the clause a statement, question, offer or command?
Polarity and tense.	Positive polarity (definitely yes) / Negative polarity (definitely no) Polarity is tied to the use of tense Tense sets up the definiteness of events occurring in time. The present tense is used for timeless truths and absolute certainty.
Modality Degrees of uncertainty	Logical possibility / probability Social authority Modality created by modals (may, might, could will), adverbs (possibly, certainly, hopefully) intonation (tag questions)
Pronouns & articles	• The choice of first / second / third person. • Inclusive / exclusive • Sexist/non sexist pronouns: generic 'he'

Fig.1. Excerpt from rubric based on Halliday's Functional Grammar

However, simply focusing on linguistic and semiotic choices which form the text is limited, as this form of textual analysis reveals little about the text in relation to social context. Indeed text analysis should be seen as only one aspect of discourse analysis. In light of this I shall be incorporating Fairclough's model of discourse analysis with Halliday's approach to grammar in order to analyse the text as an embedded function within the functions of discourse practice *and* social cultural practice, as detailed in the schematisation below.

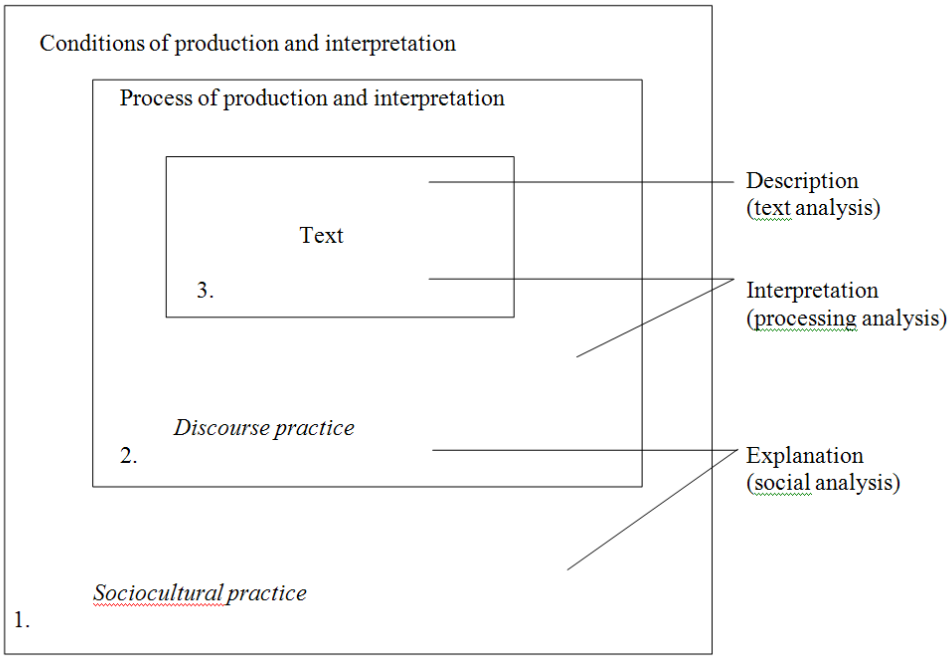


Fig.2. Fairclough's model of dimensions of discourse and discourse analysis

This composite approach is useful as it enables me to focus on the specific selection of "signifiers which make up the text; their interaction, layout and choices pertaining to production of the text;" and it simultaneously recognises that "there is a historical determination of these selections which underscores that the choices within the text are tied to the socio-cultural possibilities of that text."[65] In other words and to again quote Janks,[66] "texts are instantiations of socially regulated discourse in that the processes of production and reception are socially constructed."

Each of the three texts will be deconstructed and explained, through the means of text analysis using the Halliday rubric. It is of course common for several different meanings to be competing in even a single representation. As such, I recognise that potentially contradicting signifying practices and/or meanings will be at play in the text, and also within the meta-narrative social reception of the representation. That said, texts are coded structures: they are fixed, specific word choices are made, they are positioned and positioning. In this way a reference point does exist for interpreting the manner in which a text is functioning (even though a text a may have multiple interpretations). And given a specific social context, cues exist for establishing and interpreting what the likely reception(s) of a text will be. This reading itself may quite possibly have no marriage to the intention of the author or subjects. Considering the patterning of a particularly dominant linguistic feature from a text – be it verbs, modals, lexicalisation or pronouns enables me to arrive at a description of how the text is functioning at a critical level. Incorporating Fairclough's theory in my analysis, I will further investigate the possible conditions of production (drawn from secondary sources and social analysis) as well as the processes of production and reception[xii] which have informed the text. In this way I will be looking at the degree to which the text and its production interfere with, or echo, hegemonic socio-cultural ideas, and the degree to which the text corresponds to, or challenges, discourses of power which reify these dominant conditions.

In South Africa, there is a very vocal claim from powerful institutions, such as the government, of being committed to transformation[67] and promoting equality along race and gender lines. The field of sport is no exception to this. It might be presumed, therefore, that the South African socio-cultural context should have progressed and be more liberal than the hypothetical socio-cultural context outlined in the secondary research. However if the textual analysis of women's soccer in popular media correlates

[xii] As the processes of production and reception analysis deal predominantly with discourse and ideology there is much overlap between the models of Halliday, Fairclough and Thomspon here. Furthermore as a reader I am not outside of ideology and so even in the textual analysis my interpretation of linguistic features is informed by and couched in ideology and discourse patterns. As such it would be a mistake to imagine arriving at three discreet categories of analysis for each of Fairclough's levels. Rather, as I have previously stated, the different levels are embedded within each other and operate according to a dynamic relationship.

closely with the socio-cultural context provided for by the existing, academic theory then it has to be deduced that a contradiction exists, and representations of women in sport in South Africa carry a conservative undertone, even while there is supposedly a motion towards transformation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this overview I outline briefly the conceptual evolution which has informed the traditions of a feminist analysis of sport generally. I refer also to how authors writing specifically on soccer and South Africa have previously discussed this topic, which for the most part has not included any significantly noteworthy feminist analysis.

In the past Feminist sport scholars have used various theoretical frameworks to understand gendered experiences in competitive sports. Early work tended to dichotomise women's and men's experiences and to focus on women's limited opportunities within sports (see Boutilier & SanGiovanni, 1983; Hall, 1996). This approach conceptualises women athletes as a homogeneous group that experience gender discrimination in similar ways.

Broadening this framework, scholars turned to examining how sport within Global North, post-industrial societies contributes to the reproduction of gendered power relations (see Bryson, 1990; Messner & Sabo, 1990). This literature looks at instances where integration of the subaltern group (women, gay men) into the masculine world of sport is accepted conditionally; however an attempt to neutralise this deviation becomes evident because gendered power relationships are performed more vigorously and overtly.

Shortcomings of the growing literature on women, gender, and competitive sports include the tendency to universalise women's sporting experiences, to ignore how gender intersects with other systems of power, namely race and class, and to concentrate on the experiences of white, middle-class women in western societies. It is really only since the early 2000's that introspective work has been focused on the particularities of women in the Global South, taking into account the multifaceted impact of race and class. (see Hargreaves, 1997, 2005; Pelak, 2005, 2009)

Hargreaves's work is generally concerned with hegemony and sheds light on how dominant meanings and interests of sporting traditions are continually defended and new

meanings and oppositional interests are continually negotiated. In *Heroines in Sport* (2000), Hargreaves primarily deals with marginality and representation and examines the extent to which women, who have been previously outside mainstream sport, are being assimilated into this discourse. Hargreaves' work sparks important questions around inclusion and exclusion, power and privilege and local-global connections by way of interrogating a dominant-subordinate gender paradigm. Furthermore while Hargreaves does expressly focus on South African women it is by way of the iconic markers of race and national liberation. Her research, conducted during the transition to democracy in 1994, spotlights this period yet additional analysis should be done to critique the struggles women continue to face and their negotiated positions, particularly in relation to more nuanced and subtle identity markers of Body Politics.

Pelak's as well as Naidoo's work focuses specifically on women soccer players in South Africa and provides a very good basis and introduction to social context for my research. Pelak's work *'Women and Gender in South African Soccer: A brief history'* (2010) reflects on the history of institutionalisation, the opportunities for women to get into sports, and the convergences of national politics and the broader women's movement. These themes are also taken up in her '*Negotiating Gender/Race/Class Constraints in the New South Africa: a case study of women's soccer'* (2005). Naidoo's *Women's Bodies and the World of Football in South Africa* (2006) focuses on women's football through the important lenses of inclusion and exclusion. Naidoo's work does not have the scope to go into much detail, although it introduces one to the idea of looking at the level of representation in order to unpack how women's bodies are represented, imagined and incorporated in such a way as to prop up existing dominant discourses of heteronormativity and male-dominance. While Pelak's work is informed by a post-structural analysis and the author is concerned with exploring women athletes' multiple and often contradictory gender identities, subjectivities, and bodies, her proposed intention of showing the transgressive possibilities of sports remains in a nascent phase. As such further research is required in order to fulfil adequately the goal of situating how South African women are seen to be actively, as well as unintentionally, challenging power relations through sport.

According to Hall[68], a central debate in recent feminism is the extent to which gender differences, embodied in cultural stereotypes of femininity and masculinity, ought to be eliminated or encouraged. In the discourse on women and sport this has practical

application in areas of integration versus segregation, engagement versus autonomy, and co-opting versus ostracism. The discourse of gender and sport, it is pleasing to note, is slowly moving away from a restrictive focus on women, towards a more holistic engagement assessing the impact of gendered social structures on *both* sexes.[69]

Major tomes on South African soccer have, I would argue in line with Hargreaves and Pelak, tended to be male orientated and this further underscores the necessity to produce scholarly research on South African soccer women. In *Laduma! Soccer, Politics and Society in South Africa* (2004) Alegi provides a comprehensive account of the roots of soccer in South Africa, by means of using the game and its institutionalision as lens for mapping out a social and political history. The text lays out a chronological schema for soccer in South Africa, from pre-colonial, to colonial introduction, to its modern development. Alegi also investigates themes of Africanisation, cementing identity and the connections between football and nationalism particularly as a reaction to Apartheid. Alegi's text covers a wide range of issues related to South Africa and soccer, however his work in this realm is chiefly male centred, and is fundamentally a history of men in soccer. While Algei is aware of, and focuses on, the intersections between social history, gender history, labour history, and political history; in his writing on South African soccer, it would seem that women are mentioned only when they can be cast as supporting roles to the male leads of the narrative. Presumably this is not a naive oversight on the author's part, but a telling pointer that more research needs to be done and that scholarly attention to African women's sport has been extremely rare.

Korr & Close's text *More Than Just a Game: Soccer Vs. Apartheid: The Most Important Soccer Story Ever Told* (2008) details the way that soccer has been used in South Africa as an active force to challenge oppressive structural systems, such as the Apartheid regime. The book gives an account of political prisoners on Robben Island and their determination to organise a football league in order to resist and challenge the brutalities confronting them. The subject matter therefore is very specific, yet it may be useful for my purposes to ascertain whether themes from Korr & Close's research can be applied to women soccer players, particularly to teams of self-identified lesbian women, who choose to embrace soccer as a potential community organising tool.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

Could soccer's historic political heritage be extended in a post-Apartheid era, and coupled with a postmodern project aimed at destabilising identities and normative assumptions, can 'the field' become a space in which issues of gender/sex politics may now be contested? This line of thinking started me on an investigation into the gendered ramifications of sport. I delved deeper into the problems which have long been plaguing women in sport: issues of asymmetrical gender inequalities, transgressive body imaginaries and non-normative sexualities. All of these are wrapped up in a normative, hegemonic gender framework: in what is 'understood' to signify being a man or woman; in how bodies 'should' conform to ordered stereotypes; in how sexual desire is supposedly 'fused' to understandings of 'femininity' or 'masculinity.'

The initial chapter of this thesis, *(Subverting) Power or Not Part I* interrogates the complex relationship of resistance and power. It describes, drawing from Foucaudian arguments, how intersecting hierarchies of dominance such as patriarchy and heterosexism (as well as race and class) produce differing subject positions and how individual subjects, and representations of them, have the potential to, though not necessarily intentionally, nevertheless reproduce and/or resist hegemonic social structures – sometimes simultaneously. This chapter presents an argument for the political importance of interrogating representation and discourse from a perspective related to a philosophy of language as suggested by linguists such as de Saussure. Inspired by Cameron's research into the relationships between feminism and linguistics, in conjunction with theories building on from Austin's work on performative utterance, the chapter draws attention to the relationship between language and power, reading and meaning, and highlights the importance of social context in the reception of a text.

In *An Image of Sport: Intruding Bodies and the Media* I introduce most of the analytical elements of consideration relevant to this thesis which occur between the field of sport and gender. The chapter outlines briefly how constructions of women in sport have changed through history. This chapter centres on the perceived differences between men and women in sport, and in line with Kane & Greendorfer and Naidoo, describes how such assumptions become concretised into practical inequalities between the sexes. The strategies and effects of typical media representations of sports women, as put forward by

Creedon, are also subjected to further consideration in an analysis of a representation centred on Banyana Banyana's development.

Chapter three, *Shifting Bodies and Boundaries*, deals with body politics. It examines representations of gender, as well as describing the potential for subversion through transgressive body performance. This chapter illustrates how dominant gender conditioning emphasises a disjuncture between the categories 'athlete' and 'woman.' Through the figure of a butch athlete and the ensuing contestation over her biology I explore the possibilities for transgressive bodies to thwart prescriptivist definitions of femininity and social control. This chapter also includes a theoretical investigation inspired by Butler's work on the notion of gender as performance and its relationship to the category of sex, as well as looking at how gender intersects with categories of race and class.

From the preceding chapters it emerges that a complicated relationship exists between representations of sports women and the manner in which lesbians are represented. The chapter, *Is Gay Sport Queering Sport?* looks into the phenomenon of all-gay sport and the mobilisation of identity politics. In this chapter I examine the appropriateness of the gay sport genre as a tactic of subversion through a confrontation of alternate perspectives suggested by Pronger and Hargreaves respectively. Through an inspection of a representation of the Chosen FEW, a self-identified all-lesbian soccer team, the chapter seeks to answer whether gay-sport is in fact a method of queering the bodily image of the field of sport.

The final chapter, *(Subverting) Power or Not Part II*, touches on and brings together some of the divergent strands explored in the preceding chapters. It looks again at tensions between resistance and power, and the precarious position of media representations in such a fulcrum. It speaks briefly to opportunities of resistance for women who have been marginalised in the field of sport, the relevance of representation, and motivates that dominant orders and relations should be reimagined more openly. The chapter concludes by suggesting a strategy for interfering with oppressive orders and structures – notably through a subversive/queer politics.

A note on how to read this thesis:

The three studies on articles, 'Reading Women's Football; Reading Ambiguous Bodies; Reading Lesbian Team' should be seen as being embedded in the relevant chapter they are subsumed under, and as being in conversation with the theoretical theme of said chapter. It follows that because the media reflects society, the articles and 'reading sections' are *illustrative* of pertinent themes or theories which exist in the social and are discussed in the chapter at large – ie. READING AMBIGUOUS BODIES is an illustration of theory – in this case **Transgression**, as covered in the chapter **SHIFTING BODIES AND BOUNDARIES**. Yet since representations also produce and (re)produce social relations, the articles and 'reading sections' are not simply illustrations of a point, but are themselves a source, an evidence, informing and *constantative* of social relations. Therefore there is not an easy, hierarchical relationship between chapter titles and subheadings because they dialectically imply the cause and effect of one another. In other words the themes and theories (e.g. **Transgression** which constitutes part of the chapter at large, **SHIFTING BODIES AND BOUNDARIES**) are *outside* the text (the article) and inform how the text can be read; and exist *within* the text (the article) in that social norms inform the production of the text, but these themes are also *internal* to the text in that the text informs the production of social logic and norms as the reproduction (re)produces the social. While I am aware that my formal layout is non-traditional and my approach may come up against the criticism that it is fantastically self referencing, the reading of this thesis is an exercise in theory: it performs a cyclical (re)production of a situation, but includes a postmodern reflexive space of critical distance. It is into this 'extended' space that the reproduced product (be it the representational or the 'real' social) can over flow, take on, and reproduce anew a slightly divergent (re)production. This process might be called subversion. It follows then that my structure is in fact directly demonstrating several of the methodological concepts which underlie the work. Upon reading the quote that follows in Teresa de Lauretis's[70] *Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema* I felt an immediate surge of familiarity:

> When Luce Irigaray rewrites Frued's essay on 'Femininity,' inscribing her own critical voice into his tightly woven argumentation and creating an effect of distance, like a discordant echo, which ruptures the coherence of address and dislocates meaning, she is performing, enacting, the division of women in discourse.

(SUBVERTING) POWER OR NOT PART I

> The 'body' is rather to be thought of as the point of intersection, as the interface between the biological and the social, that is to say between the socio-political field of microphysics of power and the subjective dimension.
>
> - Braidotti[71]

Power, Agency and Resistance

For Foucault the category of resistance is closely linked to the idea of power as productive. McNay[72] argues that repression and resistance therefore are not ontologically distinct; rather repression produces its own resistance. To paraphrase Foucault: Resistances are not "in a position of exteriority in relation to power, [but] by definition, they can only exist in the strategic field of power relations."[73] "There are no relations of power without resistance; the latter are all the more real and effective because they are formed right at the point where relations of power are exercised."[74] From this understanding of resistance, McNay argues that it then follows for the sexed body to be understood not only as the primary target of the techniques of disciplinary power, but also as the point where these techniques are resisted and frustrated. Foucault[75] sates that the sexed body may have been "driven out of hiding and constrained to lead a discursive existence," at the same time as "discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it." By way of example; Foucault suggests that the propensity of discourses on 'deviant' sexualities in the nineteenth century served to reinforce social controls in the areas of 'perversity' and legitimated a notion of 'normal' heterosexuality. However this proliferation of controlling discourses created a counter-vocabulary or 'reverse discourse', which could be used by those labelled deviant to establish their own identity and demand certain rights. For Foucault, "homosexuality began to speak on its own behalf, to demand that its legitimacy or 'naturality' be acknowledged, often in the same vocabulary, using the same categories by which it was medically disqualified."[76]

In his later work, Foucault extends the realm of individual agency and potential resistance in his notion 'technologies of the self.'[77] This refers to techniques which permit individuals to affect certain transformations to their own ways of thinking, ways of being and ways of doing, in order to develop new states of empowerment.[78] Jones and Aitchison[79] articulate technologies of the *self* as embodying resistance, transgression and

empowerment on the part of the individual, in contrast to technologies of *power* which imply disempowerment on the part of the individual as a result of oppressive power structures effected through dominant discourses. As such, technologies of the self allow individuals to recognise themselves as active subjects with agency able to counteract dominant discourses of power. Sport has often been analysed by sport feminists as a technology of power and domination, however a few researchers[80] suggest that within sport, technologies can function as a form of mitigation against, while within, dominant discourses; as well as identifying certain technologies of the self which effectively release the individual from the 'control' of the dominant discourses of power. In this way sport can be understood to function both as a technology of power and as a technology of the self, acting as a site in which the tension between hegemonic order and individual resistance may be actualised. The more complex and layered notion of difference that Foucault tries to capture in his practice of technologies of the self resonates with anti-universalist calls from black and other marginalised feminists who espouse ideas of differential experience among women.

Although there may be overarching structures which determine individuals' lives, these structures are never manifest in pure and identical forms. This is because, as McNay[81] states, any individual's life is determined by multiple factors which conflict and interlink with each other, producing differential effects. Against the background of multiple determinants, individuals act upon themselves and order their own lives in numerous and variable ways.

McNay[82] correctly posits that gender should no longer be thought of as a globally constant phenomenon. Gender intersects with race, class, ethnicity, and more, to produce different – at times radically different – experiences of what it is to be a woman (or man). Furthermore, the individual's own identification with and investment in different subject positions makes it impractical to speak of gender as some kind of unified experience.[83] The relationship between structure and agency must be grasped as dynamic, not static, because existing structures are reproduced by human agents who modify and change said structures to differing degrees as they are shaped by them. Giddens[84] envisages that, "structures form 'personality' and 'society' simultaneously, but in neither case exhaustively because of the significance of the unintended consequence of the action, and because of the unacknowledged conditions of actions." In my view it is often times the

significance of the unintended consequence of actions which encode their real potential to resist or reinforce articulations of power.

(EN)GENDERING ACTION: THE RELEVANCE OF DISCOURSE

Cameron,[85] in her work *Feminism & Linguistic Theory* reflects that speech and writing have been credited with a power to regulate human social relations in ways we are not even aware of – through the "power to disguise 'truths' and alter perceptions in a cloud of rhetoric." This sentiment, that language 1.) constitutes the perceptions we have and 2.) does things, i.e. language *acts*, is the crux of this chapter.

Beliefs born of the Enlightenment insisted that language was transparent in the sense that a word was understood as merely a dressing for the appropriate thing, and the true, naked thing *existed* outside – in a concrete, 'real' world. Flax[86] speaking on Enlightenment perceptions explains as follows:

> Just as the right use of reason can result in knowledge that represents the real, so, too, language is merely the medium in and through which such representation occurs. There is a correspondence between "word" and "thing" (as between a correct truth claim and the real). Objects are not linguistically (or socially) constructed, they are merely made present to consciousness by naming and the right use of language.

One can assert (though admittedly tongue-in-cheek,) that Enlightenment thinkers, true to form, were not willing to entertain the possibility that 'in the beginning there was the word.'[xiii]

Writing as I do with a postmodern world view, I reject the Enlightenment philosopher's claims about both reality and language. Consequently although often falsely accredited as being so, I argue that language is not neutral. It is not transparent. Language is loaded. As Bahktin puts it language is "populated – over-populated – with the intentions of others"[87]

[xiii] Phrase associated with Genesis from the Bible. Enlightenment thinkers rejected religious doctrine in favour of celebrating rationality and humanism.

Language is inscribed, reinscribed and is a social construction and a social constructing. Language is a coded structure, written and spoken to be positioning and to position,[88] with the express intention of conveying meaning. And meaning is never neutral or obviously self explanatory. What 'Hello' means is not transparently expressed intact within that signifier. Meaning is taught, or realised through repetitive exposure, or subjective reflection. Word choices are made for a reason. As such it is my view that language forms the basis of all representation. This sentiment taken to its ultimate conclusion arrives at the philosopher Lugwig Wittgenstein's famous quote: "The limits of my language mean the limits of my world" – *Meaning*, we cannot think the world outside of language.

Feminism and Linguistic Theory

For many feminists the relationship between power and language has been of paramount importance – from questioning generic masculine pronouns; attempting to define a literary language which can adequately fit and express a female experience; opposing a few sexist expressions, to analysing the entire apparatus of language in general.[89] Language itself is notably a social engagement, a human activity or in other words, a discourse – the assumptions and procedures which govern it are human constructions and are gendered through and through.

Cameron[90] notes that to understand society therefore entails learning how to 'read' its cultural codes, its language. While enlightenment thinkers took language to be a transparent medium which merely names a world existing outside of language, second wave feminists began asking from whose point of view and according to whose reality this naming of the world is being done.[91] However more radical still, feminists like Dale Spencer, proposed that there is no reality outside of representation.[92] Indeed in line with postmodern approaches, such as critical theory and cultural studies which I have detailed, it has become evident that language affects what we perceive as, and how we perceive, the real.[93] Furthermore it is argued that we ourselves are created and structured as social beings by learning a language – that in fact "language 'speaks us.' "[94] The process of "becoming a (proper) social subject" states Cameron, "is the process of learning language and positioning oneself within it." As such, identity and experience are the outcome of meaning rather than the origin of meaning. Black & Coward[95] view language in this way, stating that language "defines our possibilities and limitations, it constitutes our subjectivity."

While Black & Coward's claim is very strong, from the trajectory outlined above we can begin to see how language, discourse and representation are indissoluble from the formation of perceiving the world of which we ourselves are a part.[96] Representation, has implications on, in fact it implies, indexes, and imprints, our popular imagination. How we interpret the world is therefore contingent upon the representations we have received. So if through deconstructing discourse we find that multiple possibilities and limitations can be read in a representation – reading sometimes with and sometimes against the text – then it follows that there are multiple possible ways to read the world surrounding us. And representations can imply alternative ways and possibilities towards resisting hegemonic, stayed messages.

As Cameron notes, often times through language sex differences are taken for granted and become naturalised. This is true even in linguistics. We are programmed to look for them, and when we find them to treat 'men's style' as the norm and 'women's style' as the deviation[97] – take for example the qualifier 'women's soccer' which presents the male version of the game as the 'ungendered, neutral norm' and women's participation in such as the irregularity. This without even entertaining the connotations and associated perceptions of this qualifier – that the women's game has 'less skill', is 'less entertaining', is a juvenile reposting of 'proper soccer.'

Specific languages are quintessentially social *institutions*, in other words they are cultural artefacts, with histories, authoritative conventions and claims to authority themselves. In a Foucaudian understanding, the production of knowledge is always bound up with historically specific regimes of power and, therefore, every society produces its own truths which have a normalising and regulatory function.[98] By establishing an equilibrium measure between science and ideology, Foucault brackets the whole question of validity and truth. He is concerned with how effects of truth are produced within discourses which in themselves are neither true nor false. [99] In Foucault's early work he attempts to show the limits of the legitimacy of knowledge by demonstrating that all systems of knowledge are in fact states or discursive events.[100] In turn, as McNay states, these events or statements make up part of a discursive formation which has its own autonomous and deep-seated linguistic rules of formation.[101] The task of postmodernists thus becomes not

to reveal the 'Truth' but to discover how such discourses of truth operate in relation to dominant power structures of a given society.

There has been a dominant trend in Western, everyday thinking to conceptualise language as what would be termed 'telementational.'[102] This notion perceives language as a means for transferring thought intact from the speaker's mind to the hearer's by means of a shared linguistic code – a set of invariant correspondences between forms and meanings, signifiers and signified. However I would argue along with Sassure that meaning and specific utterance get coupled together arbitrarily. They do not, therefore, conform to a fixed code of unique one-to-one correspondence: the concept/utterance is not necessarily decoded by the hearer, form matched with concept – the same concept as the speaker's – at all. Instead I would suggest that meaning can shift: between speakers, within subjects' own situatedness and between words. Gavey[103] notes that poststructuralist theorising requires an interrogation which doesn't take for granted the meanings of any terms or analytic categories, including its own, but asks "how specific deployment of discourse for specific political purposes determines the very notions used." It is in this space, the spaces in between where meaning is created, that resistance, subversion and transformation can most easily take hold and balloon, engulfing and challenging constructed structures, languages, ideologies and hegemonic culture.

Thus, I argue in line with Roy Harris's[104] conception of 'integrational linguistics,' that language is both interpretive, and radically contextual. Harris reasons that the effect of this indeterminate way of thinking means that it is "no longer necessary to reduce speaker and hearer to mere automata, handling pre-packaged messages in accordance with mechanical rules." Indeterminacy makes language flexible, able to adapt to novel situations. It also explodes the myth of the telepathic utterance-meaning complex transmission. As Cameron notes "it is not just a matter of context affecting the system, but rather the system has no existence outside of a context." Language cannot be abstracted from time and space or from the extralinguistic dimensions of the situation in which it is embedded. Language, and even more so discourse, because it is underpinned through-and-through with social context, therefore provides a fertile ground level from which an investigation of broader social norms and cultural hegemony may stem.

Speakers interacting with other speakers encounter the constraint that communication is by definition not individual, but social.[105] In Cameron's view the social norms which regulate public behaviour are always and inevitably an integral part of any linguistic or communicative act. It is in the normative practices which regulate what will be accepted as an intelligible, reasonable or 'proper' way of talking (or writing) about a topic that the possibility of elite power or control over language arises. In other words some forms of 'speaking'[xiv] may acquire prestige and dominance while others are disparaged; some definitions of the world can be made to look 'natural' and 'true' while others are excluded from the public sphere or made to seem extremely eccentric and even ridiculous. It follows then that language, meaning and communication, are thus governed by and imposed with social hierarchy. Pateman[106] argues in a similar vein: "Language, through the socially produced means of thought, is not socially controlled. Increasingly control over the development of language and its use is held by state institutions, including mass media and monopolistic private enterprise, as in journalism and advertising [.]"

According to Foucault, on the one hand all knowledge is the effect of a specific regime of power and on the other hand, forms of knowledge constitute the social reality which they describe and analyse: "power and knowledge directly imply one another; . . . there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations."[107] The effects of the power / knowledge complex are relayed through different discourses. Foucault notes that "it is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together."[108] Thus in order to ascertain information on the directives of power, discourse should be analysed. Likewise alterations and appropriations in discourse can lead to a dislodging of a particular knowledge system and a shift in power. To reiterate, while what Pateman calls a "monopolistic enterprise" does exist and provides a logic for why looking at language is relevant for investigating relations of power, it should not, however, be inferred that dominant constructions are monolithic or all-powerful. Power is not only unidirectional. Dominant constructions can be remade, subverted, resisted or opened up as new meanings (or new knowledge) replace the previous.

[xiv] Language usage in a broader sense: speaking, writing, communicating

Specialised ‘languages’ such as medical discourse, law jargon and sport commentating, historically have been created by men, and often represented women as marginal or inferior. Cameron notes that this sexism often continues even when women nominally gain access to the language in question. An example of this can be seen in journalism, which women have long been able to practise, yet where the mainstream conventions of the genre have not become noticeably less sexist. Thus, in line with theories developed by Kaplan,[109] dominant groups or structures, such as patriarchy, can be capable of preserving power and authority through the control and regulation of language conventions. It follows that hegemonic ideologies can often be maintained, reinforced and reproduced through the regular use of typical language style if it goes unchallenged.

The question of power is taken to be a question about who controls language, in what ways and to what extent. Cameron[110] poses some important questions: Does power in language derive from other kinds of power (physical, political, economic)? Is linguistic power the power to define reality and thus the key to all other forms of domination? If we use ‘their’ form of language will we start to think like them? If ‘their’ form of language is pervasive, is popular buy-in and naturalisation steadfast? In general I would answer yes to all these questions – because subjects influence hegemonic ideologies in society via the discourses they use: through the acclimatisation and accumulation of like-communing subjects the status quo calcifies.

Certain language styles reinforce the status quo, and have been termed by Pateman[111] ‘idle discourse.’ Idle discourse is the language in which many social institutions positively encourage us to engage. It sidesteps meaning and treats definitions as closed, not possible subjects for dispute, and so fails to see or even suggest that the picture of reality can be challenged. It is politically progressive therefore to make changes in language which encourage people to reflect actively on the political nature of meaning itself.[112] Pateman argues that even rather superficial changes – the use of non-sexist language for example – will ultimately affect attitudes at a deeper level. “The change in practice,” Pateman affirms, “*constitutes* a restructuring of at least one aspect of one social relationship...every act reproduces or subverts a social institution.”[113] This is a crucial point to make, that in speech and writing we can signal either acceptance or rejection of the existing order.

Politics is frequently defined as "a struggle for power."[114] Weden[115] poses an attractive reformation: discourse, is a struggle of representation, and explicitly as "a struggle for the power of representation." The role of discourse as the instrument of politics, Weden points out, has been widely recognised, from Plato and Aristotle all the way to contemporary discourse analysts such as Fairclough (1989) and Wodak (2002). She proposes, and I agree, that what has been less appreciated is the essentially political character of discourse.[116] Discourse should not be narrowly imagined as a tool employed by the powerful to monolithically inscribe the masses. Rather we must also take account of the conception that discourses are at their very core political in themselves. As a result, when anyone uses a specific discourse they engage in politics; because, in the tradition of Austin's celebrated theorisation of the performative utterance,[117] discourse, in the act of being enacting, is doing politics. Anyone can therefore, through a specific choosing of how to represent anything – a soccer game, an experience – be exercising some kind of recourse to power. To elaborate, Phelan,[118] a theorist engaged with performativity, explains that it is at the moment of performing (or for my study, the instance(s) of presenting a representation) that meaning and with it a course to power is laid open. A significant relevance for dealing with reproduced media follows, namely that it is at the numerous and reoccurring re-presentation(s) of the representation that meaning and a course to power is opened. What this means is that a written text, which will persist through time, and especially one reproduced through mass media, provides several, different opportunities to enact power. In the reading of this mode many opportunities to challenge or resist power are provided; as are as many opportunities for the status quo to be re-inscribed.

Contextualising (and) Performativity

This thesis concerns itself with texts in both the narrow and broad sense. On the one hand I will specifically analyse text from popular media and its relation to discourse while on the other I also recognise that the (human) body itself is a text inscribed with power relations. Therefore I am looking too, at bodies in relation to the politics of representation in order to describe operations of power. As already mentioned, the sexed body can be understood not only as the primary target of disciplinary power, but also as the point where these techniques are resisted and frustrated. Due to intersectionality there are unintended consequence of action, and unacknowledged conditions of actions. Media representations themselves may be ambivalent. And sport, furthermore, can be understood

to function both as a technology of power and as a technology of the self, acting as a site in which the tension between hegemonic order and individual resistance may be actualised. As such, repression and resistance are not easy-to-read unidirectional exertions.

Performativity

The manifestations of text with which this thesis is concerned have a performative element. The texts are news articles. They are players. They are bodies. They do all perform, but more accurately, they are all concerned with performativity. Performativity is to perform a type of being. It is the construction of identity or position through active expression.

In order to outline the coherence of this thesis to the concept of performativity, it may prove a relevant exercise to trace the teleos of the concept's application within academia. The performative was first described in 1955 by J.L. Austin, a philosopher of language, who stated that certain utterances such as "I bet" and "I do take you to be my wife" are performative utterances in that they initiate an action, a way, a being, rather than simply describing something either 'truly' or 'falsely' (which is what constative utterances like "snow is white" are understood as commenting on.)[119] In fact Austin goes as far as to argue that all utterances are performative, even those that appear merely to describe a state of affairs, since such utterances *do* the act of informing. As Hall[120] intimates, speaking on Austin's work, "this is a revolutionary conclusion, for all utterances must then be viewed as actions." The impetus to view utterances as actions – and accordingly as political actions – resonates overtly with my thesis. It follows logically then that utterances are not simply empty words but they are doing something. John Searle in his identification of the classic performative spoke of "dual-direction-of-fit."[121] Hall[122] summarises Searle thus:

> while the words of a performative do in some sense "fit" the world, conforming to the conventions that govern their success, they also constitute it, so that by their very utterance the world is also made to fit the words.

Derrida was another major theorist who took up the concept of performativity. Arguing in a deconstructive vein, Derrida[123] looked to literature and posited, much like Barthes,[124] that because the text can always be detached from the context in which it is written, the intentionality of its author is irrelevant. I too accept this as correct. For Derrida, context

can never be identified, because all utterances work through "a potential of never-ending citationality."[125] While Derrida seems to disregard context completely, I hold on some level with the linguistic anthropologists who contest Derrida in that as much as a text is always a repeated citation and may be detached from any specific context – it is always cognitively realised through/in specific, located, cultural conventions. Thus as I will illustrate shortly with reference to the form of the butch athlete, context is crucial – but it is the *reader's* context, not the author's, which has relevance.

Quite recently Butler has applied the concept of performativity to discussions on gender, arguing that gender constitutes the very act it performs. I will take up this relationship between gender and performativity in greater detail in the chapter Shifting Bodies and Boundaries, relating it to discussions on gender performance, as well as later in that same chapter in relation to debunking the notion of an imitation identity. Butler's application has been embraced by linguists such as Cameron and Hall, (and is relevant for me) particularly because it has leant a strong bearing to discourse analysis since, in Halls[126] words, "it leads us away from sociolinguistic approaches to identity that view the way we talk as directly indexing a prediscursive self" because "[t]o a poststructuralist like Butler, there is no prediscursive identity." All "our understandings" even that of biological sex "[are] discursively produced."[127] My thinking coincides with Hall's summation that this perspective puts more weight on the speech event itself and requires us to examine how speakers manipulate ideologies in the ongoing production of ways of being. I hope that by this point, the relevance of investigating text/utterance/discursivity, because of its understood role as an integral constitutive of the social, has been made clear.

Relative to what I have been arguing regarding language, Foucault queries the body's status as something given in nature and existing outside the operations of power.[128] In Foucault's view the body is not helpfully regarded as 'natural' but becomes something thoroughly socialised. For Foucault the categories with which we think about the body do not come from any transparent necessity, but rather are seen to be fundamentally culturally embedded and imbued with the workings of power. As Ransom[129] argues of Foucault, " 'Sex' or 'sexuality' is not self explanatory; rather we become eroticised within the discourses of sex and sexuality, and it is within discourse that we learn the coherence of an identity as 'straight', ' lesbian', 'sadomasochistic' or 'sexually healthy.'" "If the body is thus deployed upon and constituted at an experiential level *(which must be*

culturally contextualised) its status as a binding factor across historical experiences of 'being female' becomes problematic" notes Bailey.[130] 'Women' therefore cannot be imagined as a fixed category. In short, and as Bailey neatly points out, the "biological body no longer provides us with brute matter which merely requires classification."[131]

I turn now to exemplify some of the linguistic theory detailed in the current chapter in relation to reading bodies.



Fig.3. Reading bodies: Illustrating the butch athlete
Image courtesy of Big Issue

If I described the body represented above at face value I might mention these terms:

short hair; peroxide bond; black body; baggy shorts and T-shirt (non-revealing clothing); without cosmetics or feminising accessories; hard (not soft) looking aesthetic; female; bodily muscular or appearing large – either in part (powerful legs) or in entirety; engaged; physical; active; assertive; forceful; dedicated sport participant; sprawling / open deportment; roisterous

This form, for the purposes and remainder of this paper I will term the 'butch athlete.' Given that the butch athlete is taken to be a nonconforming body type, what we read is

nonconformity in regard to the fact that the butch athlete is a woman who does not personify the typical traits of hegemonic 'femininity,' and in most cases does exhibit traits more frequently associated with what would be termed 'masculinity.' While recognising that butch is not a homogeneous characterisation, but includes multiplicity, the butch type in discussion here, the athletic butch, is simply a theoretical construct and should not be understood to impute an identity, rather, it is a functional term, invoking a shared element among diverse individuals. At this point I am referring simply to body type, rather than necessarily invoking sexual preference.

Is butchness automatically linked to blackness in South Africa? Would the characteristics which may mark a white body as butch, have the same implication on a black body? The fact that traditional western 'femininity' has been set to a standard of *white* femininity and that this mode, particularly through an historic colonial perspective, has dominated[xv] popular imagining means that blackness itself could plausibly be taken to represent a position removed from hegemonic 'femininity.' That this interpretation is common-place has been established through much black feminist scholarship[132] writing on female, black bodies which points out that there has been a history of reading such bodies as perverted, oversexed and non-feminine. As such there is a potential case to be made that blackness can be linked to butchness in an oppressively racialised context where (one form of) femininity is denied the black woman. To illustrate I postulate this thought-experiment: In a hyper-racist society the logic is that nothing should be common/shared between the races. It therefore follows that from a historic colonial white female perspective the black body must be imagined as such a violent antithesis of the white self that it must be *other* on all accounts: 'other' race, but also an 'other' gender as well. By this logic any black female body could be imagined as 'closer' to butch – or the reverse, further from feminine – than the same white body. However I think this works only from inside a paradigm where femininity means *whiteness* essentially – from inside a 'whiteness' dominant framework.

[xv] The lucrative market for hair relaxers and skin lightening cream are indicative of a dominant racialised (white) femininity

I represented a black woman here deliberately because, in South Africa, soccer is typically racialised, not because butchness is. But perhaps an accurate trajectory for assessing potential linkages for butchness and blackness follows thus: Soccer playing – engaging in the athleticism of a 'mans' game, as soccer is understood in South Africa – is linked to butchness (particularly if there is not an overt 'feminising' code). And although, as I have already detailed, black women were historically denied much access to sport – hence there should be a disjuncture between blackness and sport-qualified butchness – soccer, in South Africa, has a history of being quite thoroughly racialised. Therefore, *typically*, the women who play soccer would be black. And, again *typically*, through playing soccer a woman is linked to butchness. So a relationship can be established between blackness and butchness though it is not automatic and perhaps is predominant only within the microcosm of South African women's soccer.

This foray into trying to describe or determine the intersections of racialised and femininised embodied image hints at how socially contextual the reading of a body may be. How this embodied form is interpreted – what its meaning is – is radically contextual. When this subject, the butch athlete, on top of a racialised lens, is also subjected to the gaze of sexualised others there is added a plethora of possible interpretations: From the position of power (typically male) such a body may be read as 1.) a subversive threat or 2.) 'imitation' flattery / affirmation. From a dominant position (perhaps that of a heterosexual women) this body might be read as 1.) a disparaging insult or 2.) a digression or 3.) completely different, outside of and removed from her own position. From a non-dominant, perhaps culturally alternative, position (LGBTI) such a body might be taken to signify 1.) resistance 2.) reinforcement of power 3.) an alternative, neutral body or 4.) an object of desire. What this exercise illustrates is that the reading has little to do with the text's intention, rather it has to do with interpretation which is given by the reader's context and position. Therefore the meaning of the text is not fixed, it is indeterminate, but because *language* is contextual and is implicated in discourse and ideologies about power, then it follows that texts do have implications / effects since they can never exist outside of context.

To move slightly from performativity to performance now. For a performance there must be an audience – as with language it is in the transversing communicative between performer and spectator that the act is established. The texts with which this thesis is

concerned are performative, as I have said. They are mediatized representations consumed by a readership. They are soccer players playing the game under the view of spectators. They are bodies engaged in the incessant repetitions of gender offerings reviewed by a scrutinising public gaze.

Devereux[133] suggests that Feminist Media Studies was the first field to promote a conception of the audience as active. Like the now-popular rejection of conceptualising language as telementational, feminist scholars rejected the simplistic notion of conceiving the process of mass communication as a linear transmission from sender to receiver. [134] Ien Ang, probably the most prominent advocate of this position, argues that women (although I would say people) do not simply take in or reject media messages, but use and interpret them: "female audiences play a productive role in constructing textual meanings and pleasures."[135] Active audience theory, as it became known, has been criticised however as "an interpretative free-for-all in which the audience possess an unlimited potential to read any meaning at will from a given text."[136] I take the view that it is acceptable to imagine the audience as having agency (in a far diminished capacity than would allow an "unlimited" reading) *and* take cognisance of Morley's[137] rebuttal of active audience theory. His argument is that economic, political and ideological forces act on the construction of text. This is a central premise of my thesis. However these two views are acceptably reconcilable if one holds an idea of power as complex and nuanced rather than imagining it as absolute. Worth pointing out too, and inspired by Ang and Hermes,[138] a similar objection to active audience theory is that while the audience may have the ability to subvert texts, and hence appropriate power, one should not ignore the vast marginality of that power within the hegemonic context. My standpoint in relation to the concept of the audience is therefore a reiteration of my response to the Derridian position but from a slightly different angle: the reader's context is relevant *and* the reader cannot be detached from that context.

Schuhmann[139] says that performance as an act entails an acting subject with agency, while in a performative act there is no autonomous and intentionally acting subject present – the subject and the significance of an act is produced by the act itself, meaning producing bodily practices. This corresponds to Butler's theorising on gender as performative in that she stakes "there is no agency in the sense of a voluntarist subject, as actors are little more than ventriloquists, iterating the gendered acts that have come before them."[140]

Phelan[141] reads Foucault's observation of the power-knowledge fulcrum (to revisit some ideas already suggested in this chapter) of the Catholic confessional in a broader application, as indicative of the degree to which the spectator (who is silent) dominates and controls the exchange of performance. Phelan notes that, "the performer is always the female role in relation to power."[142] This has much in common with Mulvey and others' (chiefly feminist media- and feminist cinema scholars) theory of the objectifying nature of the (typically constructed as male) gaze.[143]

To combine Schumann, Butler and Phelan then, it must be that the performance act exists in the consumption of the text, because the only acting subject exercising real agency (and thus power) is the spectator – who has the power to acknowledge or not. This is unlike instantiating an embodied experience, (for example how you dress, walk, sit) which may none the less be enacted outside the lens of a viewing spectatorship, but which can have no significance actually attributed to it outside of this lens. As such the embodied experience of gender is marked as a performative act. The implication of this is that the power to be an acting subject – the opportunity to exercise agency – most securely rests on, once again, not the performer, but the spectator. So finally it is in the consumption of the text's performativity by a reader/audience/spectator, in the performance-act-moment of a society choosing how to interpret representation, that the most significant opportunity to subvert or interfere with hegemony lies.

Reception, Multi-layered Reading and Subversion[xvi]

I position myself in line with Fenton[144] who, commenting on the contemporary (postmodern) moment, suggests that, "this is where the media audience comes into its own

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[xvi] Inherent in my understanding of subversion is the notion of appropriation. Appropriation is a fundamental aspect in the history of the arts (literary, visual, musical). Appropriation can be understood as the use of borrowed elements in the creation of a new work. As such subversion can be understood as a somewhat covert challenge to hegemonic power in that it might not attack power head-on but appropriates power's own symbols and recontexualises what is borrowed in order to create new codes which then resist and trouble the original logic of the dominant power.

– if experience only comes to us in textual form, if all reality is through representation – then the study of the way meaning is made in everyday life is crucial."

I turn now to an engagement with obviously mediatized texts as a means to introduce the operating of this thesis. Duncan & Hasbrook[145] explain that often times the media present highly ambivalent portrayals of women in sport. As a preliminary exercise I will look at various alternate media representations centred on South African women's soccer /sport in order to examine whether this ambivalent portrayal does indeed exist at a general level in South Africa and in order to investigate the potentially unintended consequences a representation may elicit according to different positionings in relation to dominant structures of power.

The Gsport webpage states its aim as: "to raise the profile of South African women in sport significantly to encourage Corporate South Africa to back female athletes." The online media portal motivates its choice of concentrating on women's sport with the following reasons:[146]

1.) Men's sport is well established, well-funded, and well-covered by the media;

2.) Women's sport, by contrast, is mostly sustained by a dedicated volunteer base of participants and supporters, and rarely receives media coverage; and

3.) It is about time that South African women's outstanding contribution to sport, as participants and as facilitators, is recognised.

Relative to this position one would imagine that Gsport would embody a forum of total commitment to the principles of feminism and encourage technologies of self. A glance at how this forum has chosen to represent itself however leaves me sceptical that it has any intention of critically interrogating women's current or historic dispossession and marginalisation within the field of sport.

The theme of the webpage is pink. It has the catch phrase, "Gsport for girls!" in its logo. The banner makes reference to "inspirational WOMEN." In an article the interviewer proclaims that: "Gsport strives to celebrate femininity."



Fig.4. Gsport webpage, www.gsport.co.za, [retrieved 2010-09-03]

If this is the prime website dedicated to promoting women's sport in South Africa this is a very troubling state of affairs. It seems clear to me that Gsport presents no desire to challenge or subvert dominant portrayals of 'femininity,' and so cannot be hoping to dramatically challenge an inclusion-segregation issue within in sport. Gsport capitulates in the dominant discourses surrounding the theme of women: It presents itself and its subject as exclusively and justifiably for women (rather than for anyone) – This line of thinking falls back on justifying biological divisions among women and men as a basis for constructing social relations, which is precisely the discriminatory mode of thinking which patriarchy employed to subjugate women. It reinforces sex distinction, notably only within a partial two-sex model and exaggerates differences between women and men. The name Gsport, if not intentionally then naively unintentionally, plays on the term 'gspot.' Arguably this almost shared nominalisation reduces the woman, from a whole person, to a portion of her anatomy, which furthermore is exclusively associated with sex. The effect is that woman, is rendered, sex object. The webpage's presentation nominates only some women as inspirational; notably those who conform to its definitions of femininity and success. It repeats a problematic tendency to infantilise women through associating them with "girls" and the colour pink. The Gsport page, in my view, typifies minstrelization: the act of conforming to the subaltern stereotype which others of the dominant group have approved. As such Gsport reproduces all the prescribed assertions of women in line with, not in resistance to, patriarchal thinking. Therefore the portrayal of women espoused by Gsport invites only an incongruous technology of self which in fact serves to reinforce dominant technologies of power.

The SAFA webpage, by contrast, utilises a format which is gender neutral and is visually consistent in reports on either men or women. The language in this article is for the most part neutral, though it predictably makes distinctions between men and women soccer players. In contrast the corresponding and overpowering image of a man is an incongruous inclusion in an article about Banyana Banyana football fever. There is overt reference to the "much-proclaimed women's month" though no follow up information. In this media portrayal it thus appears that power is articulating ambivalent assertions of the possibility of technologies of the self. The text seems to present a relatively positive atmosphere for women players, but does not actually substantiate this.



Fig.5. South African Football Association webpage, www.safa.net, [retrieved 2010-09-03]



Fig.6. Amanda Dlamini, Top scorer of the 2009 Sasol League National Championships pictured with golden boot trophy[147].

In the image above there is certainly an ambiguous representation of women's sporting recognition. In one sense the media is positioning Dlamini as a celebrated athlete. And yet in the very portrayal there is an insistence on coding women's soccer as definably 'feminine.' The Sasol golden boot trophy presented to Dlamini is a comic, high-heeled soccer boot: an amalgamation of iconic sexualised 'femininity' and iconic sport. The object of the high-heeled boot itself is completely oxymoronic. The high-heel in any practical sense is clearly incompatible with soccer. The iconography signalled by the high-heel is likely out of kilter with the daily performances of many women soccer players. So the trophy in its congratulatory presentation also signals an ubiquitous denigrating of players' private and professional performances. The presence of an oxymoronic boot also hyper-distinguishes itself from a real (men's) golden boot. This mitigates convergence and insists to spectators and male players that men's soccer and the trophies of male success will not be conflated with such absurd imitations. Therefore even in ceremonies which

seem to declare accommodation, congratulating women athletes on their performance, the bulwarks of male sport remain protected.



Fig.7. Sasol League logo

The figure in the Sasol logo is worth inspection too. The figure is shown to have long, flowing hair and accentuated, rounded hips: acutely coding it as a representation of the female form. Again this marking serves to ensure that the women's game will not cause confusion for male soccer. Consequently, even if the bodies and performances of actual soccer women, butch athletes, digress from prescribed feminised norms there is an underlying contract between hegemonic ordering and producers of representation to retrieve the image of 'woman' and remaster and encode women's soccer at a general level as unambiguously 'feminine.' Does this insistence on difference and separatism signal a complete denial for the possibility of shifting hegemonic categories? While the control of visual imagery does offer substantial resistance to a counter discourse centred on opening up the categories of femininity and woman, this particular image is at the same time having to legitimise, if only faintly, the image of women in sport. Realistically, representations (sponsor's or media's) can no longer deny women's claim to belong within the field of sport. And these new representations should potentially have some effect on remaking the bodily image of sport.

In conclusion, an analysis of language is of paramount importance because the question of power is taken to be a question about who controls language. This comes from the understanding, made popular by Foucault, that power and knowledge directly imply one

another. Moreover it is in discourse that power and knowledge are married together. Thus in order to ascertain information on the directives of power, we can analyse discourse.

The meanings of terms should not be assumed. This caveat follows from the Sassurian intention that no signifier has a self explanatory meaning outside of context. Rather it is in the inextricable essence of discourse, or what Gavey[148] refers to as "the deployment of discourse for specific political purposes" that meanings are to be determined. It follows therefore that since meanings are not given (in so far as meaning does not exist atemporally throughout time and space but instead is fashioned, determined by a particular historic and political context) chances do present themselves in which meaning can be challenged, subverted and remade. Predictably however, since the conventional meaning serves those with authority and power, preserving any hegemonic language style and discourse structure, is a way for said power to ensure, reproduce and reinforce its position.

Therefore since language is tied inextricably to context (because it can never exist outside of the context) and discourse resonates with (in that it implicates and is implicated by) power, texts should be understood to have implications and/or effects on social context and the way(s) the social context can be reproduced. Moreover it is in the imbibing of what a text is saying, in the action moment when a reader, themself inescapably bound within a context, interprets a representation, that a significant opportunity is created to reinforce old meanings or to make new meaning and so interfere with a current hegemonic order. Yet in addition since language is social and contextual, one cannot simply claim *any* meaning as having consequence without there being a course to power through which to articulate and establish that particular meaning.

Thus as Foucault theorised, resistance and repression do not exist in relation to one another as simple unidirectional exertions. Acts of both repression and resistance are highly complex and contextual. As such, what was demonstrated in this chapter is that both resistive and capitulating actions/texts may have an effect of resisting dominant power structures on one hand, *and* inadvertently reinforcing those same or similar structures on the other.

AN IMAGE OF SPORT: INTRUDING BODIES AND THE MEDIA

The Image(s) of Sporting Women

Arguably sport represents a social institution which, perhaps more than any other, perpetuates the ideologies of male superiority and female inferiority.[149] Dworkin & Messner[150] express that in the wake of two decades of burgeoning athleticism by girls and women, medical leaders in the 1920's and 1930's responded with what now seem like hysterical fears that vigorous physical activity for women carried enormous physical and psychological dangers. One so-called psychological danger, and a major social fear, was the conventionally accepted idea that through strenuous physical activity (and strenuous mental activity ie. attending university) the prospect for women to 'become' homosexual increased.[151] In response to these fears institutionalised women's sport was adapted to a 'tamed down' version. As Dworkin & Messner[152] pronounce, this effectively served to ghettoise women's sport, leaving the hegemonic masculinity of sport virtually unchallenged to this day. Because sport is ultimately about physical prowess, it presents an arena in which, and generates concrete examples whereby, superiority is equated with physical and muscular achievement. Since it is generally accepted that males run faster, jump higher and throw further, the physicality of the male body is taken to represent power and dominance while the physicality of the female body presents subservience, frailty and weakness. This symbolic physical superiority can then be translated into the currency of social superiority.[153]

According to Hargreaves[154] the muscularity and power invested in female sporting bodies inverts the myth of gender by rendering women apparently less 'feminine' and more 'masculine.' Hargreaves argues that the small numbers of women who take part in aggressive, muscular, traditional male sport have their femininity, and/or sexuality, denied. They are labelled "mannish", or "freakish", presented as androgynous, or in reaction to these stereotypes, are constructed as "super-feminine" and heterosexual, because there must always be a 'feminising' code to "neutralise the effect of the transgressive act."[155] At this point it may be useful to reconsider briefly Foucault's theory of the body, which has had a significant influence on feminist work. Feminists[156] have proposed (following on from Foucault, that the sexual body is both the principal instrument *and* effect of modern disciplinary power) that various strategies of oppression around the female body – from concrete procedures of confinement and bodily control to

ideological representations of 'femininity' – are central to the maintenance of hierarchical social relations.

Cahn[157] suggests that in the USA "By the 1950's all female athletes and physical educators functioned under a cloud of sexual suspicion." The stereotype of the mannish lesbian athlete pressured women to display the characteristics and insignia of heterosexuality – to display to the world that they were 'real' women – by wearing make-up, pretty clothes and showing off boyfriends and husbands, elucidates Cahn.[158] The pressure to display heterosexual signs – defined as 'compulsory heterosexuality' – was most powerfully applied in traditional male sports, where women seemed most trepidatious of the stigma of masculinity and implied lesbianism. Homophobia and hostility, Cahn explains, lead to the systematic oppression of lesbians in sport.[159] There was an unexamined assumption that the great majority of women in sport were naturally heterosexual and the few remaining 'others' were sexually degenerate and dangerous. Homosexual openness was thus repressed and lesbian sports women stayed hidden and remained silent.

Even within counter-cultures the power vested within the female sporting body was subjected to harsh scrutiny. Following the rise of Lesbian-Feminism in the late 1960's and '70s, the image of the muscular, butch athlete who enjoyed physical, 'male' sports and typically dressed in a style associated with men, came under attack within pockets of the homosexual community due to her assumed heteronormative mimicry.[160] According to the early Lesbian-Feminist paradigm the female butch was to be understood as an inheritance from sexist society, reifying the sexual divide and therefore the oppression women faced under men.

The critique labelled against such a reading is that it does not concede the physical effects of sporting activity, and more importantly, the criticism is that this mode of feminism does not accommodate sufficient class-gender analysis, and beyond these aspects the claim of 'mimicry' itself has been extensively critiqued. In terms of a class analysis, the butch/femme dichotomy, reveals Smith,[161] was predominantly a working class performance and the Lesbian-Feminists were mainly middle class. As such Lesbian-Feminists were already removed from butch/femme portrayals by a class divide and did not share social spaces or organisations. In addition the Lesbian-Feminists' call for a

universal sisterhood resisted examining conflicts among women which were based on race, class or sexuality divides. This inability to perceive and accept difference among women resulted in a flawed gender analysis being construed. [162]

Moreover it has more frequently been patriarchal representations of lesbian sexuality which have both assumed and propagated lesbian role-playing as an imitation of heterosexuality. Roof[163] makes the case that dominant ideology has a vested interest in making butch-femme role playing "appear to be a mere replica of heterosexuality, as a way of calming male anxiety over the threat of female appropriation of male dominance." The logic behind this, points out Goodloe,[164] is that "if lesbian role playing is merely imitation, then it is always inferior to the 'real'[xvii] thing."

As Smith-Rosenberg[165] notes, describing an early butch prototype, the emergent New Woman of the 1920's, these women did not desire to 'be' men, rather they sought to *reject* the "male-defined" role of traditional 'femininity.' Thus by appropriating the codes and symbols of a social role, masculinity, while remaining fully female their new presentation called into question the relationship between biological sex and gender, therefore exposing gender as not natural but constructed.

I will pick up both these ideas later in the chapter Shifting Bodies and Boundaries and explore them at a deeper and more complex level. What should be evident at this point is that the butch athlete becomes a challenge to heterosexuality rather than a replication of it. And so in breaking away from an 'imitation' interpretation, which I have argued for, it is possible to say that the butch athlete should be understood not as mimicking 'masculine' images but rather as expanding the categories of how women can look/act/be and be read.

From the 1970's a number of sport feminists in the West, many of whom were lesbians and radical feminists, sought to assert their identities in sport by means of a 'Women-centred' philosophy in opposition to male-dominated and male-defined sport.[166] On these

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[xvii] A crucial issue at stake here is that in understanding butch performance as an imitation of masculinity, one assumes 'masculinity' as an original from which 'copies' like butchness have been graphed. I take the position that this is a fallacious notion and I will deal with this in more detail in the following chapter.

grounds it was thought to be particularly relevant to create all-lesbian or lesbian-positive sport activities in order to foster a sense of community and a positive process of self identification. Although it is acknowledged that lesbian women in sport are not a homogeneous group and have differences and complexities in their experiences, Hargreaves[167] argues that enclaves within sport can provide a refuge from the structured discrimination in mainstream (heterosexual) sport or in wider society. In this argument Hargreaves provides a logic for the promotion of a (positive) lesbian label and lesbian consciousness within and from specific enclaves.

On one hand, and most often due to heterosexism, a few lesbian athletes quite overtly express their 'homosexual-ness' in order to claim, assert and fortify their right to a space, identity and nurturing community. This type of assertion while certainly contentious for heteronormal paradigms may also have the effect of reinforcing normative heterosexist, patriarchal dominance: 1.) in terms of entrenching identity politics and presenting a necessary 'other' around which heteronormative society can negotiate its own identity; and 2.) in terms of segregation methods whereby the form of inclusion offered to sporting sexual minorities does not radically challenge the nature or bodily practice of sport, and can in fact reproduce asymmetrical gendered hierarchies.

On the other hand in most sports there is still a flagrant denial of homosexuality and the promotion of images which advocate the neutralising code of 'femininity.' As such it can be argued that butch athletes and lesbian-positive sports activities can be, even at an unconscious level, providing an expression of potential subversion. This is precisely because unlike typical images of 'femininity' these figures cannot easily be co-opted and consumed as a heteronormative commodity. The butch athlete cannot easily be marketed because if this image was to be presented as being intriguing and attractive to either male or female mainstream heterosubjectivity, on some level this appeal would have to acknowledge a homoerotic element to both sexes and in doing so, that very acknowledgment would destabilise heteronormative values. Thus at the level of representation the butch athletic performance, for the most part, remains veiled from mainstream media, unlike its marketable, hyper-feminised counterpart. On a practical level this denial and attempted visual exclusion can have very concrete implications for transgressive gender performing athletes – from limited sponsorship and support within their sport, to the perpetration of hate-based violent crime against them.

Media, Men, Women and Representation

Creedon states that news attempts to "bring us the event 'as it is.'"[168] Yet, she argues, journalistic conventions and the way news is presented also brings with it a value system – a value system which according to feminist research[169] continues to privilege a patriarchal world view. In addition huge sports media events like the FIFA 2010 World Cup allow the national regime, via the state-owned broadcaster, to transmit national doctrine, symbols, prescriptive self imaginings and a world view to a vast majority of the population.[170] As such I support Nauright's[171] suggestion that in South Africa the sport media complex has traditionally functioned as a vehicle through which hegemonic discourses of power can be produced, reproduced and disseminated to a mass populous. Being both an ideological mode and a vehicle, the sport media complex perpetuates certain discourses in the broad socio-cultural context thus reproducing structures of power. A sports media complex must also reproduce the self sustaining ideologies which underpin it, and in so doing reifies the ideologies of the broader socio-cultural context by serving as its own naturalising referent. Thus if we were to illustrate this according to a gendered perspective – The field of sport is governed by ideologies which reproduce the privileging of masculinity; the claim of two apparently natural, mutually exclusive, 'opposite' sexes; and the denial of homosexuality. Because representations of sport events are accepted as a vehicle to transmit desired doctrine *and* because sport is often viewed falsely as politically 'neutral', these same ideologies which underpin sport are popularly reintroduced into broader socio-cultural life.

Creedon[172] describes the two overarching feminist approaches seeking to challenge the system of sport as, 1.) *reform* and 2.) *transform.* Reform generally seeks to achieve some designated form of equity within the existing system, while transform seeks to change the fundamental values on which the system is based.

Kane and Greendorfer[173] articulate that sport in general, and media portrayals of female athletes in particular, are vehicles through which sexual difference, gender difference and gender hierarchy are reified. They state that males and male athletes are perceived and portrayed as different from (sexual and gender difference) and better than (gender hierarchy) females and female athletes, which perceptions maintain the patriarchal status quo. In some cases the media goes so far as to present female athleticism as a cute or

"bastardized, perhaps even counterfeit version of the 'real' (men's) sport" argue Kane & Snyder.[174] Typically representations of male athletes depict men in strong, active poses and represent men in relation to their sport and sporting achievements. Dominant media portrayals of female athletes, note Kane & Greendorfer, by contrast tend to emphasise particularly women's femininity and sexuality, while not often concentrating on their athleticism – Feature articles frequently[175] comment on a woman athlete's dual role as caring mother / devoted wife despite her sporting involvement; or give tabloid-esque commentary of (hetero)sexually attractive sports women's romantic relationships, while overlooking reporting on their sport achievements.

Kane & Greendorfer note further that one integral apparatus for accommodating *and* resisting women's entry into sport has been through the messages socially constructed in mass media.[176] What is important to recognise how this accommodation and resistance occurs simultaneously. For instance the presence of a women athlete on the cover of a sports magazine acknowledges that social change has taken place, yet the type of portrayal most often indicates a resistance to fundamental social change by primarily linking the woman sports person to her 'appropriate' role as female (read in the majority of cases commodified as a sex object), rather than athlete.[177] While I acknowledge that Kane & Greendorfer's assessment is somewhat dated in that today cover men can also be said to be subjected to an objectifying gaze, this inclusion has not served to remedy the situation for women – it is simply no longer necessarily a problem particular to women. In summation I agree with Kane & Greendorfer when they suggest that the media has transformed the meaning of women's physicality (women who are active agents with and of their own bodies, who use their bodies in skilled, physical activity) to portray commodification, sexuality and 'femininity.' This critique has also echoed loudly from feminist film studies circles. Mulvey's legendary contribution that, "the male gaze is an integral structure of cinematic desire, so integral that it is inscribed by everything from camera position to narrative structure"[178] means that, she insists, as metaphor women function as "image and bearer of the look"[179] entirely. This makes the position of female (heterosexual) desire 'impossible' explains de Lauretis,[180] since the female spectator is forever caught "between the look of the camera and the image on screen;" whereas the exterior position of a true spectator is exclusively compatible with male (heterosexual) desire, since the male gaze is both the origin and rational behind the cinematic medium. While as I pointed out this critique only accounts for a hetero-dominant perspective, given

that the hegemonic position of society is heteronormative, it is none-the-less useful for understanding typical media commodification of women's bodies. In these examples we see how, through certain media conventions which present a commodified, sexualised and 'feminised' female body, women's challenge to male superiority can be successfully incorporated within patriarchy since the challenge is transformed in such a way that it becomes compatible with stereotypical expectations of (sports)women and their bodies.[181]

The trend of emphasising sports women's 'femininity,' rather than their athleticism, has prevailed in the popular imagination for decades. Neal's handbook for women coaches published in 1969 stresses the point:

> Coaches should put a damper on masculine mannerisms that are not necessary to a girl's performance or that create an undesirable impression . . . The coach should seize every opportunity to improve the girl's behaviour. It may not make the woman a better athlete, but it will make the athlete a better woman.
>
> – *Patsy Neal182, Coaching Methods for Women (1969)*

as does Ria Ledwaba, Chair of SAFA Women's Committee, in 2005.

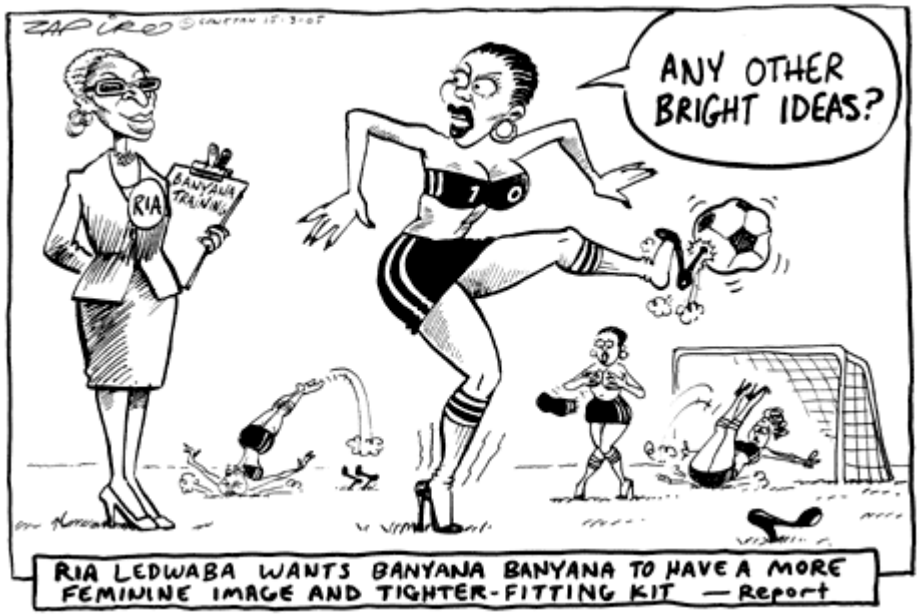


Fig.8. Zapiro, Feminine Image, Mail & Guardian (2005)

Soccer and (homo)Sexuality

Sexuality became a hot topic in the South African mainstream media notes Naidoo, [183] precisely around the ways in which the bodies of the Banyana Banyana players should be

(or could be) made to procure greater sponsorships. In March 2005, then chairperson of the SAFA's Women's Committee, Ria Ledwaba, said to the media that Banyana Banyana players should "act and dress like ladies,"[184] primarily in an attempt to secure greater sponsorship. Amongst Ledwaba's proposals for the transformation of the team were 'workshops' to teach the players general etiquette and ways of 'behaving like ladies,' as well as a shapelier soccer kit.[185] In response, the captain of the national squad, Portia Modise,[186] stated that how the players chose to behave and dress off the field had no effect on their playing on the field. She also claimed that 60% of the team were lesbians, and that, in fact, a majority of soccer players worldwide were lesbian. However, she felt that the sexual orientation of players was of no business to anyone else and that this was being made an issue by SAFA management purely to shift responsibility for not securing sponsorships and properly developing the national team. In Modise's words, the sexual orientation and appearance of the team had become a scapegoat for SAFA's poor management and leadership of the team.[187]

Ferrante[188] draws attention to the notion of 'gender purity' and how it is promoted in sports, and asserts that if homosexuality were openly accepted, it could categorically threaten the entire meaning system of most sports. Homophobia, she therefore argues, is being expressed through the insistence on clear gender marking of players, in much the same way as patriarchy is being affirmed through media commodification of 'femininity.' Ferrante states that coaches of women's sports have long been advised to minimise any appearance of lesbianism or 'tomboyism' (which is often associated with, or confused with lesbianism), to render 'deviance' invisible. Hence insistences like Neal's, to "make … better woman" prop up the extant sex difference system, gender difference system, and sexuality difference system, and their hierarchical natures, continuing to oppress not only women in general, but homosexual women in particular.

Academics in Australia have observed how some sports, such as cricket and hockey, have been labelled 'dyke sports' and it is claimed by Burroughs et al[189] that, rather than elision, it is "[t]he media's preoccupation with lesbianism in women's cricket" which serves to "denigrate women's sport in general, trivialise the game, and merely titillate the public." Thus domineering systems operate not only according to a framework of violence by erasing any trace of the subversive identity; but also, as Burroughs et al's alternative

reading points out, by using 'hypervisibility' as a further way to violate and stigmatise these women.

In conclusion, the male body has historically been accepted as the sole appropriate contestant in the realm of sport. This is in part predicated through ideas around a binary body image, which codes male as strong and active; and female as feeble and passive. Because sport was seen as men's prerogative, women attempting to enter the field were viewed as intruders and defamed. Lesbian women wishing to engage in sport came up against even greater resistance and discrimination. Female athletes, particularly those involved in 'male' sports, were seen by dominant power structures, as transgressing and were understood to be potentially seditious. As women did gain greater access to the realm of sport, there was a resultant need for power to attempt to regulate any behaviour which could be deemed too transgressive – typically this was done through either encouraging women to fear being (mis)taken for being lesbian, or through a promotion of a neutralising code of 'suitable' 'femininity.' The media has been integral in both accommodating and resisting women's entry into sport. Owing to the fact that more and more women are engaging in professional sport the media has responded by giving them more coverage, however this coverage remains contingent upon representations being compatible with stereotypical, patriarchal expectations.

READING WOMEN'S SOCCER IN SOUTH AFRICA

In the previous section I discussed how typically female athletes are represented doing things other than athletics – while male athletes are framed in active, physical poses. As argued in the secondary material, in the past, and specifically in the West there has commonly been a deferral in reporting on women athletes per se, and rather to construct their image in accordance with suitably 'feminine' activities – being a mom, looking pretty, fetching the kids, being a great cook.

I turn now to a contemporary article from South Africa, in order to comment on how the South African national women's team, Banyana Banyana, is represented. While media attention given to women's sport within the country is not nearly at the level or frequency of the positive promotion given to male sport, the focus of much contemporary South African media reporting on the national team is *not* to insist that 'this female soccer star is

also a great mom too.' These South African sports women are described as sports people: the focus of the article is on soccer, rankings, the World Cup and training – yet even this engagement is not without problems and gender discriminatory indulgences.

1. *Sisters Still Sidelined: SA's Female Footballers Struggle to Make Their Mark*, Sibulele Siko-Shosha The Big Issue, June 2010

Text Analysis

Sisters Still Sidelined: SA's Female Footballers Struggle to Make Their Mark exemplifies a clear case study in which we can see ideology as theorised by Thompson[190] at work. In this article the mode through which ideology is operating is fragmentation. Fragmentation is the ideological operation that makes 'othering' possible. The use of lexical markers such as "*female* footballers," "*women's* game" and "South African *women's* national team" prominent in the title, header and first paragraph serve to emphasise that there is a presented distinction between footballers and *women* footballers; soccer, and *women's* soccer; and the national team and the *women's* national team. This linguistic symbol, differentiation, is used to emphasise difference. In the case of this text it creates a clear fragmentation between 'women-soccer-players-and-their-support-person/system' camp and the other camp of generally everyone else connected with soccer, specifically institutionalised organised soccer – SAFA, the World Cup, media and sponsors. In fact this is recreating a binary opposition, men's soccer:women's soccer. This oppositional pair is then evident throughout the text – at times the sides of the binary are pitted against each other (in a traditional power struggle) yet elsewhere the text constructs different kinds of relational dynamics between the two (such as imparted dependency). The text sets up such a clear dissociation between these two groups that I used this disjuncture as the basis for a major part of my analysis. I investigated how each side is constructed: who has the power; how do they act and in relation to whom; who are the doers and who are the done-tos; who is silent?

On first inspection a text which concerns itself with asking questions about the state of women's football is surely to be seen as, at least moderately, radical: It has identified a fairly marginalised topic area (so it cannot be said to be simply towing the party line, especially in the build up to FIFA 2010). It is bringing this topic to light (not only has it noticed the oft overlooked topic but it is attempting to do something about it, to act by

way of projecting an alternative voice). And furthermore it is critical (read does not capitulate into praising the wonders of South Africa's pet pride 'transformation'). Yet what happens in this text, which seems to present itself as a champion of female soccer, is particularly interesting.

I examined verbs since grammatically verbs represent syntactical elements with the strongest link to power and meaning. Verbs afford the power to act, and by analysing linguistic features related to the verb patterning one may deduce how a participant is constructed: as having agency or being acted upon; as being afforded action / mental / being / existing processes or combinations of these. Furthermore the selection of one particular verb over another carries with it particular meanings designed to have a particular effect.[191] I therefore also examined the semantic meaning created through choice of verb in terms of connotations, both negative and positive, and the effect the association of verbal implication has on the reception of particular textualised participants.

An examination of the allocation of frequency and number of verbs reveals that women soccer players and their support person/system are constructed as the most represented participants, with more than half of all verbs in the text relating to this category. As a result of this it is obvious that both spatially and thematically the women soccer player complex occupies the majority of text and one would therefore think that by affording this often underrepresented participant group center stage the article is challenging hegemonic gender hierarchies in sport.

Transitivity

The use of transitivity shows that female players are predominantly constructed with material processes of 'doing.' Organised Soccer and Women's Soccer (the institution) similarly are also constructed primarily as 'acting.' The category, sponsors, while having many material processes, is also afforded mental processes and the Nation is constructed as the most reflective participant with a host of mental processes allocated to it. Hilton-Smith and Molefe are the participants who speak. The author and his argument are given many existential processes of 'being' which carries the inference that the argument put forward in the article 'exists' as being 'valid.'

Voice and Semantics

As I have noted female soccer players are *interestingly* principally constructed as acting and are most often presented in the active voice. Yet let us review some of the material processes attributed to them. "[S]truggle to make" and "need to make" – these verbs are not the kind typically associated with strong, active agents. In fact these material verbs reflect a difficulty in accomplishing the intention of the subject: while they are 'doing' processes they are in a sense incomplete, non-triumphant. Similarly verbal forms like "creeping", "bumping" and "occupied" do not have positive connotations. "[O]ccupied" at an extreme level may hold connotations of imposing one's presence over others, or (often associated with toilet stalls) of a stall which is taken. Even in less extreme cases this word has connotations of being unavailable, being static, not moving (forward). Especially in sporting terms the inertia associated with "occupied" does not conjure up positive images of athletic sports stars or teams. In the phrase "After bumping Ghana out of the number two spot" the surface meaning is that Banyana Banyana toppled Ghana – a positive reflection on the South African team. However the word choice undermines the sentiment because the connotations of "bumping" are not particularly assertive or purposeful. To bump someone out could be accidental, is not convincing and does not have permanence. "Creeping" also has a negative inflection. Synonyms for creep include sneak, skulk, tiptoe, crawl and slither; either putting one in mind of 'creepy crawlies' or of a thief in the dark. "Creeping" again has connotations of being slow moving, hardly the way one would chose to imagine a successful team moving up the rankings. Furthermore in the bold sub-heading "Creeping up the rankings" the female players who are the active subject are omitted from this statement. In other words women players and their efforts are left out of a statement which describes their success (even though this success is cast somewhat negatively).

What is more, female players are repeatedly constructed as, what I will term, subjects of empty actions. The adverbs in the active voice "is still not getting" and "has yet to qualify" and in the passive voice "hasn't been directly linked" links Banyana Banyana with a *negated action*. The wording "is still not getting the support and coverage they deserve" carries the implication that this result is unfair. Banyana deserve coverage and support and some unnamed, external force is keeping them from attaining what should be theirs. Nonetheless it is Banyana who are framed as the subject – the non achieving subject. In a related fashion women soccer players are time and again inferred to be

subjects who *do not do* enough. They "should work harder to win", "should focus on", (should try) "getting", (should do) "through winning." 'Should' conveys multiple nuances, firstly that the team is not doing something, secondly a sense of reprimand for not doing this thing, and thirdly an indirect obligation to do the thing in future – should in this context is equitable to 'must.' There are also times when women players are constructed as subjects without negative modifiers as in the following examples: The team is excited due to the World Cup spin-off publicity. A few players can receive salaries because of an increased availability of funds. At the academy players receive attention from world-class experts. But these are almost paradoxical subject cases who seem enabled to act only because something or someone else is acting upon them. They are receptive subjects who require to be imbued with the ability to act from outside.

The women's football team is frequently referred to in the passive voice. This technique casts the team as a done to, rather than a doer. In the instances of the verbal forms "sidelined", and "ranked" (ranked occurs twice) the doer is un-named and omitted from the sentence. In using the passive form "ranked" not only is it left unsaid who is ranking the team but the team's own accomplishment in achieving this ranked position is elided. "Sidelined" is much more sinister. The participial phrase "Sisters still sidelined," colour coded to accentuate further, and spatially situated next to, the focal feature, a ringed female sign sets up an uncomfortable tension. The sign has a history of being appropriated by feminist and pro-women groups in the struggle for gender equality. The term "sisters" also references a feminist, (black) rhetoric and a history of struggle associations, of community groups against oppressive regimes, culminating one could say in the black power movement. This multimedia metaphor seems to set-up an active complex of 'empowered sisters' but at the same time the sisters are rendered impotent at the inclusion of "sidelined." "Sidelined" conveys clever allusions to the sporting theme, but much more commonly and in this context, holds connotations of being marginalised and pushed aside. By allowing the agent of this action to go un-named, responsibility for the action cannot be allocated. Thus the apparent fact is that female players *are* sidelined, presented as an unquestionable truth. This coupled with "still" in the given phrase "Sisters still sidelined" gives a sense of continuation – they have been sidelined in the past, they are sidelined now and since the doer of the action is rendered invisible/nonexistent no direct course of action is offered to female soccer players to challenge or change the apparent status quo.

In likewise manner it is unclear as to who exactly has had a national female football team for almost two decades; the nation, organised South African soccer, or women's soccer? Similarly whether the female football league "was launched" by and "was established" by women's soccer or organised soccer (and to whom the delays experienced can be attributed) is undisclosed. What is clear is that the lengthy time period it "took to establish" the league (by whom? Again unstated, either or both participant groups) is constructed as a disservice to women players.

These ambiguities aside, when organised soccer is referenced alone the sporting fraternity is constructed as an active, capable subject. This contrasts greatly with the subjectivity ascribed to female players. Moreover organised soccer, embodied by SAFA in this article, is presented as being one of the fundamental enablers of female players. SAFA has, in active voice and carrying only positive connotations, "been playing a key role" and "drumming up" support for women's soccer, which is placed in the object position. This phrasing re-establishes the notion of women soccer teams as subjects of negated actions or subjects who do not act sufficiently. The implication is that in and of themselves and through their own deeds women players cannot garner necessary support. They are framed as infantalised objects to whom paternal SAFA graciously steps in and lends a hand.

In analogous manner, sponsors are also constructed as benevolent participants who help female players achieve. The use of transitivity represents sponsors as both thinking and acting agents. While sponsors "prefer to back" the men's game which is "seen to dominate," they nonetheless "have come on board" and "changed the face" of the women's game. The article articulates that sponsors "have enabled" women players to receive salaries and it is through their funding that expenses "are now covered." Female players are again represented as the objects, as the done tos rather than the doers. Even though what is being done to women players is not a negative action, within the text this grammatical relationship nevertheless suppresses their own potential for agency.

SAFA, sponsors and the World Cup, all primarily associates of the men's game, are constructed as separate from, but willing to lend vital assistance to, the women players who, the article subtly implies, are unable to help themselves. Both SAFA and sponsors are constructed as acting to legitimise women's soccer; however a contradiction emerges as language and positioning from the text serve to (re)produce the notion that women's

sport is seen as inferior to men's. This opinion is even directly stated in the text in relation to the "nation" as a participant. The author argues that in the case of Banyana, "there's a lot for our nation to be proud of[.]" Revealed through modality though is the converse, the insinuation is that the nation *is* at present *not* proud of Banyana. Further reinforcing this are the claims that in general experience "women's football has and still is being received as more of an amateur sport" in relation to men's football which "is seen as being the most relevant." What is emphasised is a binary female:male organisation and the implied effect is the erroneous concept that this dynamic operates on a directly proportional win:lose system. Women's soccer gets less funding "because men are still seen to dominate the game." And "as the nation rallies behind the boys … the media hype over the women's squad had [sic] dwindled down to a trickle." Noteworthy too, a lack of media coverage caused the country not to be disgruntled with the media, but to be "disenchanted with women's football." The articulation of these attitudes, in representing the nation's supposed ideas back on to the nation actually gives these beliefs more credence in society. I would argue that this article, specifically in relation to subject object and agency constructions, in fact reinforces hegemonic gender relations, representing men as being dominant and women as being weak.

Turn Taking & Quoted Speech

Besides the author, Fran Hilton-Smith, the Banyana Banyana team manager, and Mazola Molefe, a sports journalist for *The Times*, are given the floor. It is expected that these speakers are deferred to because they can be seen as 'experts in their field' and in that way add legitimation to the article. Turn taking is alternative, however Hilton-Smith gets more room to comment. Ironically though Hilton-Smith, essentially a part of the Banyana team, appears never to be asked directly about the women players. Hilton-Smith talks about perception, funds, spin-off and the future – topics which relate to women soccer players but in which they are not positioned as the central features. On the other hand, Molefe, an outsider, is the only voice heard when commenting on Banyana's progress. While the argument could be made that such an exchange of content could be deliberate in order to make the article 'objective,' I think a deceptive form of 'validation' is taking place. For example Hilton-Smith's voice is used to deliver most of the infantilsing information – The implication is that this information is coming from 'someone in the women soccer players' camp (a one of them) and so it should be believed uncritically. Moreover the apparent gains which Hilton-Smith lists fall flat because of the author's deference to authority and

use of many modal words, such as “according to” and “although.” Modal words have the ability to derail certainty. It seems that the text has tried to use Hilton-Smith too much. Such over-use lacks conviction, and a situation has arisen where ‘the lady doth protest too much.’ Organised soccer is silenced throughout the article, however its importance and role is safeguarded, again through the voice of Hilton-Smith speaking on behalf of women’s soccer. What is being expressed here is the integration/segregation dynamic – We see hegemony at work; women protect patriarchy, grateful for the meagre, stifling space they have been afforded within sport, though in actuality partial inclusion can serve to exacerbate further discrimination. Having a women’s team allows for claims of equality – yet at the same time it does nothing in terms of progressing towards a levelled perception of popularity, funding or coverage between male and female soccer.

Results

The linguistic subject of women soccer players (or agencies which promote them), in this particular article, is wholly active 18 times while it is a non-acting entity 22 times. There are 29 other active subjects, the majority of which are elements of institutionalised soccer – male soccer, – the World Cup, SAFA, sponsors, funds, media, publicity. These other agents seem always to be presented in contrast to women players, as a binary. Furthermore in instances where women soccer players are objectified through the passive case, the subject of the action is elided in nine occurrences. In two instances this mystification of the subject serves to obfuscate power relations. By not naming a subject, no-one or no thing is allocated responsibility for the action. Instead the illusion is created that something merely ‘happens.’ At least three times, through the act of presenting women soccer players as the object of the verb, the agency of the players themselves is entirely reduced and their own involvement is rendered devoid of significance. In a further seven instances women players take the object position in relation to receiving assistance or support from others. This is a form of infantalisation and interpellates women players as constantly being incapable, of forever being dependent on other subjects

The almost equal number of semantically positive and negative verbs (23 negative verbs and 14 positive verbs + 9 positive verbs accredited to Hilton-Smith) which are associated with the women soccer players within the text in effect serves to neutralise female players as an category. In addition, the text asserts that within popular imagining while awareness of the women’s game may have been generated (1 positive), the reality on the ground is

that female soccer continues to be trivialized and as reported is seen negatively twice (potentially 3 times). In addition it is framed as viewed diametrically opposite to male soccer which is viewed positively three times (twice out of the three times clearly and relationally insinuating a negative view of women's soccer). The effect is such that at a 5:1 instance the purported popular opinion delegitimizes women's soccer. Furthermore current organisational sporting structures, which this thesis argues privilege male sporting participation over female, are over-ridingly represented as acting in a positive light (SAFA 4 positives; sponsors 4 positives; World Cup 2 positives). Not only are these structures reflected in a positive light, but their actions are represented as being positives for women's sport. This sort of construction of 'amiable organisational sport,' conceals its history of discrimination and makes the public and athletes far less likely to call for any radical transformation to the structure.

Discourse Praxis

Women's soccer is established as other through the use of the qualifier "women's" which distinguishes this phenomenon from 'normal' soccer. The setting up of the unstated men's soccer/women's soccer divide, recalls several sexist ideological binaries – culture:nature; public:private; strong:weak; doers:done tos. I think the article's pitting of women against men is very simplistic and an unhelpful strategy which leads us astray from more pervasive gender oppressions – To stipulate that women are not being funded because men are being funded (a battle of the sexes notion) does nothing to help us question and dismantle the what, whys and hows of why women's sports continue to be viewed as less lucrative than men's (a more pernicious patriarchal attitude). Signalling more than a bigoted mindset, this sort of chauvinistic sentiment translates into concrete practices which markedly undervalue sports women in relation to sports men. Signalling more than a bigoted mindset, this sort of chauvinistic sentiment translates into concrete practices which markedly undervalue sports women in relation to sports men. The discrepancy in national team salaries is exemplary. From 2006, Naidoo[192] reveals, Banyana Banyana players received R5000 for a win, and R2500 per draw, whereas Bafana Bafana players got R40 000 for a win and R20 000 for a draw.

As I have already mentioned with reference to Kane & Greendorfer[193] the persistent sense in society is that males and male athletes are perceived and portrayed as different from, and better than, females and female athletes. The ideal reader in this case is thus

positioned to accept uncritically a justification of sexual difference (men and women are different). From this premise it can be inferred that for the reader it is logical to assume as necessarily true that men and women must play soccer differently. The language used constructs a representation of women soccer players as under-capable. This representation in effect reproduces conservative social assumptions and practices in relation to gender stereotyping. What is also worth commenting on is the fact that the media's framing of organised women's soccer is apparently regressing rather than transforming. IOL publications ten years ago would run pro-women soccer stories such as: *Women's soccer gets fired up*, October 30, 2002. From about 2007 one witnesses a popularity drop off, with a trend towards framing women players ambiguously as non-actors gaining momentum in mass media: *Big boost for women's soccer*, July 30 2009. As I have pointed out the non-actor construction continues today and what is more, the entire subject of women's football has lost ground in mainstream media. The article *Sisters Still Sidelined*, June 14 2010, is emblematic of a trend to concentrate not on Banyana independently but always in relation to Bafana Bafana (*Fresh Ideas Needed to Market Banyana*, Mail & Guardian August 08 2008; *Banyana Banyana, our Cinderellas,* Mail & Guardian, March 08 2010.) It can be suggested that at present, there is the staging of an 'equal treatment' for the two national teams by SAFA – at face value the balanced names, Banyana Banyana and Bafana Bafana, and the stipulation to have the same funder sponsor both teams seem to speak to this – but these small concessions which purport so called 'equal measures' ignore a history of unequal relations experienced by sports women as historic subjects. *Sisters Still Sidelined* thus, in the given context of current hegemonic gender relations, through the conditions of production and reception helps to sustain existing sexist binaries and social assumptions and thus unintentionally serves to reinforce the patriarchal status quo.

Pfister et al[194] posits that "male allegiances are formed precisely through the exclusion of women and the rejection of femininity and all qualities associated with it...Efforts to keep women away from football fields can, therefore, be interpreted as attempts to preserve and protect the domains and the privileges which men have secured for themselves." While Pfister et al are operating within a very classical framework, it is interesting and of more value to see how their concept translates in arenas where women have in fact been granted access to football fields and the world of organised sport. What is brought to light via the *Sisters Still Sidelined* article and textual analysis is that even when women have been 'let

in,' this inclusion continues to be contingent on the persistence of symbolic and discursive features (re)establishing segregation and dispossession.

In conclusion this text fronts a theme of typical sex difference. Even when media portrayals attempt to assert women politically in sport, it is apparent that the language and stock ideologies for representing sports women have not developed adequately. The analysis of this text correlates quite seamlessly with the theory on the subject of gender, sport and the media written two decades ago. It is evident that there is still a deficit when it comes to forceful and positive descriptions of sports women. If Athlete were an archetype, we could say that these sports women are represented in effect only as far as (anti)Athletes, as the opposite of men. This text has simply relied on available discourse, and tries to speak women players' experience through this discourse. As such it is not particularly subversive or resistant, and so does not escape from recapitulating hegemonic stereotypes and dominant gender hierarchies. This text, therefore, and the broad base of texts in the popular media which it represents, perpetuate hegemonic gender ordering and power relations by framing women and men (in sport) as distinct from one another; and locates sports women as less capable than their male equivalents.

SHIFTING BODIES AND BOUNDARIES

Whitson[195] posits that boys are taught to utilise their bodies in skilled, forceful ways. Through sports boys practise, become comfortable with, and gain detailed and accurate knowledge about their physical capabilities and limits. Moreover the embodiment of this engaged physicality constantly reaffirms dominant body constructions of masculinity. However drawing on the work of Young, Whitson argues that girls are hardly ever taught to 'follow through,' to put their entire body into a swing or a kick.

This assertion seems perfectly acceptable in terms of dominant ideas relating to 'acceptable norms' for male and female physicality. It also brings to bear the ironic ease with which conservative understandings of 'femininity' and 'masculinity' are able to hold contradictory views of sex difference. To elaborate, historically patriarchal privilege was regularly entrenched through identifying women primarily in terms of their bodies – as beings who were governed by their physical, embodied experience; be it through menstruation, pregnancy or childbirth – and thus inferior to men, who were typically defined by mental capabilities and characteristics. As such in a male privileging world view, women and body were equivalent and objectionable. What has remained consistent is that even when women are the primary gender associated with 'body', women themselves have never been constructed as having ownership over their own bodies. They were either at 'the mercy of nature' or their bodies were understood to be the property of men, be it fathers or husbands. Women were thus expected to portray themselves 'suitably' so as not to bring disrepute on the men whose honour they represented. This denial of women's control over their own bodies leads us back to Whiston's account of the relationship between gender and physicality.

To continue, girls are not encouraged to press the limits of their physicality, instead hegemonic constructions of 'femininity' have stressed a reining in: poise, elegance, being demure. If we imagine that contemporary, normative constructions of 'masculinity' celebrate pushing particularly physical activity, to the limit[xviii]; then normative

[xviii] Interestingly Messner notes that almost all sports were in fact designed for, and in order, to push the *male* body to its limits.

'femininity' centres on an imagined reservedness, a withholding, a desire not to test the limits. Young[196] suggests that the typical "feminine body comportment, movement patterns and tentative use of space all say 'I cannot' in the very act of trying." Perhaps then there is a case to be made that women's soccer is less 'balls to the wall,' rapid and entertaining than the male version of the sport. But if we understand Young and Whitson correctly, this outcome has far more to do with gender conditioning – where engagement in sporting activity is self enforcing vis-a-vis 'masculinity' but antagonistic in relation to 'femininity' – than sex difference. To continue, the very act of being physical is in a sense contradictory to conservative notions of what it means to be 'feminine,' and by (problematic) extrapolation female. What then for women who do embrace physicality, and don't hold back? Who put their all into sporting pursuits and excel?

If women are successful in sport, points out Russell,[197] a realm of vulnerability is created for men. This may be one reason why the media seems strongly to resist presenting athletic women as athletes, argues Russell, without first identifying them as either "acceptably feminine or dangerously deviant." [198] In MacKinnon's words, sports women "get to choose between being a successful girl or being a successful athlete"[199] An enormous amount of popularity for female athletes continues to ride on their defined heterosexual attractiveness. This 'symbolic annihilation'[200] effectively excludes female talent from being valued as worthy, as attention is instead directed and focused towards a sexualised body. Even the 'lesbian label' is a way of discouraging heterosexual female athletes from participating professionally in sport, creating the fear that their social identity may be 'marred' while ushering women towards acceptably 'feminine' roles.[201] Thus the scrutiny of a well-built, exceptional sportswomen's body continues to be a tool employed to define and police the boundaries of acceptable female behaviour within a patriarchal culture.

On the other hand certain theorists coming from a homosexual lesbian position argue that in so-called 'lesbian imagery' muscularity in fact bestows eroticism on the lesbian body; the butch body is constructed as "a sexual agent, something that *does* rather than *is*," says Munt.[202] In addition states Hargreaves,[203] the butch body is flexible – it can be read as sexual and political at the same time. Caudwell[204] posits that, unlike in the past when butch bodies were chastised for 'trying to emulate' male bodies, a celebration of the butch lesbian has been rejuvenated, in line with queer politics. I have already begun referencing

this shift in the previous chapter. Moreover the political significance of the masculinised butch body not only has relevance within a homosexual context, but I argue, the contemporary butch body, to appropriate Caudwell:[205] "can be seen as a form of subversion, one that destabilizes dominant notions surrounding heterosexuality," regardless of her own sexuality.

The athletic, muscularised butch body, states Hargreaves, has been routinely constructed in opposition to the ultra-feminised one, but "current representations of the female sporting body show some collapse of conventional points of reference, some acceptance of values that have previously been marginalised, and the emergence of new, radicalized images of female physicality."[206] However though lesbian athletes are not excluded from this widening of the definitions around femininity in sport, Hargreaves maintains that while today muscularity in the female body is valued and admired – as physical capital – the acceptance of such bodies is still conditional upon publically avowed heterosexuality.[207]

The South African Women's Football Teams Manager, Fran Hilton-Smith,[208] argues that the impetus around creating a heterosexual, feminised image misses a world of discrimination that women players face in their choice to play football. Hilton-Smith notes that the game naturally shapes one's body into an athletic and androgynous form, and that the most comfortable and functional clothes for playing football happen to be those historically associated with the male form. She also highlights that many young girls begin to "dress and act like boys" in teams in order to avoid being sexually harassed by male coaches.

> There's two issues to this story - one, I did a lot of research into it, and one of the reasons the girls portrayed themselves like boys was that in the time or just after we got back into football, it wasn't then acceptable for a lot of the women to play football because it was seen as a men's sport. And there weren't a lot of women's teams. So what happened, if I can take the example of Portia Modise, the captain of Banyana, she played most of her life in boy's teams because there weren't many women's teams. Secondly, to play in the boy's teams you had to look like a boy. So they developed this kind of boyish attitude because they wanted to play football. And also, I discovered when we started to have all women's teams this thing continued because they realised that they wouldn't be sexually harassed by the managers and coaches of the teams because they weren't appealing to them. So that propagated that as well. Certainly, there are girls who are

> lesbian in the women's national team. Equally there are men who are whatever in the men's team but nobody talks about that.

Russell[209] notes that often times women's success in sport creates a realm of vulnerability for men. I would agree but complicate the notion of 'men' and say that a realm of vulnerability is created for a hegemonic, patriarchal system on the whole, which is reproduced through the actions of some men and some women. To continue, often times it is the most successful women who are viewed as the biggest threat. And when success and muscular appearance converge there is an active attempt by others to persuade women that they don't belong in the environment.

To recap, this chapter has thus far made reference to difference in gendered imagery. The prevailing notion is that *visibly* 'athlete' and 'woman' are pictured as disparate categories. Butch bodies however challenge this – as they embody a space wherein strength and female are emulsified. And so, as the remainder of this chapter will demonstrate, there is a trend – in order to retain power – to villainise the transgressor and transgressive bodies for their contravention of the hegemonic order.

While this chapter may appear to traverse between theories of sex (because it looks at the body) and gender, I maintain that gender is in fact the *ipso facto* system which informs our reading of bodies and performance. Due to this and because the subsequent text will look at issues around a gender complaint, let me turn briefly to a more theoretically substantiated unpacking of gender.

Performing Gender

Rakow insists that "gender should be seen as a verb, that is, work that we do to construct and maintain a particular gender system; and as a meaning system, that is, organising categories used to make sense of the world and experience."[210] Gender is thus a classification system that persons have used to "think the world with."[211] And yet it is of paramount importance for the continuation of the patriarchal order that gendering be presented as *natural*. As Rakow[212] states:

> [I]t is not gender that causes the women's behaviour but our gender system, which locates some people as women in a particular organization of social life, making that location appear natural and the result of biology and psychology rather than culture and politics.

Similarly Judith Butler[213] argues that gender (feminine and masculine performance) is not a fact. There is neither an essence which gender externally expresses, nor an ideal to which gender aspires. Biological sex does not inculcate people to a gender. Gender (as well as our understanding of sexual difference) is rather *socially constructed*. As Butler notes it is the various acts of gender performance which create the idea of gender. In other words Butler sees gender as an act that has been rehearsed, much like a script, and we, as the actors, make this script a reality over and over again by performing these actions. Gender is therefore a construction; moreover it is a construction which conceals its genesis – which is simply the agreement to perform, produce and sustain polar cultural fictions. Thus it is the credibility of these performances, the constant witnessing and interpreting of masculinity and femininity, which obscures and dispels the actuality, that these categories are really cultural fictions, and not expressions of discrete identities. In other words gender is a performance and never an expression. Gender is never fully internalised owing to its performable, temporal constituency and therefore it can never be fully embodied because the understood 'internal' which gender is *believed* to express can only ever be achieved as a surface signifier. [214] As such the gender norms proposed by a dictatorial heteronormative society are described as phantasmatic by Butler. [215]

Race and Sexuality

The reading section of this chapter will focus on critiquing popular interpretations of Simalata Simpore's body. In order to understand more explicitly the nature in which bodies such as Simpore's have been read in relation to power, it may prove useful to unpack some of the historic and cultural insistences laid on black women's bodies. Gunkel[216] argues that colonialism has constituted race as a sexualised category and sexuality as a racialised category. This occurs since the discourse of race is corporealised in individual bodies because racialised bodies are themselves reproduced through sex. Colonial legacies are deeply inscribed on bodies. Schuhmann[217] notes that given the history of slavery and colonialism the exposure of a black woman's body has a very specific relation to technologies of power: This body has been intimately conjoined to the power of definition and classification, by being subjected to a penetrating and inquisitive gaze regime which has historically inscribed it as Other. As Schuhmann points out the historicity of such a colonial inspection, particularly within a South African context, calls forth the memory of Saartjie Bartman. Bartman was a khoi khoi woman who was

displayed in public spectacles in 19th century Europe as an aberration of nature – natural being defined according to a characteristically white, sexed body – because of a perception that she had pronounced genitals. Even after Bartman's death her genitals and brain were preserved and exhibited in the Museé de Homme in Paris until 2002. As such the Bartman experience typifies a technology of violence, and reveals a shared global history, which put and continues to put, the black woman's body – a racialised and sexualised body – under public scrutiny. The black woman's body is most obviously the subject on which power acts, in order to enact itself, since it is through negotiating an identity in oppositional relation to the body of the Other that privilege is entrenched and maintained. As such whiteness and masculinity, and furthermore sexualised[xix] whiteness and racialised[xx] masculinity are able to constitute their own power relations vis-a-vis the black woman's body.

To this day white identity continues to guarantee systems of white privilege and entitlement, including sexual entitlement. As such a neo-colonial discourse of sexuality is maintained, not only in hegemonic culture but also within some LGBTI communities.[218] Exemplifying this is the misguided notion that the West is both the expert and exporter of 'queerness' because queer theory is so often linked to European and US-American informed scholarship. This is problematic on two fronts: 1.) such an assertion is often mobilised by the West as a means to present itself as most liberated and therefore position itself as a reference point of development and progress to all other countries/societies. 2.) such an assertion inversely reinforces the notion that homosexuality is un-African in that it is seen as a Western by-product or disease brought to the continent together with colonialisation. This line of thinking is regularly used as justification for racialised (black) queer bodies being violently denied. Gqola[219] argues that in the South African context, black lesbian bodies have never been invisible in society, but are in fact "highly visible manifestations of the undesirable." Furthermore this sentiment is expressed and demonstrated through hate crimes. In April 2008 Eudy Simelane, who openly identified herself as lesbian, was raped and stabbed to death in KwaThema, Gauteng. Simelane was the mid-fielder for Banyana Banyana. Whether the queerness of the bodies in question

[xix] Here implying both masculine and feminine

[xx] Here implying both white and black

relate to transgressive form as will be shown to be the case with Simpore, or to sexual orientation as in the case of Simelane, seems to be of minor concern. Rather it is at the intersection of queerness within a 'racialised,'[xxi] female body that this body is brought under even greater attack.

READING AMBIGUOUS BODIES AND DEFINITIVE CLAIMS

2. *Caf Acknowledge Gender Complaint*, SAPA, The Star, 26 November 2010

This is a curious text because what sparked the media issue, or at least what grabbed public attention, is really the question of whether men (or possibly some women thought to be 'too manly') were playing on women's teams and so whether those teams were in effect 'cheating' during the Confederation of African Football (Caf) Women's Championship held in South Africa in 2010. This particular article in part distanced itself from that theme by fronting a very passivised account of an administerial procedure and gives the public hardly any details or information regarding the events which formed the basis for this situation. The discourse is reminiscent of 'objective' legal reporting, which does not make definitive claims until the outcome has been 'proven' in a trial.

Yet at the same time it can be argued that merely by means of having a nebulous article coupled with an apparent contradiction, a distinguishable picture and caption, the media, exemplified through this text, was able to keep interest alive and in part tantalise the public with unstated controversy. For their part the public clung to conservative understandings of sex difference, and accusations were very much alive in the public realm.

Transitivity

Material transitivity is a process in which an actor + goal is expressed. These verbs are typically active, material, can be seen, and are operating – in other words they are "doing" words, terms which express action. In this article there is a trend to reduce material

[xxi] Here taken to imply 'not white' through the ironic convention of the 'invisibility of whiteness' in which whiteness has successfully imagined itself as the 'norm' rather than an'other' radicalised position.

statements in favour of fronting passivised expressions. This is done through the reporting style, which I shall speak more to later, and through the selection of transitivity, ie. choosing to foreground mental and verbal processes rather than material ones. The article style presents 'this happened,' at the expense of commenting on 'the (transitive) action' and in so doing seeks to neutralise excitement/controversy at one level. A prime example of this redirection from physical action to detached happening can be seen in the title "Caf Acknowledge Gender Complaint." Here although Caf is an active subject and the sentence is not presented in passive voice, a form of passivisation is still taking place. This is especially evident when compared to the manner in which the event was framed in Ghana.[xxii] Had the title instead read: "Caf *Investigating* Gender Complaint" then the article's framing would be very different indeed. In the hypothetical title the gender complaint is more substantiated and the story would seemingly be about looking into the events surrounding the complaint; whereas in a story entitled *Caf Acknowledge Gender Complaint* the focus is not about ascertaining whether the gender complaint is factual or not, the news is simply that Caf did as opposed to did not receive a complaint. The news element of this article is equivocal to a 'confirmation of receipt' message. In short, by way of framing, there is very little action and in fact very little to report on.

The verbs "acknowledge" and "has confirmed" are mental processes. They are abstract and intangible and as such convey no inherent action implications. In other words we, the reader, do not know conclusively what Caf actually did: How did they proclaim acknowledgement? What is the implication of acknowledgment? Is there anything more be done? All this is left open. The connotations of "acknowledge" and "confirm" in addition imply Caf's status as a *cognisant* authority – Not only is Caf represented as having the mental ability to recognise, but it is through Caf's recognition that the situation is made legitimate.

As I have said, far more than looking into any gender complaint, this article's framing centres on Caf. Via written conventions the magnitude of Caf is presented. Caf is the title

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[xxii] "*Ghana accuse Eq. Guinea of playing men at Africa Women's Championship*" was the title of the lead story on one website proclaiming itself as "Ghana's most authoritative football news website." This title, by contrast, foregrounds an action which was *done*, and includes material processes and specific participants. http://ghanasoccernet.com/2010/11/ghana-accuse-eq-guinea-of-using-men-at-africa-womens-championship/

subject, Caf is described as "African football's ruling body," Caf is positioned as the dominant participant in the text, allocated twice as many verbs as the second major participant, Nigeria, and Caf's is the only voice unequivocally quoted in the text. The use of transitivity shows that the majority of actions associated with Caf are verbal processes, for example "says" occurs three times, as well as "did not name." Only ¼ of the verbs accredited to Caf are of material transitivity. This is again cause to argue that the text has been rendered passive. In instances where Caf is constructed with material transitivity as in the clause "[Caf] received a protest from the Nigerian Football Federation" Caf is not the source of action, but the receptor of it. Receive is one of those peculiar verbs which cause the subject to be instantiated only upon another's instigation of action: ie. Caf can only 'receive' because Nigeria acted (in the form of a protest). In summation Caf is constructed as having import. Caf is also constructed as being set apart from action, as an entity more inclined to verbal and mental proclivity and so able to arbitrate over proceedings. There is also the suggestion that the situation, a squabble between Nigeria and Equatorial Guinea, now handed over to omniscient Caf will be, perhaps 'resolved', but certainly neutralised.

Modality and Style

Modality refers to the linguistic elements which contribute towards degrees of certainty within the text. Modals are the markers of logical possibility/probability. In this text the inclusion of specific modals impacts the reporting style. Terms like "the player in question," "reportedly" and " 'the gender status' " in what may be scare quotes, are modals which diminish certainty. These terms are also highly reminiscent of the reporting language of juridical proceedings. Another type of juridical assertion is apparent in the statement that "the *competent* committee" to inquire into this matter is the "Caf Sports Medicine Committee." As such there is a foregrounding of juridical/legal and biomedical knowledge systems as authorities. I will refer back to this relationship between the discourses of law and biomedicine in the discourse analysis section of this chapter.

Internal contradictions

According to the article Caf makes a statement with regard to " 'the player in question.' " The phrase "in question" deflects attention from any specified person – and in essence presents the entire situation as vague. The employment of the 'in question' tag in the clause: " 'the player in question' played for Equatorial Guinea" serves to reduce

probability and in effect casts doubt upon the validity of the gender accusation. Similarly the quotation marks around " 'the gender status,' " even if justified as legitimate quotes as that term is most likely lifted directly from the Nigerian Football Federation's protest, allow for ambiguity and have the effect of marking the term "the gender status" as an imaginative and ridiculous concept. Grammatically, when reading the words, " 'the player in question' played for Equatorial Guinea" the definitiveness of the statement – or positive polarity – is aligned exclusively to the insistence that the player played for Equatorial Guinea; and the issue of gender contention is side stepped and not mentioned by Caf. Semantically, however, while the information which the text is stating is 'unnamed player played for Equatorial Guinea,' the way the text is crafted allows for a further semantic meaning, 'the questionability of the player', to be popularly inferred by readers.

This device, to deny anything happened while simultaneously eliciting curiosity, is even more apparent in a sentence in the caption: "Striker Salimata Simpore is reportedly one of the players in question." In this sentence the figuring of the tag "in question" serves to defuse the situation, to lessen the attack. The article, *Caf Acknowledges Gender Complaint,* doesn't hone in on the critical situation that one of the players is accused *of being a man*, but instead something nondescript is posited, she is *in question*. However the concrete mention of Simpore's name and the accompanying picture of her direct attention acutely towards that player. So even though the article deliberately avoids premature conclusions, the text as a whole (the writing and picture) shrewdly focuses attention onto the figure of Simpore. Then there is the addition of 'reportedly.' While grammatically modals such as this are understood to reduce degrees of probability/possibility, in general use they are also coded as ironic, crucial insinuators. Thus, although "reportedly" is meant to restrain certainty, its inclusion has a contradictory effect – It is a flag to readers which emphasises the opposite, an overwhelming degree of likelihood. I am certain that no reader is left wondering whether Simpore is or is not one of the players in question. Simpore's part is taken as a given, and readers are only concerned with whether she is or is not a man. As such it is what is *not* said – the question of being a man or woman, and what is only *alluded* to – Simpore's person, which in this article holds the interest of the public, and upholds an idea of sex/gender differentiation.

There is also a contradictory, or at very least an ambiguous, construction of Caf in this text. Transitivity, as I have said, allows Caf to be presented as an authority and a

neutralising body. Descriptive language venerates Caf. The modality of the article avoids implicating Caf. However the brevity of the article, the vagueness, the dual nature of modality, as well as the concluding remark: "Caf say they will provide more information when " 'some other details emerge' " has the potential effect of casting Caf as negligent, slow to act and ill informed. Respondent's comments echo this sentiment: "CAF should have been proactive on this matter" and "I have heard about this a week ago and it is strange that CAF never act sooner."

Results

The named subjects' actions and language informing this article present a hesitation to investigate gender too closely. I postulate that this resistance emanates from the unstated fear that if we start to examine gender effectively its assumed naturalness will be revealed to be a fiction. Such a revelation would rock a principle foundation of competitive sport, sex differentiation. This revelation also threatens the bedrock of all patriarchal ideologies and its institutionalisation. Thus it is unsurprising that Caf, an institution of organised sport, and the media, through the text itself, attempt a sleight-of-hand in order to distance themselves from having to engage vigorously in the topic of gender. So while articles[xxiii] by ostensibly covering the subject of gender controversy in sport may appear to be acting in a revolutionary manner (and creating a space to begin questioning gender divisions), the framing actually presents very little information regarding gender construction to the reader because it would be unpopular to do so. Broad social questioning therefore is not encouraged, though the event itself marks a potential interruption in the social order in which organisations such as Gender DynamiX or Intersex SA are given a golden moment to assert themselves more forcefully in the political mainstream. On the contrary, little is said, and in this way assumptions are encouraged to prevail. This article is emblematic, ironically, of a silence on the theme of gender constitution. Thus it reinforces a void in popular discourse, which allows the myth of naturalised gender difference to continue unabated. In so doing it throws figures like Simpore to the mob as scapegoats to bear the brunt of insidious disdain for threatening to reveal the falsehood of dual sex binaries.

[xxiii] Though only one text is presented here due to spacial restraints, this text can be understood to represent a number of similar news articles on the topic of the 2010 Caf gender inquiry. It is also representative of the media reports on the Caster Semenya – IAAF issue of gender testing as well as prior reports concerned over gender contestations in women's soccer in Africa particularly.

The situation I speak of is typified in readers' comments. Some comments on the online article include: "every spectator suspected the player," "I also thought something was wrong when i (sic) was watching the games;" "I knew it would come to this. Strange looking 'ladies' indeed" and "I thought as much, especially about the lady in the picture!" Though the " 'ladies' " signifier is coded as mocking through the use of scare quotes, the compulsion to refer to Simpore and others as "lady" or "ladies" even while denouncing their status as women illustrates a fascinating paradox. I feel this is symptomatic of a popular difficulty to grapple with questions of gender and shows both the man-in-the-street's tendency to fall back on binary naming, and the resilience of the concept of sex differentiation. An interesting comment is: "can't you see he's a women (sic)." I think it is sensible to assume that this is a satirical comment. The equation of "he" being a "women" is sarcastic, signalling the reader's opinion is the reverse, that 'she is a man' and moreover for the reader in question, "he" is obviously a man. The reoccurring sentiment in all these responses is that one can deduce a person's sex – rather than gender (I will come to the issue of sex gender conflation and supposed distinction when I look at discourse practice in this chapter) – simply by looking at any given person.

This mode of thinking denies a possibility of expanding definitions of woman. I would argue that these kinds of conservative imaginings of women are inherently hostile, in that they limit and confine, not only our understanding of what it means to be a woman, but also women themselves to fit within preset parameters of 'femininity' in order to be accepted in society. As I have illustrated in this and the previous chapter, ideas of 'femininity' broadly, but especially in sport, are typically dismissive. These brittle notions trap women athletes in ghettoised spaces, as well as compel sports women to underachieve in order to be thought of as women. Clearly this reality thus reinforces the assumption that women athletes are inferior to male athletes and promulgates a cycle of discrimination. It is my feeling that had Simpore not been an outstanding soccer player, her physique would not have received much attention. To hammer the case home, though the comments imply that the situation can be resolved by looking at bodies, the real issue is not even that Simpore has a body which is outside of the regular definitions of the female form. The case is about more than visible bodily transgression – it is that a woman looked a certain way *and* was deemed too good, too strong to be a woman; the assumption being then that

she must therefore be a man. The contention is that skill and power vested in a female body qualify it to be read as not-female.

Discourse Praxis

The reporting style of this article borrows directly from the language associated with legal proceedings. Besides presenting itself as seemingly 'objective,' legal discourse has been described as a bastion of patriarchy.[220] As Ehrenreich & English[221] note in their descriptions of medieval witch trials: institutions of the state, law and medicine, have long since forged alliances to preserve patriarchy from threats. In this case a comparable partnership is formed between the discourse of law and biomedical discourse which both strive to present hypothesises as 'objective facts' and which creolise their relation to power through deferral to said 'facts.'

North[222] indicates that the media generally use the phrase 'gender testing' to describe these sorts of inquiries. This discourse was very familiar to the South African public and most undesirable for Caf and the South African media to find themselves entangled in, given the high media profile of the ordeal with IAAF and Caster Semenya just a year before. Some readers did make direct connections with the Semenya case: "Hope this is not another Caster scenario" and "uuhgh another gender test." North further states that many have pointed out an inaccuracy in the terminology: "if sex is a biological 'fact' as biomedicine would ostensibly have us believe and gender is socially constructed, then what is really at issue must be the player's sex." However, as Butler[223] explains, the idea of this testing, with particular reference to the Semenya case, appeared to be an effort to socially construct the runner's biological sex via the opinions of a panel of 'experts.' This anecdote reveals not that sex determines gender, but rather the converse, that understandings of sex difference are also socially constructed and it is gendered (binary) thinking which informs how we are able read sex. The bizarreness of this approach, North insightfully states, shows how poorly understood sex still is. Furthermore the sheer number of experts the IAAF relied on (gynaecologists, endocrinologists, psychologists, experts on gender) North declares, speaks to the fact that society really hasn't arrived at a single standard of what makes someone 'female enough' to compete. I find Butler's[224] cogent response that "they should simply decouple the question of femaleness from that of eligibility," compelling and refreshing.

To rejoin now the history of the colonial gaze which I unpacked earlier, it should be clear to see how in the case of Bartman, Semenya and Simpore the public exposure of a 'transgressive' body, intensified through public spectatorship, science and the commodification of these women, brings to bear the emphatic and mutual reinforcement of three axes of domination, namely racism, sexism and heteronormativity.

In opposition to what Butler calls the law of heterosexual coherence, she argues that sex and gender can be denaturalised by means of a performance, such as the transgendered 'masculinity' of a butch athlete, which "avows their distinctness and dramatises the cultural mechanism of their fabricated unity." Within feminist theory 'imitation identities' have been considered as being degrading to women, ie. drag; or as uncritical appropriations of sex-role stereotyping, ie. butch/femme portrayals, yet as Butler argues, the result of the enactment of these roles is more complicated than the critique generally declares. These 'imitation' performances reveal the falsely naturalised coherence of sex and gender, and furthermore they divulge the inherent *imitative structure of gender itself.*

In Butler's view, *all* gender behaviour is imitative in nature. Bettcher[225] explains that even heterosexual gender identity necessitates an instability which it attempts to mask: while purporting to be grounded in a naturally gendered core, it amounts to nothing more than repeated attempts to imitate past instances of gendered behaviour. "Heterosexuality" Butler[226] intimates, "constitutes itself as the originary or 'true' expression of sexuality in order to subordinate all other expressions of sexuality as, at best, inferior imitations." All gender, then is an imitation, a kind of impersonation and approximation, so that, explicates Butler,[227] "the imitative *parody* of 'heterosexuality' – when and where it occurs in gay cultures – is always and only an imitation of an imitation, a copy of a copy, for which there is no original." It therefore makes no sense, Goodloe[228] states and I agree, to speak of butch-femme roles as in some way replicating heterosexuality, since such a statement depends on an assumption of priority that no system of gender roles can accurately claim.

In the case of the butch athlete the implication of a body which is not male performing as 'masculine' becomes by Butler's account simply that – a body performing as masculine, is a body performing as masculine; and the performance needs to be constantly repeated to be maintained. Butler terms this notion a gender parody. The parody does not assume an original which it then imitates; instead what is being parodied is the very notion of an

orginal. Gender parody exemplifies that the orginal identity after which *any* gender supposedly fashions itself is actually an imitation without origin.

Since gender performance is a parody, the concept of gender performance is therefore congruent with the concept of pastiche. A pastiche being understood as A.) a literary, artistic, musical, or architectural work that imitates the style of previous work; and *also* B) a musical, literary, or artistic composition made up of selections from different works. A work is a pastiche if it is 'cobbled together' in imitation of several original works. Frequently depreciated a pastiche is further undervalued and termed kitsch if it can be mass reproduced – the societally approved performances of gender conventions (men acting 'masculine' and women acting 'feminine') are indeed reproduced on mass.

In the case of gender performance, much like Baudrillard's simulacra and Jameson's writings on consumer society, the constant reappearance of the copy/imitation in fact issues the destruction of the possibility of an authentic original. What this means in terms of gender portrayal, is that since there is no genesis informing gender, gender performance is therfore subject to perpetual displacement. And this perpetual displacement constitutes a fluidity of identity. In other words masculinity is neither the exclusive preserve, nor outward expression, of the quality of being male. In addition, femininity and masculinity are not polar opposites but should be seen to exist along a spectrum which incorporates many different femininities and masculinities. Any individual may shift their performance along this spectrum at any given time.

Transgression

It is widely accepted that structures of privilege, such as patriarchy, gender hierarchy, and heteronormativity, can be undermined or destabilised through acts which transgress/cross the perceived discrete, hermetic boundaries of such structures, and thus reveal the constructed, and not *inherent*, nature of these structures. According to Garber, transvestism was located at the intersection of class and gender – and, accumulatively, through 'crossing' acts, gender and class were revealed to be commutable, the boundaries traversable.[229] Although there is no definitive answer as to why some sports women opt not to conform to, or even rally against, the 'feminine' stereotype, Creedon[230] confirmed several patterns of common characteristics from her work in previous decades. In the case of outstanding sports women like Didrikson, Francis, Joyner-Kersee, King, and

Navratilova and Lieberman these women were all from lower-middle- or working-class backgrounds, and they did not necessarily define themselves by standards of white femininity, or compulsory heterosexuality.[231] This is as a rule true of most women soccer players in South Africa too, the vast majority of whom are black, and/or lower-middle or working class, and/or lesbian. Thus in relation to power, to be exempt from the space of privilege opens up the possibility to challenge that or other structure(s) of privilege. Indeed to be able to transgress against one boundary, is to call into question the inviolability of another, as well as the parameter of the social codes by which such categories are policed and maintained. The masculine performing athlete who queers gender performance is seen (by hegemonic, heteronormative society) to denote a space of anxiety about the fixed and changing potential of identity.[232] The performer of gender crossing as such, incarnates and emblematises the disruptive element which intervenes – signalling, what Garber terms "not just another category crisis but a *crisis of 'category'* itself."[233]

Hence Garber's crisis of category positions the butch athlete as subversive to heteronormative binaries. The butch athlete's transmissible character, in her very exceeding of the prescribed boundaries of hetero-binary society, calls into question, and even to some extent cripples, the supposed limits of such binary categorisation. As a subversive agent and performance, the butch athlete ostensibly dismantles the heteronormative perspective through her embodying and performing (implying inevitably that the gesture is witnessed) a counter position beyond the definitions of the dominant structure.

However traversing boundaries does not always serve to transform and destabilise categorisation, and can in itself not only reform but actually reify the status quo as Mullen's[234] work on passing (from a racial context) reveals. Mullen argues that this form of transgressing boundaries is most often an attempt to move from the margin to the centre of power without radically modifying the structure. Similarly Birrell & Cole[235] note how sexual reassignment surgery, an individual's solution to a structural problem, is primarily an acquiescence of power to the oppressive structure.

Birrell & Cole use the case of Renee Richards, a trans male-to-female athlete, whose entrance into professional tennis in the US during the late 1970's sparked a trail of

controversy, in order to exemplify how sport continues to be (problematically) a cultural activity still accepted as legitimately dived into two sex categories.[236] According to Birrell &Cole[237] even Richard's own decision to participate as a woman illuminates how sport is a political field which "produces and reproduces two apparently natural, mutually exclusive, 'opposite' sexes." And indeed by focusing on the question of individual sex legitimacy, that is whether Renee Richards is a man or a woman or whether Salimata Simpore is a woman or not, the media obscure the broader social and political issues of inherent categorisation and exclusion.

The transsexual's solution to gender dysphoria is to change sexes: an individual solution to a systematic problem. The system institutionalises and reduces sex to dimorphic, mutually exclusive, categories. Additionally, surgical remedy repositions the transsexual into a system which locates individuals as either male or female subjects.[238] Academics, such as Fausto Sterling,[239] and many activists have detailed the inaccuracy of this dual-sex model. And the growing literature documenting the experiences of intersex individuals is testament to the violent measures which the two sex system exerts in order to maintain its claim and authority. As such the question of who gets to decide 'who is a woman?' has been the domain of, and remains typically under the jurisdiction of, patriarchal discourses of medicine and law.

Media framed the Richards case in terms of sexual essentialism: 'Is Richards a man or a woman?' Similarly the reception of the text regarding the gender complaint in South Africa was bred on the supposition of sexual essentialism, and general media portrayal of the event did little to counter this. An alternative framing of the Richards case was in terms of liberalism: 'Is it fair to allow Richards to play according to human rights discourse?' This framing, Birrell & Cole argue, actually discounted other women athletes' perspective on fairness, in favour of individualising Richards's human rights. In the South African context however, for all the state's discourse around transformation and rights, a liberal concern for Simpore's human rights (although problematically individualised), was shockingly subsumed under a concern for neo-liberalism: "proving a woman to be a man, …could cost some parties major bucks." [240] Rather than critiquing a flawed sex ordering which underpinned the emergence of the issue, the concern among the South African public was that this controversy would cause sponsors to be (even) less interested in the women's game.

In the above examples, of sexual reassignment surgery as well as the position taken by the South African media, the resolve is to practice and maintain the rules and structures of hegemonic power relations. In other words rather than challenging power dynamics and ways of understanding the world, inclusion by degree of mimicry (either in terms of 'becoming a woman' in Richards case or in terms of speaking only in a dual-sex register as the South African media did) is a choice to produce and reproduce advantage over others by subjugating through omission, or by eliding, the transitional subaltern.

By contrast, in Halberstam's work "F2M," comments Bettcher, [241] Halberstam attacks the notion of representing Female To Male (FTM) sexual reassignment surgery as mimicry *or* as a more radical form of gender crossing than others (such as lesbian butch gender presentation). Halberstam[242] claims that "surgical intervention in the case of 'sex-change' also serves to 'fictionalize' gender (i.e., render or expose as artificial). Likewise, alternative gender presentations involving attire or fantasy can 'fictionalize' gender, where in all cases the 'fiction' requires a reader." The result is that in Halberstam's reading there is nothing distinctive between FTM transsexuality or a masculine performing butch lesbian (or, I would include, an athletic butch heterosexual woman) because they all "fictionalize" gender. For Halberstam "Sex-change" and "cross-dressing" are largely on a par (and are both central in a performativity act.)

In light of this move, Halberstam notoriously remarks, "We are all transsexuals. There are no transsexuals" in order to underline the plurality of ways in which gender can be "fictionalized." Bettcher [243] points out that Halberstam's attempt to undercut the specificity of FTM transsexuality drew fire from some FTM circles. In response Halberstam later explained that his intention had been to mark out space for the notion of a *transgender butch* as a position which resisted a continuum in which lesbian butch masculinity is represented as less than the fully achieved masculinity of FTM transsexuals. This notion proposed by Halberstam is valuable and furthermore it reinforces my argument, in line with Butler's, that all gender is an equally pastiched performance. It follows that, just as one should not assume butch masculinity as a less authentic performance than that performed by FTM transsexuals, so too one cannot assume either butch or FTM masculinities as a 'less than' or 'imitation' version of a masculinity performed by a heterosexual male.

Because Halberstam rejects the idea of a continuum (imagined as heterosexual/ lesbian/ transsexual) s/he argues against the notion of "crossing from one category to another in light of the proliferation of such identities situated at alleged 'crossings.' "[244] By this explains Bettcher, Halberstam means to assert that such identities can be taken in their own right as claiming ways of being in the world that contests the very dominant categories that would situate them as 'crossings.' I concede Halberstam's proposal that such identities can be taken in their own right as claiming legitimate (and specifically not imitation) ways of being. However I diverge from Halberstam's argument against the notion of crossing. Rather I concur with Garber on this point that the performance of traversing *dominant* categorisation (although inherently constructed and not 'real') does take place and in itself is a signal of the fictionality of social categories and so brings on a crisis of category. This is perhaps reaching the same conclusion as Halberstam's though achieved via a slightly different understanding of 'crossing' – since in the reading of Halberstam and Garber, I suggest a synthesis, that the butch athletic performance legitimately contests the authority of dominant categories.

Davis & Kennedy[245] also eschew the notion of interpreting the butch performance as imitative of 'masculinity.' The irony of the butch identity, they note, is that women adopt a masculine role in order to validate who they are as *women*. The butch performance "can hardly be considered an imitation of the heterosexual male role, since it has nothing invested in the structures of domination this role is designed to maintain."[246] As such, I highlight, butch performance does not have the same intent as an act of 'passing' because the 'transgression' of butch performativity does not signal a rejection of and move away from one's positionality. Rather it seeks to retain and validate its own position through pointing to, in Davis & Kennedy's[247] words, "the possibility of different ways of 'being' masculine, and of course different femininities."

Another resultant possibility of transgressing is what Broyard[248] termed minstrelization.[xxiv] Minstrelization is described as being the act of conforming to the subaltern stereotype

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[xxiv] Minstrelization, like 'passing,' is another term adopted from a discourse on race, now used in discourses on transgression generally, as such 'minstrelization' is an example of interdiscourse and it highlights an intersection of structures of dominance. The suspected origin of the term dates back to the 'Jim Crow' era and its associated racially debased 'minstrel' performances. It is suggested, as way of a historic explanation

which others of the dominant group have 'approved,' and in so doing one is perceived as being less threatening. Hence, it could be said that the masculine self emblematising of the butch athlete marks her as outside the hetero-biological binary structure of acceptable womanhood as espoused by the field of sport. She is at one and the same time not 'correctly' participating in sport's relationships, and, can be quietly marginalised by that structure because of her 'flagrant' transgression. At the same time such a transgression marked as deviant, ironically, can reinforce the dominant, discriminatory segregation arrangement itself. In this case the butch athlete, despite herself, seems to reify heterodominance. This can be linked to Pronger's theory, to which I will speak more fully in the next chapter, that acceptance of sexual minorities within the realm of sport, or limited integration, does not in fact challenge sport's approved hegemonic body politics, but more aptly serves to identify, monitor and neutralise potential threats and as such reproduces segregation.

To recapitulate, Russell[249] notes that women's success in sport frequently creates a realm of vulnerability for patriarchy, because according to the constructed imagining, 'women,' are not supposed to succeed at sport. As such, there is often an active attempt by men to persuade women that they do not belong in such an environment.[250] This is especially true of women whose bodies transgress the prescribed bodily image condoned by sport and the media. The degrees of dissuasion vary: from patronising labels which insidiously imply the quality of women's activity as lesser, to blatant ridicule or overt scrutiny of female performance and capacity, to cases of violence enacted against women athletes, to complete elimination.[251] What is apparent is that because women are not deemed to belong in the first place, overt scrutiny is enacted upon the *female* body. There is always a measure exacted for the degree of perceived transgression: whether one is simply an intruding woman in a male domain, or one is seen as an invasive trespasser, in an evasive body.

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of the word's meaning, that slave-owners probably gave preference to "good-natured Negroes" thus a smiling countenance would increase one's chances for a less back-breaking job, or possibly avert a whipping.

By way of conclusion, this chapter has dealt at length with representations of gender as well as with describing the potential for subversion through transgressive performance. In the article *Caf Acknowledges Gender Complaint* the text serves to reify dominant gender structures; perhaps not dramatically in the manner in which it speaks, but conspicuously through what it fails to do. In the text modals operate simultaneously to present an aura of uncertainty and contradictorily emphasise an overwhelming degree of likelihood. The juridical reporting style and reference to biomedicine permits the villainisation of trangressive bodies. These types of discourse, legal and medical, are also strongly implicated in colonial history and fit into a legacy of violently scrutinising black women's bodies. The enacted transitivity in the text begets a passivisation of the text and issue. This creates the impression that there is little to report on. The article relies *not* on what is actually said, but on what is left open, and on what is but alluded to as its driving force to interest the public. In other words it presents the public with an opportunity to project their own preconceptions and have these preconceptions rearticulated back to them. The text utilises internal structural contradictions with the effect of reproducing hegemonic assumptions. Therefore through its avowed silencing of an interrogation into gender and the gender-sex relationship, the text allows the myth of naturalised gender difference (aligned to a two-sex model) to continue unabated. The text in effect denies boundaries the opportunity to shift. It also, because it does not discourage public assumptions, denies bodies' meanings the opportunity to shift. The discourse of the text serves to perpetuate conservative imaginings of women which limit and confine understandings of 'woman,' and also women themselves, to existing parameters of socially accepted 'femininity.'

An appeal to difference which is based on an essentialism of the female physique reinforces the notions of a male / female divide.[252] According to McNay, the category of sex is always subsumed under a discourse of heterosexuality because the category of the 'natural sexed body' makes sense only in terms of a binary discourse on sex – one in which men and women exhaust the possibilities of sex and relate to each other as complementary opposites.[253] This way of conceptualising men and women, is self-evident in the recent accusations levelled against the Equatorial Guinea women's football team during the 2010 African Women's Championships. Such a conception ardently reinforces sexual difference and hegemonic gender relations as well as by extension the compulsive 'normalcy' of heterosexuality. The widespread popularity of the idea in South Africa, that men and women exhaust the possibilities of sex and relate to each other as complementary

opposites, and an insistence on rigid categories, has become glaringly apparent to me through my research experience. Furthermore, I have come to notice that many South Africans assume a problematic conflation of gender-/sex-/sexuality. Frequently I have encountered students who have defined ‘woman’ according to the premise that a woman is by definition attracted to men. This has dire consequences when it comes to representing homosexual experience, as will be dealt with in the following chapter.

IS GAY SPORT QUEERING SPORT?

How others read not only sporting women's sex but also their sexuality can have far-reaching implications. In the broader arena an abundance of anecdotal evidence exists from women in South Africa, who tell of how their participation, observation or enjoyment of sport is not given any acknowledgment by male counter parts. Instead a woman and her positionality as a potential sexual partner is immediately conflated and accessed. "The men think we are coming to the place just to have a good time with them. They cannot even think that we are entering a place to enjoy ourselves and not satisfy them." [254] said a woman from Cape Town commenting on a local sport/games hall in the township.

Naidoo[255] notes that talented South African women footballers have been denied positions which their skill should have afforded them owing to such expectations of 'legitimised' sexual congress. The story of Gloria Hlalele is a case in point. Hlalele is one of South Africa's great soccer players – she was instrumental in establishing both Banyana Banyana and the Soweto Ladies, as well as being recognised " 'as skilled enough to coach men.' " [256] While Hlalele grew up playing as part of boys' teams, she was prevented from playing professionally in male teams because she was a woman. She went on to found and play for the women's team, Soweto Ladies. Later on Hlalele and fellow team mate, Pumla Masuku, were banned from the team. This followed a public sexual harassment accusation laid against the then coach of Soweto Ladies (Hlalele maintained the coach made several sexual advances, which Hlalele rebuffed). Both Hlalele and Masuku are lesbian. Hlalele strongly believes that her sexual orientation and refusal to sleep with the coach, was a reason for her exclusion from the male managed team.[257] Thus not only is there the assumption that women are first and foremost seen as sexual objects in the service of men, but if a woman rejects this role, the repercussions can often be extremely detrimental, either professionally as in the case of Hlalele's career, or bodily with the oft looming threat of grievous abuse. The female body, the embodied experience itself, also becomes a site of tension as Hlalele's story illustrates in regards to its not being 'man enough', as well as its being seen as 'not being woman (read heterosexual) enough.' This becomes a 'double bind' for many lesbian professional and semi-professional women footballers in South Africa.[258]

Offsetting Discrimination

Hargreaves asserts that sport constitutes a social practice in which "there is systematic, institutionalized discrimination against lesbian women according to gendered and sexualized systems and structures of power."[259] Homophobia in sport, particularly that directed at lesbians, is sustained by stereotyping and labelling; by conjuring up myths that lesbians colonise sport (and other female players); and by further acts of active abuse. Griffin[260] takes this further. She argues, and I support, that although lesbians are the targets of attack in women's sport, *all* women, are in fact victimised by the use of the lesbian label in sport to intimidate and control. According to Hargreaves the abuse is so overarching that it prompts heterosexual sportswomen to disclaim such labels and send out heterosexual signs. Lesbians are therefore "trapped in a mythical culture of heterosexuality"[261] because the assumption is that everyone is 'straight' or 'normal' unless otherwise stated. Because of this lesbian sportswomen are forced either to 'make a statement' about their sexuality, or to suppose a heterosexual identity.[262] Both of these positions are problematic in terms of a queer reading because they essentialise identity politics, either by 1.) reinforcing categorisation or 2.) by reifying the 'invisibility' of heteronormativity, and thus marking any difference from it as Other.

According to Hargreaves,[263] sport has provided a unique space where lesbian women can be together. Lesbians have more leisure flexibility than most heterosexual women, Hargreaves says, and it is possible that because butch lesbians have appropriated the codes of masculinity sporting lesbians are attracted to activities which are associated with powerful, muscular physicality and traditional images of masculinity.[264] Owing to enforced secrecy around sexuality, the fight for lesbian space in sport has resulted in the demand for and establishment of all- (or predominantly) lesbian/gay sport. 'Gay sport' is a relatively recent phenomenon originating in the 1970's. Since that time there has been exponential growth in the number of lesbian sports clubs, organisations and competitions throughout the world. Yet the drawback, as Hargreaves does point out, is that crossing from gay sport into mainstream elite sport is not yet a realistic option for sportswomen hoping to advance their sporting careers.[265]

Pronger[266] raises important questions around whether gay community sporting activities have signified progress for sexual minorities. He concludes that the answer depends on one's political aspirations for the cultures of sport and sexuality. In other words whether

one views sport as a bodily cultural practice to continue essentially unchanged but to be more inclusive of sexual minorities, or whether alternative sexuality must necessarily disrupt and therefore transform the very nature of sport as a bodily practice. This notion raises questions for me about whether women's assimilation into masculine sport, as well as butches' participation in such sport, can in fact have the progressive impetus one assumes it will. Does this inclusion challenge or reify (or both) prevailing forms of masculine dominance?

Hargreaves is also is aware of the possibly contradictory position afforded through gay sport and argues that the campaign for reimagining sexual prescription in sport, which gay sport represents, is taking place in insular, ghettoised spaces and that gay sports liberation is partial and conditional – it has come only with separation and not with integration.[267] All-gay sports teams, organisations, and competitions, however popular, can create barriers between gay and straight people and provide an excuse for mainstream clubs and organisations to do nothing about their own sexual intolerance, homophobia and discrimination. Another likely barrier could be that created *between* gay athletes. For this reason it is necessary also to look at the differences among gay sports people. One should take cognisance of the fact that for some homosexual athletes sexuality may be an off-hand consideration, and what is of primary concern is the degree to which they can excel in sport; for other gay sports people what is most pressing is the desire to foreground sexual politics through the medium of sport. Thus lesbian sportswomen face a double conundrum around segregation-integration: whether the increased numbers of 1.) women's and 2.) lesbian, clubs and organisations is liberating or restrictive. Gay people are asking: "Are these clubs a symbol of our strength or will self-imposed segregation from mainstream sport inevitably hamper our progress towards greater acceptance in the heterosexual world?"[268]

As a counter point, Hargreaves[269] catalogues the potentially positive contributions of gay sport. She notes that gay sport enables lesbians to come out without the labelling, repercussions and discrimination that accompany coming out in mainstream sport. It challenges stereotypes, gives lesbians a higher profile, creates positive images for other lesbians, and provides a safe women-only space and sense of comfort and belonging. It is argued that gay sport provides lesbian sportswomen with a prejudice-free space – something that mainstream sport has failed abysmally to do. Gay sport furthermore gives

lesbians greater visibility, pushing forward the growing public acceptance of homosexuality. This is arguably true in a South African context where the political utilisation of soccer from the Non Governmental Organisation (NGO) sector has had success at the level of community located sporting events. For example an annual women's soccer tournament, initiated by the Lesbian and Gay Equality Project in 2009 in the course of mobilising the local LGBTI community in Kwa Thema around the murder trial of Simelane, now receives warm, broad-based approval in the same community where four years ago Simelane was murdered specifically for being a lesbian. The growing popularity of gay sport, Hargreaves asserts, is a significant expression of lesbian identity politics: 'Open' participation by increasing numbers of lesbians reflects an assertive individual stance signifying community pride and group identity. Lesbianism is lived on a day-to-day basis, and 'doing' gender by 'doing' sport constructs new and positive images of lesbianism. Such images, Hargreaves argues, have political power though their visibility in dominant culture. Gay sport, in the opinion of Featherstone et al signals "a move beyond demands for the tolerance of private sexual preferences to the thematization of public group identities and the construction of alternative lifestyles."[270]

READING LESBIAN TEAM

As previously stated, I was unable to find an article in the South African media reporting directly on the 2010 Gay Games. I thought this was peculiar since South Africa's bid to host the very same event had been widely and positively reported: IOL publications – *Gay Games May be a Boon for the City of Gold*, March 11 2005; *Gay Games Venue to be Announced Soon*, November 2 2005; *Joburg Loses Out on Gay Games*, November 14 2005. One explanation for this may be the seemingly innocuous justification that the popularity of the FIFA World Cup simply overshadowed the Gay Games in media reporting. However perhaps another explanation for the change in the reception of the Gay Games had more to do with the political climate in the country: In 2010, in a move that many viewed as unconstitutional, South Africa voted in favour of removing a reference which had protected against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation from a United Nations resolution on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions.[271]

Domestically, only the independent Mail & Guardian carried stories on The Chosen FEW, the lesbian soccer team representing South Africa at the Gay Games (*Belles of the Ball*, April 23 2010; *Lesbian Team Fight For Rights*, May 5 2010). It would appear that the major nationally syndicated newspapers did not deem such a story newsworthy, though it was picked up and reported on internationally (The Guardian (online), United Kingdom, *The Chosen Few Lesbian Team has Changed Lerato Marumolwa's Life*, June 20 2010; CNN, United States, *World Cup Inspires Lesbian Footballers to Play with Pride*, June 22 2010).

The Chosen FEW is a soccer team connected to and part of the NGO, Forum for Empowerment of Women (FEW), which organises around protecting and promoting the human rights of black, lesbian women, particularly from townships in the greater Johannesburg area.

3. *Lesbian Soccer Team Fight for Rights in SA*, Barry Moody, Mail & Guardian, 5 May 2010

Several pertinent themes are raised in this article, and continued throughout the text through repetitive lexicalisation. Certain lexical run-ons are situated around metaphors of family, geography and advocacy. Particularly noteworthy in terms of this examination is the manner in which within these themes, ideas of discrimination and refuge; rights and geographic reference, and sport and advocacy, are positioned and operate. Between several of these topics there exists a relational tension, an interplay between proximity to (one aspect and another), and distance from (one aspect or another), both at an ideological and concrete level.

Lexical Themes

Family

In the article there is a strong insistence, supporting Hargreaves's[272] notion, that all-lesbian sport provides a safe space and sense of comfort and belonging. The author notes that "players say the team has become a refuge for them" particularly "in contrast to the danger and prejudice they suffer in their townships." One of the players states that: "FEW is my family," "It is a space where I feel at home, I can be myself." She says, "We come

from different backgrounds but when we come here we are one thing, we are a family." Another player echoes these sentiments: "This team means a lot to me, because we are like sisters. We are the family."

'Family' by and large has the connotations of being a nurturing, protective and close-knit space. This is the idea the players are referencing. However, Simmons[273] expediently demonstrates that, "couched within the imagining of the stereotypical, nuclear family are hidden discriminatory relations of power: patriarchal dominance, racial cohesion and heterosexism." With regard to a lesbian team battling homophobia and violence against women (arguably ideologically at odds with the historic logic of the family[274]) add to the fact that an all-women team does not visually resemble typical representations of the family, one might think this a misappropriate and damaging metaphor. Yet it is possible to read the family metaphor in this context as operating as a site of resistance. This can occur in two ways: On the one hand referencing 'the family' shows basic similitude: shared values, shared aspirations, shared desire for sense of belonging; it might be seen as an attempt to make homosexuals relatable to a predominantly straight audience – a means of delegitimising discrimination without thoroughly altering the contemporary social order. On the other hand, and more radically, one could argue that by using the metaphor of the family the speakers are slowly shifting its meaning, opening up the word to contestation and wider appropriation. As such the speakers could be said to be resisting the allocated meaning and inscribing the word with an alternative reading at the site of utterance. That is, creating counter meaning through suggesting a more inclusive notion of the family and a different image of what the family may look like.

<u>Pronouns</u>

As I have illustrated it seems quite conclusive that the players regard each other as family and the space as a positive, shielding one. Over arching in the family metaphor is the idea of convergence, of standing together. This is expressed with the sense of unity that comes from the 1st person plural pronoun – we. "*We* come from different backgrounds but when *we* come here *we* are *one thing*, *we* are *a family*" and "...*we* are like sisters. *We* are *the family*." In a sense the collective quality of the family seems implicit and strengthens the idea of the family grouping functioning as a safe haven.

What is more interesting then is the explicit affirmation of the individual which is also presented through pronouns: "*I* feel at home, *I* can be *myself*," "…*my* family" and "[it] means a lot to *me*." This focus on the individual can be linked to a Foucaudian idea of technologies of the self. Technologies of the self, which were discussed in the first chapter, suggest another means of affording protection, by resisting oppression through agency, personal resistance and individual empowerment.

As the above hints at, this text contains some ambivalent slippages between subject pronouns. This is specifically evident when members of FEW speak about themselves. To illustrate this point I will take Mamabolo's statement: "This team means a lot to me...we are like sisters. We are family. We fight for our rights. We are the voice of black lesbians out there."

In these clauses we see a move from an individual relative to a group: "[t]his *team* means a lot to *me*...we are like sisters[,]"; to complete immersion within the group: "[w]e are family." The motion and degree of incorporation is further emphasised in the progression of comparisons, from simile (weak comparison) "we are *like* sisters" to metaphor (strong comparison) "we *are* family." Exactly who is part of this family, though not greatly problematic, is somewhat ambiguous. At times it is the team, The Chosen Few, which is a family as in the case of Marabolo's words: "This team... We are family." For other players the family resides with FEW the organisation itself: "FEW is my family." While of course there is an overlap between FEW and its soccer team there are instances, at least linguistically, where distinctions are made: "The Chosen Few was launched in 2004 *by* the Forum for the Empowerment of Women (FEW)." In this case the Chosen Few is the subject of the passive action enacted by FEW and the two nouns (since not self reflexive) cannot be entirely synonymous. Furthermore Phindi Malaza, FEW's programme coordinator, states: "[T]he team has been that kind of a tool where *they* are able to support each other..." The use of they, rather than we, shows a clear differentiation.

In statements like "We fight for *our* rights" the ambiguity is intensified. The Chosen Few or FEW are clearly fighting for their rights. However given earlier statements like: "we get discriminated against, we get raped, we get beaten up" in which the subject most likely does not simply refer to Chosen Few players but to the broader body of lesbians in the township, to which FEW also belongs, this boarder body should also be an appropriate

subject. The Simelane synecdoche as constructed by the author – that the crime against Simelane "exposed the amount of hatred suffered by [all] lesbians in the black community" – also serves to establish this cohesion. Linguistically it is not clearly defined if the word 'fight' pertains to promoting individual's rights or the rights of lesbians in general. The implication, and most likely the intention of the speaker, is that in this case '*our*' signals the rights of all lesbians in the community. The concluding statement: "[w]e are the voice of black lesbians out there" seems to confirm this. Here however the ambivalent subject is more problematic. If we are to accept that (not even the parent organisation, FEW, but) the Chosen Few (the team, according to Marabolo's linguistic genesis) speaks for all black lesbians, we need to ask some questions:[xxv] Is this representation self appointed? If so, are the Chosen Few entitled to be the legitimate voice of those they claim to speak for? Are other lesbians unable to speak? Is there a condescending view that other lesbians are not necessarily unable, but unwilling to speak? Are the Chosen few in fact assisting other lesbians by acting on their behalf or additionally dominating them by acting in their place? At a level of representation too, this vein of questioning is relevant. In my research the Chosen FEW is the only lesbian team which is, however minimally, substantially reported on. There are other all lesbian soccer teams in South Africa. Yet the Chosen FEW dominate representations of this subject category, making it harder for any other team, or the number of other teams, to be noticed and recognised.

While FEW undoubtedly does strive to contribute inclusively towards improving the quality of life for lesbians in the township in general, this text does reveal some sentiment of difference relating to how the Chosen Few regard other lesbians. Marumolwa notes: "There are other teams where there are lesbians but the coaches don't allow them to be who they want to be. They know we are lesbians and we are free." The implication here is that 'those other lesbians' are not being themselves. They are not strong, head-sure individuals imbued with technologies of the self. Instead they allow authoritative coaches to suppress their being "who they want to be." On the other hand the subtext is that the freedom that the Chosen Few experience apparently comes from their bravery, from their

[xxv] I am aware that this is a general problem of political representation and not specific to the deeds of the Chosen Few. These types of questions, particularly relevant to the NGO sector, point to a more complex issue around social/civil movements and politics, and questions of authorship and representation.

willingness to portray themselves honestly as the "only openly lesbian" team. It seems to me, that the Chosen Few do look down on other soccer players who are lesbian – In terms of viewing them 1.) as women who subordinate their personal well being to coaches' wants; and 2.) as lesbians too afraid of repercussions to openly disclose their sexuality and move to the Chosen Few team where player well-being is more considered. The problem with this view (which reoccurs in other themes I highlight in the article) is that it falls into the trap of narrow identity politics – by assuming sexuality to be above sport (or anything else), as the factor of prime importance constituting women's identity.

Thus far I have pointed out through the personal pronoun 'we,' a conflation of subject positions, from the individual, team, family, to assuming the position of representing lesbians in general. There is one other noteworthy subject position brought to bear through this pronoun. "*We* have this constitution that everybody is supposed to be following." "*Our* policies are great." Who has this constitution? Is it Chosen Few, lesbians, or the people of South Africa? Here we see that not only does the textual 'our' take on the voice of black lesbians for whom it speaks, but it is also credited with speaking on behalf of the entire country. There is a massive attempt at symbolic integration at work here. Besides the use of symbolic unity and positioning through the textual augmentation, there is also an attempt to engage directly with and incorporate the reader into this constructed unity. This occurs in the phrase: "*You* never hear any condemnation of hate crimes." Even though, as with the other pronouns, the entity to whom the 'you' is truly referring remains ambiguous – the semantic meaning implies that one (anyone) never hears condemnation of hate crimes from government; that she, the speaker, does not hear condemnation and by extrapolation then, she is asserting that no one hears any condemnation. Furthermore the choice to use the 2nd person pronoun, 'you', serves as a rhetoric device interpellating the *out*side reader *in*to the text. The pronoun 'you,' coupled with the strong modal "never" and the indicative mood of the sentence, forces the reader to occupy a position in conversation alongside the speaker. The ramification thus is, I speaker + you reader = we, the collective. This is of course true of every 'you,' of every reader. Thus a broader social audience is being pulled in, added to the conflation of lesbians, FEW, family. Furthermore one can deduce from the text's congratulatory construction of South Africa (though tempered South Africa's civil liberties are presented as 'better than' many countries) and via the production and intended distribution of this article, that the author imagines the majority of readers will be people who live in South Africa. As such the 'we' who "have

this constitution" is not just an abstract 'people of South Africa' but a 'we' intended to resonate with readers. The reading 'I' is thus implicated, included and involved. The desire of the text is for all readers in South Africa to be positioned in this way.

Results

Due to the pronominal shifters there is a continuous slipping of the subject. While certainly on the surface a form of ideology of unification[275] as theorised by Thompson is happening grammatically; a critical reading reveals that semantically the conflation builds so vacillatingly and ephemerally upon itself that expecting the reader to imagine a concrete cohesion becomes unlikely. Who is the true subject of the 'we's and 'our's? The national community, or only the lesbian community, or only the black lesbian community, or only the black lesbian community living in the township, or only FEW, or only the players themselves? In any sense I think that the representative nature which the speakers at times extol (and in other instances repudiate) essentially fails. A metaphor like Russian Babushka dolls more readily comes to mind – surreptitiously signalling compartmentalised fragmentation rather than a porous unity. The effect of such a representational style, even subconsciously, allows compartmentalised divisions to continue unabated in the minds of most readers, such that the image of a distinct, lesbian, (minority) group can be maintained – who while 'begrudgingly' part of the unified whole as declared in the constitution, can nonetheless on a practical level continue to be systemically relegated, marginalised and 'othered' by that whole.

Geography: Proximity and distance

The author sets up a correlation between the Chosen FEW and the Constitution. There are regular insistences of geographic proximity between the two entities (the space occupied by the Chosen Few and the space of the Constitutional Court), and also a supposed closeness in intent and legal aspirations (the protection and promotion of rights, particularly of homosexual rights). This theme is presented from the first sentence: "Down the road from a Constitutional Court that is charged with upholding gay rights, South Africa's only lesbian soccer team fight not just for the ball but to overturn brutal prejudice and discrimination." "Down the road" is a common phrase which signals that something is nearby. The writer's understanding of an underlying nearness of intent is also clearly spelled out in the stylistically mirrored phraseologies: "lesbian soccer team … overturn …prejudice and discrimination," and "a Constitutional Court … charged with upholding

gay rights." However even with this emphasis on closeness, a seemingly irreconcilable distance is also revealed; In the first place the use of the indefinite article "a" in "*a* Constitutional Court" rather than the definite article 'the' is an interesting choice. In linguistic analysis 'the' is taken to refer to shared knowledge, whereas 'a' on the other hand does not have this function of implying an idea held in common. Also given that there is only one constitutional court in South Africa, and that this is shared knowledge, the choice to refer to *the* Constitutional Court with the indefinite article 'a' instead, reveals an active attempt to make general. In doing so, the court's status is taken down a notch. The 'a' further insinuates that this Constitutional Court is simply one of many, although of what set is left unsaid – is it one of many/few constitutional courts worldwide? Is it one of many/few which uphold gay rights? In addition the indicative mood of the clause "a Constitutional Court that is charged with upholding" signals logical probability; it is rational to expect the court to do this, yet a potential lack of implementation is implied – It sounds as though the court is *supposed* to uphold gay rights but eventually the onus to counter discrimination falls on a lesbian soccer team. The semantics of "is charged with" too is reminiscent of accusation and arrest, and through language patterning has the subtle effect of placing the court in the position of being a wrong doer on trial.

As I have begun to imply, dissonance also reoccurs throughout the text – the descriptions of the geographies of the players' space is completely at odds with a framework committed to countering dispossession. This tension between proximity and distance is strongly carried throughout the article. The Chosen FEW are obliged to train at a "scrappy dirt wasteground bordered by a large puddle[.]" This is contrasted with "a well-kept green pitch 500 metres away" where an unnamed "they," "just won't let [Chosen FEW] in [to]." The omission of a specified 'they' means that no rationality for this segregation is offered to, nor is responsibility for it demanded by, the broader audience. The stark discrepancies in these geographic comparisons seems hardly equitable especially given that both pitches are only "a few hundred metres from the imposing Constitutional Court[.]" Proximity is again emphasised in the sentence "FEW has its offices in the former apartheid-era women's prison, now a museum, next to the Constitutional Court." The reference to the monumentalised women's prison gives both historical context and a thematically relevant link (particularly in relation to lesbian organising) and speaks to the long tradition of separation within the country. "[N]ext to the Constitutional Court" again speaks to closeness in geography, but emphasised within this tag phrase now too is a history of

(typically racial, but also gendered and sexualised) separation. The description of the players "chang[ing] their clothes in the courtyard," invokes both historic remembering and current geographic imagery of the transformed prison complex, now the site of Constitution Hill. This description also highlights the fact that despite political transformation, Chosen FEW have not gained any formal infrastructure – They have no access to a stadium with dressing rooms in which to change, instead they are exposed; out in the open, and without facilities. The players then "walk down the hill to the training ground next to a petrol station." "Down the hill" like "down the road" is again a measure of closeness. In contrast, the mention of the petrol station next to the ground highlights again a lack of formalised facilities and a farness from progress. A petrol station may undeniably conjure up images of an industrial or commercial setting, rather than the leisure or recreational qualities typically associated with a training ground.

Moreover as Malaza's statement: "There is a long way to go" indicates, even with all this proximity to the Constitutional Court space there is still much which needs to be achieved to change facts on the ground. "There is a long way to go" may for many have phonetic resonances with the biography of South Africa's first democratically elected president, the man who 'introduced' the constitution, Nelson Mandela's, *Long Walk to Freedom*. This sentence, "There is a long way to go," forms a mentally cohesive, though contradictory, tie to the text. It functions as an antonym and through a discursive description of distance can be understood to propose an idea opposing the notion of "down the road." In the ideological landscape it is far-ness rather than closeness which prevails. There are other examples of distance/spatial word plays in the text such as "We have this constitution that everybody is supposed to be *following*." In this example "following" has two-fold connotations. The first involves geographic features in that people may be "following" i.e. walking along a path, which idea is linked with the lexical selection of "There is a long way to go." The second involves ethical/judicial/legal considerations such as the underlying sentiment that the country's citizens should, and are obliged to, abide by the constitution.

Discourse Praxis

While there is the assertion in the text that the Chosen FEW are instrumental in forwarding legal rights of homosexuals, what is highlighted is that there is a dissonance between rights which are promised and the resources which have been given. This is

exemplified further in the statement: “I feel there is really no support in government or the political leadership.” The lack of “support” which is mentioned encompasses many things: resources, facilities, finances and most importantly ideological solidarity. In this case what is reported in the text is an accurate illustration of the general status quo, particularly the creeping wave of conservatism and homophobia which engulfed the South African government and its foreign representatives in 2010 (Jon Qwelane, a South African foreign ambassador was convicted of homophobic hate speech. Baso Sangqu, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations voted in favour of removing sexual orientation from a UN Resolution condemning extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, essentially disregarding the particular vulnerability facing many LGBTI people. The Zuma cabinet (unlike Mbeki in 2009) did not radically denounce the stalled Ugandan anti-homosexual, ‘kill the gays,’ bill.)

While a reactionary claim that sport is outside of the realm of politics is often made, this article in some instances rightly gives recognition to the inextricable connection between politics and cultural practices, and appears to promote the use of sports as a means of challenging power. The beneficial features of such action are presented as apparent when the text makes comment to the discourse of anti-homophobia, rights and anti-discrimination (factors which are abstract political rights). Yet in other instances the article demonstrates no awareness of discriminatory power relations within general cultural practices (like sport) and succumbs to the pitfall of not resisting, and in fact not even drawing attention to the possibility of resisting, these. The apparent implication within the article is, therefore, that big *D*iscrimination can and is being challenged (the discrimination of abstract political rights) but by failing to interrogate, subvert or transform the politics of sport the article takes no cognisance of little *d*iscriminations and ironically it is these which constitute the very means of resistance suggested: because said little *d*iscriminations are constitutive of the very fabric of the image and history of the field of sport. I argue this because in this article there is still an ambiguous resignation to, or at best no challenge offered to offset, the denial of homosexuality and sex privileging in sports when addressing the sport theme directly. In the next thematic section, Advocacy vs. Sport, I shall deal with exactly this premise and clarify my argument further.

Advocacy vs. Sport

In terms of voice the team is mentioned nine times in the active voice in terminology relating to advocacy work. The team is described as being "more than just soccer players" because "[t]hey campaign to overturn prejudice against black lesbians[.]" Thus there is a direct construction of these players as political agents. This is done explicitly through lexical choice: a word like "campaign" has overriding connotations of political action, "overturn" has associations with judicial action, and "prejudice" (or more accurately its avoidance) is suggestive of the language of the constitution. Therefore a strong tie is further entrenched lexically between the Chosen FEW and the rights based discourse of the constitution. Another instance of advocacy associated actions occurs in the sentence "The group demonstrated outside the court where one of the murderers ...was tried and sentenced[.]" "Demonstrated" is another example of a connection with a social justice based rhetoric. There are also clear cases of self identification with an intent to promote advocacy. Malaza, the manager of the Chosen FEW, is reported as saying: "the organisation was set up as a space for black lesbians to counteract the homophobia in townships" and " 'One of the purposes of the team is that they do advocacy work around campaigning and talking against hate crimes'" and " 'the team has been that kind of a tool where they are able to support each other[.]' " "Advocacy work," and "campaigning" can, especially in this context, be said to be the language of activism, and "hate crime" too is associated with a South African constitutional discourse. Furthermore, the title of this article, "Lesbian Soccer Team *Fight for Rights* in SA," can be said to have connotations with a discourse underlying the memorialisation of the national liberation struggle. As such it can be argued that there is a very strong and intentional resistance to discrimination posited in the article, both in terms of how it is written and through the subjects' own expressions.

I will turn now to examine how the sport theme is framed within this article. Looking at voice, the Chosen FEW (or synonymous concepts), in 8 instances functions as the subject of active-voice verbs which relate directly to sporting activity. The team "play[s] with skill"; they "train"; they "won...medals"; they "will compete[.]" These verbs can be said to convey strong, objective descriptions of the players' engagement with soccer.

The remainder of the sport referencing actions can be read in more nuanced ways. Clauses about the players such as "most of whom began playing soccer in their childhood" offer an

ambivalent perception of their sporting integration. Great sport stars are often trained in their discipline from infancy, so on the one hand, a subtle link to this vein of exceptionalism may be being suggested. The assertion that Chosen FEW have substantial experience as they have been playing since they were young children is also possible. Yet on the other hand the pointed grammatical link to childhood makes the players sound or seem child-like. This is reinforced through discourse patterns[xxvi] which stress 'women-and-children' as one category and one which is viewed as less capable than the category of 'men.' In conjunction with the former ideology is the inference that the players' skills are inferior (in relation to their male counterparts); and that they have not progressed much – there is still a link to the childhood level of the game. Given that women's soccer is so frequently read as a lesser or watered down version of the 'real' (read men's) sport, to link women players so dramatically to themselves as children then reinforces the coherence of the women-and-children idea and further degrades the image of women's sport by making it resonate with a children's game.

In the clause: "They dance down the pitch in formation before matches," "pitch" of course is a direct reference to sport, "dance" however may have connotations which link it to soccer, the beautiful game, particularly given the "in formation" adverbial phrase. However 'dance' also carries 'feminising' qualities. As does "sing" which is mentioned in the clause "singing shows the team spirit." These devices could possibly be serving to neutralise the perceived trangressive element of women engaging in 'men's sport' by aligning the sports women to an imaginatively constructed 'feminine' activity; and further may be being used to lessen the perceived threat of homosexuality by making a lesbian team appear suitably 'feminine.' Similarly the second clause of this sentence: "and end games with a huddle and recitation of the Lord's Prayer" operates much the same way. The word "huddle" is often employed in direct relation to sport, and while many, many athletes are pictured thanking a god for their achievements, the decision to include this description of the team may indeed be being intentionally included as a means of neutralising the homosexual identity of the team – particularly given the prevalence of the assumption that engaging in homosexual practices goes against religion. Thus while many

[xxvi] Typical examples would be discourse around security which propounds that women- and-children be protected or saved first. In South Africa there is also currently a department dedicated to Women, Children and the Disabled, signaling these identity groups as more needing of a patron to ensure their wellbeing.

male players or teams may do all of these things: dance, sing and pray, in general these activities are not explicitly reported on when writing an article about men's sport. Furthermore the actions carry a different inference when describing a lesbian team.

As such I would argue that a potential tension is frequently suggested even in instances of direct reference to the Chosen FEW's engagement in soccer. What I mean by this is that there does not seem to be an overwhelmingly comfortable alignment in describing the team and portraying them with a primary identity as sports players. Worth commenting on at this point is the similar, though slightly divergent, constructions of national, formalised women's soccer and civil society/NGO organised club soccer. Banyana Banyana players, remember, were accrued a primary identity as sports woman – however they were described always in relation to sports men and as inferior, non-achieving, dependent – as (anti)Athletes. All the same even though they are framed as the antithesis of stereotypical athletes, Banyana were still described in a relational context to the concept of 'athlete.' Descriptions of The Chosen FEW however situate them even more in line with Kane & Greendorfer's early descriptions of media's attempts to frame sports women as women, despite their involvement in sport. The Chosen FEW, represented as sporting activists, are framed as activists, in spite of their involvement in sport. This points to the fact that if one is not playing at a national level (where there has been some concession, albeit disparaging, to allow 'feeble athlete' to read 'woman') the trend among the broader public still is *not* to consider women generally as competent athletes. One could also speak of what Duncan & Hasbrook term "denial of game."[276] This is a strategic insistence figuratively to decouple and keep separate, the image of women and the image of sport. This happens at two levels within this text. At one level there are the inconsistencies with the image of the athlete which I described in the previous paragraph, illustrated through the references to childhood and imagined 'feminising' activities in so far as these players are not able to be viewed in the model of the archetypal 'athlete,' predominantly because they are women but even more so because they are lesbian. On another level, because this article looks at players at community/civil society/NGO sector level there is the denial of sport through the decision to redirect focus on to advocacy activities, *in place of* sporting activity. This is evident in a quantitative comparison; in an article about a soccer team, distributed in a period with a spiked nationwide interest in soccer, nine instances of active voice detailing that team referred to advocacy activity, whereas of the eight instances

which refer to sporting activities, only half of these are emphatic assertions of the team as legitimate players of soccer.

There are of course some syntactic overlaps between sport and advocacy, such as the use of 'fight' and 'overturn' in the given sentence: "South Africa's only lesbian soccer team fight not just for the ball but to overturn brutal prejudice and discrimination," where these words pay reference to both sporting and advocacy metaphors. Nevertheless, Malaza's own words "[Chosen FEW] are not just playing soccer but pushing issues of advocacy," coupled with the stated purpose of the team, and the intention of setting up the organisation, convey the feeling that soccer is secondary to, or simply a tool for, doing advocacy work.

Results

It can be concluded from the textual reading, that the presentation of the 'family' theme gives assent to Hargreave's notion of positive spaces – but only in so far as closed gay sport. This does present a potential challenge to dominant constructions of power, but not dramatically. The utilisation of pronouns informs a noticeable failure at unification, signalling rather, immense potential for segregation. This text also reflects how sports women's athletic achievements are seldom reported on without also referencing other facets of their life. It is somewhat disconcerting that, when applied to a South African context, the at least two-decade old observation suggested by Kane & Greendorfer has not undergone any substantive changes. There remains a common uneasiness around the idea that women would participate in sport for sport's sake.[277] Instead there appears to be the need for a rationale as to why women would be engaging in sport. In this case, engagement in sport is presented as an advocacy means towards a motivated political goal. The 'advocacy' theme simultaneously constitutes a denial of sport (excluding women/lesbians from being viewed the same way as bona fide players). Also brought into focus is the fact that this text overlooked the need to interrogate or transform sport as a political and bodily practice.

The Problem of Identity Politics

If supposedly subversive performances are restricted to designated, cloistered environs and assert themselves through a reliance on categorisation, such resistance can only ever be partial and will more usually prop up existing hierarchies of dominance. Therefore

there is the need for subversion to obfuscate the boundaries of simple categorisation in order to be truly successful and counter-hegemonic.

In my view all-lesbian sports are not nearly as useful or revolutionary as queering sport. This is because isolated gay sport reintroduces the issue Pronger spoke of – that sport as a bodily practice remains essentially intact. And gay sport, as Hargreaves[278] describes, can propagate the ghettoisation of the Other within the field of sport. Having gay sports, in conjunction with women's sports/female versions of sport, in my mind only serves to increase stratification.

All-gay sport in effect creates little islands so positioned that heterosexist dominant sport can identify, monitor and reject such potential threats, thus reproducing segregation. Additionally all-gay sport creates little island where gay identity can identify, monitor and reject anything other than its approved image, thus again reproducing segregation. The greater the number of identity categories we recognise as discreet, hermetic positions the greater the number of spaces from which to violently perceive the 'Other'(s).

So while feminist and pro-lesbian civil society organisations, exemplified here through the Chosen FEW, are intentionally attempting to push equality and challenge gender and sexual discrimination, in this case neither the team nor the article tackles the issues of sexual hierarchies or discrimination within the constitution of sport itself.

I suggest therefore that if potentially counter-culture advancing texts (be these texts actual historic subjects – like the players of the Chosen FEW – or articles about them) perceive (or are read to perceive) a false separation between abstract political rights and a struggle for equality whilst simultaneously overlooking/not reporting on/not speaking to, inherent forms of the same or similar discrimination present in everyday cultural practices (some of which, like sport, may constitute the very medium for their promotion of struggle) then a problematic schism in ways of being is presented. It is therefore probable that such a contradictory modus operandi will instantiate a self-created, irreducible, and perpetuating schism between the broader social climate and the desired aim of enacting on the broader social climate.

The question arises though, as to whether just being gay and playing is enough to challenge the existing order. Rather surprisingly I intuitively think yes. I feel that by participating and engaging one can actually be redefining the historic, imaginative construction of the field of sport and one can in fact be actively transforming it through creating a new appropriation. But this new shared ownership can only be defined in terms of integration, not through a 'minstrelized' acquiescence or, alternatively, a promulgated self-separation. In another sense, I am suggesting that one should not celebrate the notion of 'sport' uncritically. Neither should one uncritically celebrate 'lesbian' as a resistance identity.

With regard to the category of 'sport' – should one ignore the political significance (of asymmetrical gender relations) vested in certain cultural practices (like sport), and so uncritically mobilise said cultural practice with the aim of achieving a desired goal (abolishing sexual discrimination for instance), one might in fact create an *interference* in what could have been a queer project already interfering with the axes of oppression one sought to challenge.

In like vein, one should not uncritically celebrate the category 'lesbian' as a resistance identity. While Pronger,[279] whose view I touch on throughout this chapter, argues that belonging to a gay sports team is itself an act of resistance, because such an act inherently challenges heteronormative culture, he also cautions that the concept of viewing all-lesbian sports teams as essentially subversive in and of themselves is a complicated and contestable notion.

Recall now what was discussed in the initial chapter, *(Subverting) Power or Not Part I*: In so far as a power relation resides in the consumption of the text, power most securely lies with the spectator, and not effectively, the performer. In other words the intention (to abolish sexual discrimination) of specific performers or players (coincidental synonym?) is far less consequential than the interpretation of the representation of performativity. Therefore aside from the fact that a lesbian identified team may be read as exhibiting limited scope for encouraging non lesbian women, or even other non-out lesbian women, to participate in sport, there is also the concern that the exclusionary look of a lesbian 'only' team might be read as justification for problematic patriarchal assumptions.

There is the possibility that, in a hegemonic hetero-patriarchal dominated society there might be a deference to read the performance of the Chosen FEW, an exclusively lesbian team who principally perform a form of masculinity (as well as femininity) and conform to a butch body image, as: 1.) reinforcing dominant sex hierarchies (of 'rightful' male-masculine domination in sport) and 2.) being mobilised by a conservative sports fraternity to dissuade heterosexual women from entering into the sports arena through reliance on the efficacy of the 'lesbian label' and 3.) ostensibly providing as a 'justification' that sport is indeed 'unwomanly.' In terms of this paper such a critique would obviously be rendered null and void because it makes the reductionist assumption that the category of 'woman' will be read as being exhaustively heterosexual and 'feminine' in the first place. In the social context of South Africa, however, this reading is highly probable as has already been demonstrated.

Therefore while greater representation of women's and lesbians' participation in sport can be subversive to the body politics and dominant representations of the field of sport, if this so called subversion takes place only within the narrow framework of exclusionary identity politics which asserts itself through a reliance on difference and categorisation it will only ever have a partial effect. It does not blur the boundaries nor question or problematise 'which' politics, according to 'whose' definitions, such distinctions are drawn. In my view any insistence to categorise, to mark as other from, and self-segregate will never produce a truly tangible transformation of sport or the body politic. I do, however, concede that in order to make an appeal for transformation it is often times necessary to demonstrate, at least initially, the effects of power structures on a certain shared positionality or identity group.

Re-envisioning Inclusion: A Double Take on Gay Sport

It follows thus that the gay sports phenomenon can be understood as a symbol of the growing demand for homosexual cultural activities, the need to experience greater visibility and solidarity and the quest for an 'imagined community.'[280] Pronger[281] further makes it clear that "Gay culture is one that is *not* orthodox. ... Joining/belonging to a gay sport club is an act of resistance to the oppressiveness of orthodox culture. Gay culture is a response to homosexual oppression."

The recent impetus to define lesbian identity in terms of culture – an example of which is gay sport – has challenged the established coupling of sexuality with the 'private' realm and the hegemony of the public/private divide.[282] The breakdown between private and public is marked in Western urban contexts, where there has been some increased tolerance of a person's right to be gay, with escalating right-wing intolerance.[xxvii] The tension between freedom and constraint highlights the significance of the growth of gay sport. Hargreaves[283] argues that the greater the number of lesbians and gay men participating in sport openly as homosexuals, the greater the cultural and political effect and the greater is the sense of a new embodied politics. Gay sport – the pinnacle of which is the Gay Games – has amassed such support that Hargreaves posits it can be characterised as a 'new movement' with politico-personal implications.[284]

In addition Hargreaves notes that liberal reforms do little to change public attitudes. This is gravely evident in South Africa where not even the enshrining of what is often celebrated as 'the most progressive' constitution, has done much to inspire any alteration to the hierarchies of dominance still deeply entrenched in the South African popular imagination[285] – for example South Africa still has one of the highest rates of gender based violence and hate crimes against lesbians. In fact applying stand alone policy seeking to limit discrimination against lesbians in sport would be extremely hard to implement given that, while much assumption is based on appearance, the lesbian body, unlike black or disabled athletes, is in fact invisible.[286] However, argues Hargreaves, taking part openly as a lesbian in sport can have a great effect on reducing prejudice. This sentiment is reinforced in Munt's[287] expression that:

> One of the most effective tools in counteracting homophobia is increased lesbian and gay visibility. Stereotypes and the fear and hatred they perpetuate will lose their power as more lesbian and gay people in sport disclose their identities. Although some people will never accept diversity

[xxvii] It is important to note, as Gunkel and Pitcher (2008) do, the complicity of queer and feminist organisations in Europe and the US with right-wing discourses/politics. For instance how gay rights are mobilised in anti-immigration discourse as well as in recent military interventions, such as those in Iraq and Afghanistan, through the construction of the 'homophobic Muslim.' However in the South African context, some right-wing intolerance has also resulted in a backlash on queer and women's rights (the protection of a woman's right to abortion being a case in point).

> of sexual identity in sport or the general population, research indicates that, for most people, contact with 'out' lesbian and gay people who can embrace their sexual identities reduces prejudice.

From the late 1990's, particularly in Europe, there have been commendable attempts to straddle the sports/sexuality divide in a way that offers both integration as well as tangible transformation. Many gay-orientated national sports organisations have been set-up, such as Gay Integration through Sports and Arts Holland (GISAH) and the British Gay and Lesbian Sport Federation (BGLSF), and similar associations are developing throughout the world. The importance of these types of organisations is that they represent the lesbian (and gay) sports experience as not separated from, but as part of, mainstream sport society. This is a form of reconstituting the materiality of the field of sport. Past examples of such action include powerful lesbian and gay sports lobbies together with other queer pressure groups managing to secure a dedicated visitor's centre for the first time in Olympic history at the 1996 Atlanta games with the objective being to provide and promote the world's gay and lesbian community a "highly visible presence."[288] In 1997, also for the first time, BGLSF had a tent at the Gay Pride Festival in England, encouraging gay athletes to network together and enter mainstream sporting events such as the London Marathon.

Elite athletes who are out, function not only as an inspiration and promise to the lesbian community, but more radically they inject positive images of lesbian women into the mainstream. This strategy is in line with my call for the need for subversive presentations to spill over the boundaries of simple categorisation in order to be truly successful and counter-hegemonic. Lesbian athletes cannot perform, or be represented, only in the confines of a safely demarcated gay space if the real aim is successful transformation. An eminent example of exploding these types of cloistered environs and thus asserting positive representations of lesbian sports women could be found at the FIFA Women's World Cup 2011 held in Germany. In this sports spectacle one could witness a shift towards a casual acceptance of lesbians in sport. In this event some lesbian sports women were able to represent their sexuality openly, in public ceremonies, and be viewed, not as deviants, but simply as sports women. The Women's World Cup 2011 represented an opportunity for Germany specifically, but FIFA and organised sport in general, to reinvent itself in the eyes of, and through the eyes of, the global community. Hopefully this signals the possibility of a further progression towards celebrating positive representations of sports *women*, not as lesser athletes, but more generically as elite sports people.

(SUBVERTING) POWER OR NOT PART II

The Opportunity for Resistance

No one is surprised if men play soccer, but in South Africa (unlike in the United States for example) women are expected to defend their choice.[289] Wright and Clarke[290] point out that the "media strives to rationalise women's participation in rugby [in terms of a discourse on *gender* in South Africa, rugby and soccer may be read synonymously] by confirming to (male) readers that these women are not making any (feminist) statements." There is an intersectional tension between the widespread disbelief that women play solely for enjoyment and not to be 'political,' and the fact that, when questioned, most women footballers say that they simply wanted to play,[291] and it was their exclusion which propagated the political aspect of sport for them. As such soccer, not feminism, is the hook, in most cases, though soccer may indeed come to be a technology of the self for individuals, providing women with a space to resist and even challenge hegemonic gender relations and sexual hierarchies. This phenomenon can be witnessed in many articles published by or commenting on FEW (*Belles of the Ball*, Mail & Guardian, April 23 2010; Naidoo, P. (2006) 'Women's Bodies and the World of Football in South Africa'; *FEW Gathers Black Lesbians to Witness First World Cup Match*, FEW website, June 15 2010). As I pointed out in the analysis of *Lesbian Soccer Team Fight for Rights in SA*, the Chosen FEW functions as a space which creates a refuge from structures of power and discrimination, allowing lesbian sports women to employ technologies of the self which can be read as resisting dominant technologies of power.

However, on a level of representation, individual sports woman's stories are frequently subsumed within a discourse around women's soccer which upholds gendered and sexualised hierarchies of difference and expresses oppressive technologies of power. This finding is made evident through the analyses too: the three texts articulate discourses which speak to notions of sex hierarchies, exclusive body prescriptions, and segregation and control.

<u>Exercising Power</u>

Birrell[292] describes that in some sports athletes compete directly against one another in the sense that they can control, influence, or overpower their opponents. These are usually

team sports. Team sports, have by and large, been associated with men. The symbolic construction of team sports is different from individual sports where athletes typically measure themselves against an inanimate standard such as the clock or a perfect score out of 10 or their previous best. In these types of sports – swimming, gymnastics, horse riding, ice skating, athletics etc – the image of women's participation has met with relatively less confrontation. Birrell theorises that it is primarily team sports that allow athletes to exercise their power directly, and see the immediate, direct consequence of that power. As such there is an argument to be made that playing a team sport like soccer effectively allows women to exercise power and moreover grants women access to an embodied form of power. Therefore playing soccer in itself presents a subversive counter to hegemonic imaginings of 'femininity' and to gender hierarchies. Yet, argue Duncan & Hasbrook,[293] because women are frequently excluded from participation in team sports, especially by the media, women are thus denied the opportunity to wield power and influence in the sporting world. For Duncan & Hasbrook,[294] a representational 'denial of team' and 'denial of game' is tantamount to a symbolic denial of power and symbolic denial of sport respectively. The suggestion is that by denying team or skill, the sport is rendered as not a *true* sport, rather it is a pale imitation of the real (men's) game and the players are rendered as not *real* players. These operations are evident in all three texts: in *Sisters Still Sidelined* players were constructed as feeble (anti)Athletes; in *Caf Acknowledge Gender Complaint* readers believe that Simpore plays too well to be a woman; in *Lesbian Soccer Team Fight for Rights in SA* the Chosen FEW are presented as activists rather than sports women. The method of denial, note Duncan & Hasbrook, might contrast significantly with the outward appearance of the sports broadcast: So it appears as though the media are celebrating women's sport but in the very way in which the commentators describe the game there is an implicit delegitimisation and put down of the game. The result is that media may be publishing a highly ambivalent portrayal of sportswomen. This is explicitly evident in the text analyses of *Sisters Still Sidelined: SA's Female Footballers Struggle to Make Their Mark* and *Lesbian Soccer Team Fight for Rights in SA*.

In this thesis I argue that texts may interfere with hegemonic gender relations if they are read to be subversive. This is, I argue in line with Phelan and others, because the reader has the power to (re)imagine new meanings and thus potentially reproduce a new social order. However, drawing from Ang and Hermes, I posit that while readers may have the ability to subvert texts and reformat power relations, the vast majority of texts in the South

African media, the language conventions used, the self presented readers' interpretation, and the reproduced social events, effectively suggest that, with regard to gender ordering, the centrality of hegemonic relations is being rearticulated.

Admittedly I approach each text from a highly critical perspective, none-the-less I argue that, for the most part, the discourse employed within these representations fails to present subversive alternative (re)presentations which may interfere in the hegemonic order. However I acknowledge that the long reaching ramification and/or social effect a representation might elicit is frequently unintended and complex. By way of example, it was precisely because of the highly problematic representation of the Semenya debacle, that Intersex SA could lend its voice to the critiques of this kind of representation and in so doing gain increased recognition and more strongly affirm their own position in society – and this result *should* be understood as an interference in the hegemonic order.

As such one can describe a tension when it comes to suggesting the social effect which a representation will have – this again is precisely because power and resistance are not simplistic, oppositional exertions. In commenting on whether a text is a resistance opportunity or not, this tension arises since, were there no need to report on these events (which I describe as moments of gender politics in 'crisis') – in other words were performances which transgress the boundaries of categorisation not understood to be moments of crisis and thus newsworthy – it would suggest, in the best case scenario, that society had reached a queer and egalitarian approach to body politics. A similar end result, no reports from the media on issues of gender/sex discrimination, might however indicate a different case entirely: a virtually totalitarian oppressive domination, to the point that the hegemonic order is able to shut down a space into which potentially dissenting voices might speak their positions. Therefore, though I argue that the texts analysed are not radical or subversive, and that all these texts in some way, perhaps unintentionally, reinforce dominant hetero-patriarchal relations, I do not discount that, though I would not classify them as subversive, their very presence opens a tiny opportunity for resistance because it is via the eruptions of these crises, that attention is drawn to the discrimination inherent in hegemonic hetero-patriarchal ideology which might otherwise go unnoticed. One should call attention to, challenge and resist oppression until such time as one's actions become empty. This is the goal – to empty categories of hierarchical meaning; to empty structures of discriminatory logic.

Conclusion

In conclusion, sport as a political field has ensured the hegemonic 'masculinity' of itself. The male body has historically been accepted as the sole appropriate contestant in the realm of sport. This is in part predicated through ideas around a binary body image, which sees male as strong and female as feeble. Sport as an institution produces and reproduces the myth of two apparently natural, mutually exclusive, 'opposite' sexes." Additionally, because sport has been viewed as men's prerogative, women attempting to enter the field have been viewed as intruders. There has furthermore been a flagrant denial of homosexuality in the field of sport. As such lesbian women wishing to engage in sport have come up against even greater resistance and discrimination.

The sexed body can be understood not only as the primary target of disciplinary power, but also as the focal point where these techniques are resisted and frustrated. Despite the current social structures and discourses, or perhaps because this current repression produces its own resistance, more and more women are engaging in sport. As women have gained greater access to the realm of sport, it would seem as if women athletes have been faced with the choice of being either a successful girl or a successful athlete, but not both. Furthermore hegemonic structures continue to attempt to regulate any behaviour which could be deemed too transgressive and thus a threat. Typically the regulation of women in sport has been achieved by means of: 1.) discouraging women from participating by encouraging them to fear being (mis)taken for being a lesbian or 2.) requiring the simultaneous promotion of a neutralising code of 'suitable' 'femininity' if women do participate or 3.) effecting a denial of either their sporting involvement or their status as women if they participate.

The media has been vital in terms of both facilitating and hampering women's entry into sport to varying extents. As more and more women participate in sport, and thanks to previous feminist gains specifically at professional levels, the media has reciprocated by affording women more coverage. This increased media coverage of women's sport is not value-neutral however, and remains heavily reliant on and complicit in (re)citing representations of women which will be palatable for a patriarchal subscribing audience.

Concurrent with capitalism, technological advancement and the rise of consumerism, contemporary society has seen a decline in the relevance of physical strength in the workplace and warfare.[295] Symbolic representations of the male body as a symbol of virility, strength and power have therefore become increasingly important in popular culture as actual inequalities between the sexes are increasingly contested in all areas of life. Perhaps this serves as a possible explanation for the ardent desire to protect the symbolic image of the masculine body and not have it appropriated by others, with the manner in which the 'male' in sport is represented serving as the synecdoche of popular imagination par excellence.

Then, most likely because of such a threat, it appears that skill and power vested in a female body seem to evoke intense concern from hegemonic society. The result of this is that prevailing representations still tend to picture 'athlete' and 'woman' as disparate categories. Women whose bodies transgress the prescribed 'feminine' bodily image condoned by sport and the media are heavily villianised for their perceived transgression.

This could be seen in the text *Caf Acknowledges Gender Complaint*. This text fails to speak to, let alone interrogate, the nature of gender relations and the relationship between sex and gender. In so doing it effectively intimates that there is neither the need nor the space to query the myth of 'naturalised' gender difference aligned to a two-sex model. The media strategy propelling this article seems to be devised around what is *not* said. The article utilises internal structural contradictions as a means for reproducing assumptions. It enacts particular modals which suggest a vacillation between uncertainty and likelihood. It renders a lifeless account of the gender issue through a tendency towards passivisation. Furthermore the discursive style of the text references legal and medical discourses, two discourses which have been heavily implicated in a violent colonial history of oppression. This oppression has found direct expression in relation to the bodies of many peoples, but historically it has predominantly been against the bodies of black women. Contemporarily and within a South African context, it is towards the bodies of *queer*, black, women which the harshest scrutiny, and often accompanying brutality, is directed. This reality reveals that by and large bodies are not afforded an opportunity to present alternative 'meanings' to those which are dominantly accepted. It follows therefore that women whose bodies do not fit into the parameters of social 'femininity' are 'made an example of' and continue to be villianised for their supposed transgression.

On a global scale mass media continues to marginalise women in sport. In recurrent studies conducted in 1989, 1993, 1999 and 2004 by Messner, Duncan and Willms,[296] the researchers found that although more and more women were entering the professional sporting world, there was a lack of change in terms of both quality and quantity of the coverage of women's sport in mainstream broadcasts. This kind of visual denial of women's sporting participation serves to maintain the myth that sports are exclusively by, about, and for men. In truth most 'money' sports, like soccer, are defined according to the most extreme possibilities of the *male* body.[297] The result is that women players are not only battling against gender stereotypes and social expectation simply by means of participating, but in addition, are waging this particular battle on an exclusively male-defined turf. As such the claim of equal opportunity is called into contention – simply offering women access to a male preserve, inherently designed and marketed to favour a male form of the game, does little towards promoting transformation, both at a structural level and on the level of ideology, and limits the establishing of true gender neutrality sans bias in which the categorised difference of male and female may cease to be so important.

In South Africa however, media coverage of women's soccer has certainly increased. The representative articles in this work and the dedicated link to the women's game on the SAFA webpage are testament to this. There has also been an effort to diminish the once obvious gap between comprehensive coverage of the male version of the sport and virtual exclusion of the female version. This was evident in the SABC televised coverage of the 2011 FIFA women's world cup which was virtually on par with that of the mega event of the 2010 FIFA World Cup held in South Africa. Yet when dominant values are entrenched in a large enough proportion of the population, "the media is able to maintain a veneer of objectivity and fairness precisely through the incorporation of a watered-down version of the values of an oppositional group" states Messner.[298] In this vein increased representation does not necessarily signal transformation.

In the text, *Sisters still Sidelined* it is evident while the intention of the writer himself may have been to call attention to inequalities and issue a call on behalf of (already a potentially problematic and paternalistic position) women soccer players, the techniques deployed within the text undermine this. There are almost no decisive or positive attributes used to describe the players. The text does not represent Banyana Banyana as

independent but constantly represents the national women's team in a relation category to the national men's team. In this manner the text (re)presents and reinforces an idea that it is 'unimaginable' to view 'woman' as anything other than the Other outside of the category of 'man.' For Banyana in particular this construction frames them as a team of players who cannot exist in their own right, and moreover the text casts the team as endlessly destined to be perceived as being less capable than the male national team. Because representations do instantiate reality, this hierarchical binary projection is likely to function as a self fulfilling prophecy and, though disappointing, will most likely reinforce hegemonic gender orders and asymmetrical power relations between the sexes. This situation was obviously apparent at the time of circulation: intense media interest was focused on any and every aspect of Bafana Bafana and the FIFA 2010 World Cup, and typically if Banayana Banyana were mentioned by the media it was in terms of framing them as dutiful and loyal supporters of 'our boys.'[299]

The media portrayal of *Lesbian Soccer Team Fight for Rights in SA* is similar to that occurring in *Sisters still Sidelined* in several ways, notably, both media representations offer ambivalent portrayals of women in sport. (Both also present sport as a positive practice and direct attention towards 'promoting' certain discreet identities.) The major mode for producing ambivalence differs slightly between the two articles though. In *Lesbian Soccer Team Fight for Rights in SA* rather than denying team and as a result symbolic power (which is the case operating in *Sisters still Sidelined*) in this article the media denies game and thus sport symbolically. The cause of this is that the article fronts the Chosen FEW primarily as activists not sports women, and the effect is that these women are not given the opportunity to be read popularly as legitimate soccer players. The production and limited space of reception for this text in South Africa, coupled with the fact that the Gay Games evidently were not reported on in the South African mainstream media – this article ostensibly having to substitute for that lack of media – most likely speaks to a concerning 'nationally sanctioned' swell of homophobic sentiments. Besides that important political revelation, this text through its short comings brings into focus the fact that the need to interrogate or transform sport as a political and bodily practice remains greatly overlooked by participants and the media alike.

Though increasing in number, the media's representations of women athletes is still conservative. As such, because of the increase of representations of sports women in the media, Messner[300] points out that, the ideological hegemony of the dominant group may

shift, but is essentially maintained. I contend that the way in which women's soccer is reported, the language which is used, fits within patriarchal discourse and ideally exemplifies the above sentiment. At present the increased coverage of female soccer has done little to challenge hegemonic gender relations and the organisation of sexual difference. Men and women athletes continue to be venerated on different standards. Certain body types continue to be deemed the prerogative of men and are balked at when attributed to women. Sexuality is still highly topical in relation to women's sport and non-conformity to heterosexuality continues to be pathologised as a way of discrediting women's inclusion in a 'male sphere.'

How to resists this then is a question of primary importance. The popular technique of resistance against the discriminatory politics of sport seems to be the creation of a separate space free from such discrimination. This can be seen in the increasing number of 'subversive' spaces, such as all-women/ all-lesbian sport teams. I argue however that these 'seemingly' subversive fixed performances and discreet spaces are not in fact helpful or subversive, because they employ the same logic of essentialism and segregation as the existing dominant and oppressive hierarchies do. This is not in line with queer politics, nor a project to queer sport as a bodily field. The persistence of non-integrated gay and women's sport perpetually reintroduces ghettoised communities within the field of sport. This in effect emphasises the potential to view divergent sports people as Other. Moreover having a plethora of categories, gay sport, women's sport, men's sport, able-bodied sport, disabled sport, with minimal estimated mixing or overlap between such categories, fosters hierarchical perceptions and stratification, does not in reality necessarily promote fair play, and can be violently oppressive for individuals who, for any number of reasons, do not fit neatly into one of these predefined categories. In response, I suggest rather that resistance should take on a form of blurring boundaries; of destabilising categories and in this way cause interference in hegemonic orders and relations.

I am arguing therefore that there must be an interrogation of the politics of the field of sport – both structural and theoretical. Sports as a discursive cultural practice like any other can be opened up and is remade through engagement, reappropriation and reproduction. To a certain extent and more especially as their numbers increase, sports women who are not intentionally looking to transform sport but simply engaging in mainstream sport as a technology of self, open up and redefine the boundaries of sport.

However where the critical transformation can be made is at the level of representation. Through representation and discourse, knowledge and power can be remoulded to affect alternate interpretations, understandings and experiences. For this reason even if there came a time when women dominated sport, if at that time women were still represented as feeble, inappropriate athletes the reality of the situation would go unrecognised.

So currently is the South African mainstream news media's representation of women in soccer interfering in hegemonic organisations of gender relations and sexual difference? The answer is no, not to any great extent. But does the subject of representation have the potential to change the image of sport? Absolutely. Therefore while greater numbers of representations of women's soccer do not necessarily mean less discriminatory representation, it is likely that more representations will offer greater chances to challenge the existing, conservative representations and will help to stimulate a more aware, progressive social context. It is important to note too, that conservative representations, within an increasingly progressive context, may well be read as subversive and so provide an opportunity to assist in challenging gender hierarchies – this was shown to be the case in the initial chapter in relation to the Sasol logo. Furthermore, it is widely accepted (in a logic which stretches from consumerism, to nation building, to psychology, to media studies, to critical theory) that popular media is a very powerful vehicle for influencing and affecting the social.

Popular media, be it contemporary art, news papers, consumer society, almost anything postmodern has a concern with representation.

> Re – presentation, media: mass produced news articles, art: performance of text, body as text, sport: performance for spectators, performance of body: gender. Pastiche, a tasteless copy, mass produced. commodification, making cheap multiplied objects that are unoriginal, worthless imitation, never-ending citationality, copy without original. Appropriation. which cobbles together borrowed elements in the creation of a new work. Recontexualises. what is borrowed in order to create new codes. Subversion. which then resists and troubles the original logic of the dominant power.[xxviii]

[xxviii] Paragraph of no sentence is my own. Illustrating a cycling through, a tying together, appropriation of themes and sections in the thesis as suggestive of a politics of resistance.

One should not take the meaning/s of any field for granted, since no signifier has a self explanatory meaning outside of context, rather it is in the deployment of discourse for specific political purposes which determines what those meanings are. As such the opportunity exists for the meaning of sport to be challenged, subverted and remade. Because the manner in which texts are framed does have both an effect and a relation to power, counter power and legitimacy can be produced through the application and control of alternative language conventions and representation. As such *un*-hegemonic discourses and ideas can be introduced, reinforced and reproduced through the regular use of a representation system. The best representation system for altering hegemonic organisations of gender relations and sexual difference in sport would be a discourse which is underpinned with a logic supporting integration and renouncing pejorative categorisation.

Once sports women are understood and represented as legitimate athletes – not as other or lesser – and once the question of who constitutes a sports person is no longer determined through the conventional gendered understanding of 'male norm:female attempt' then the hegemonic understandings and organisation of gender in sport, once a bastion of maleness, can be opened up and sport redefined. This result would provide significant evidence that transformed sport could function as an exemplary microcosm, which could in fact be used to challenge broader gender hierarchies of discrimination.

As Dworkin & Messner[301] note, a simple "gender lens" which views sport uncritically in terms of undifferentiated and falsely universalized categories of 'men' and 'women' will not take us very far. Different groups of men and women disproportionately benefit from and pay the costs of the current social organisation of sports. Empirical evidence[302] has demonstrated the absence of absolute categorical differences between 'men' and 'women' – instead there is a "continuum of performance" which, when acknowledged, could radically deconstruct dichotomous and problematic sex categories. However rather than shift to a *fundamentalist* deconstruction in which people are reduced to depoliticised, autonomous individuals, the research on gender, bodies and sport suggests that it is of paramount importance to retain and critique the concept of social structures, with attention to the relevance of people's shared positions within social institutions. Dworkin & Messner argue acceptably that in order to further the field of gender and sport one should maintain the feminist impulse to place in the foreground the need to empower the

disadvantaged. At at the same time the sport study framework should also be being expanded to take cognisance of not only the importance of race, class, gender, and sexuality differences among athletes, but it should also, in order to offer more legitimate equally in future, render obsolete the trappings of those perpetually limiting categories.

It therefore follows that this thesis is not an exercise to promote women's sport per se,
but the promotion of queering the bodily field of sport,
coupled with a positive promotion of representations of this phenomenon.

NOTES

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[22] Pelak, C. 2010 'Women and Gender in South African Soccer: A brief history'
[23] Ibid
[24] Roberts, C.1992. *Against the Grain*
[25] This account of organisational history has been abridged directly from Pelak, C. 2010 'Women and Gender in South African Soccer: A brief history.' I acknowledge my indebtedness and the above citation is implied to all content which follows in this section.
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