

# **SPORT AND TRADITIONS OF FEMINIST THEORY**

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## Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge my gratitude to a number of people who have assisted me in the completion of this thesis.

Stanley and Wise suggest “whatever situation I go into, whatever it is, wherever I go and whatever I do involves feminism- Because that’s me. Because that’s a part of my everyday interaction with people that I meet each and every day” (1993, p. 18 cited by Schacht, 1997, p. 4). My first debt of gratitude goes to the large number of feminist and feminist-inspired sport authors who have allowed me to see the world through a different set of eyes, and act in the world with a different set of interests. Many of the practices that I commonly engaged in as a younger athlete or academic have now been revisited with, in my opinion, a more discerning and broad-minded outlook. Where the project that I engaged in here began as an almost purely academic enterprise, I am now happy to admit that my orientation in all of my life’s experiences is feminist. For no other reason, that makes this project a success, and the authors who I have read, outstanding educators.

My feminism probably began as a young male child who enjoyed the support and inspiration provided by three older sisters. So I must also acknowledge Gay, Marg and Louise for demonstrating to me ideas of equity, empowerment, autonomy and freedom, before I fully understood what they meant. Also I owe a debt to my mother, Joan and father, Alan, who allowed and encouraged both their daughters and myself to break free of any of the gendered restrictions on our lives, as well as embodying the type of caring relationship with their children that remains an inspiration to me and a model for me.

My battles with the male establishment in sport also predated my feminist transformation. As a young, junior girls basketball coach I was fortunate to coach several teams who displayed outstanding capabilities as athletes. One of these teams was far superior to the other teams in the girl’s section of the competition, and I suggested that they apply for inclusion in the boy’s competition. The committee running these competitions rejected this bid on the grounds that the boys in the competition may be embarrassed if they lost to the girls. At least the committee did not dress up such

concerns in spurious biological justifications. So I also acknowledge the many hundreds of young female basketballers that I have coached, and I hope that part of my debt to them has been repaid by encouraging them to break free of the constraints that society imposes on them.

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Finally, but most importantly, I offer this thesis as a dedication to my children, Natalie, Matt, Lucy and Sally (the last three were born during the period of the dissertation) and to my wife, Denise (who was unfortunate enough to meet me just as I commenced my candidature). My children continually provide me with unmitigated love and happiness, and have never permitted me to live a day without laughter. And words will not convey the part that Denise played in this project, so I hope it will be sufficient to say that tears of gratitude are welling in my eyes as I write this. Thanks and Love.

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## Abstract

“Sport and Traditions of Feminist Theory” involves a philosophical examination of the opportunities that are offered to females who seek authority in sporting participation, by an examination of the ideas that emanate from various streams of feminist thought. Chapter One introduces the concepts of oppression and authority in sport for females. It also introduces Rortian pragmatism, and four strands of feminist thought which will be utilised throughout the thesis; liberal, standpoint, poststructural and Foucauldian feminism. Finally it briefly suggests the potentials for each of these feminisms to explain and alter the situation of women in sport.

Chapter Two is an elaboration of Rortian liberalism. It explains the concepts of anti-foundationalism, the private/public split and the ideal liberal society. These ideas are then applied to an understanding of the opportunities for freedom in sport. Sport is viewed as a symbolic language medium where athletes have the opportunity to express their private freedom through idiosyncratic action. The chapter then goes on to address feminist concerns with Rortian pragmatism. It will be suggested that the female position in society forces a reformulation of Rortian pragmatism to include the possibility of collective expressions of freedom, and to recognise the systematic oppression of women in, and by, society. The female athlete must negotiate the unenviable position of performing in a practice that has a long history of male control over sporting discourses, and female exclusion from, or incorporation into, those sporting discourses. A feminist – reformed, Rortian pragmatism gives the female some tools with which to break down male control and produce individual and collective changes in the language (practice and theory) of sport.

Chapter Three is a selective history of feminist politics and female participation in sport. The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate that “strong poetry” (i.e. collective and individual language changes) which increased the opportunity for females to speak with authority, were often the result of both contingent conditions in society, and the whims of the dominant class of males. Yet two important points should be made; firstly,

within that limited area of freedom in both politics and sport, women did recreate themselves and their society, and secondly, the public discourse about female athleticism throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries suggests a genealogy of ideas which continues to limit female athletic participation and authority. It would be naïve to suggest that this history of ideas about female athleticism would be broken down simply by legislative change which allows for wider female participation in sport.

Chapter Four investigates one mechanism of gaining authority for females in society and sport, the liberal intervention of equal opportunities. It has been suggested by radical and postmodern feminisms that such an intervention is inadequate because it leaves in place the structure of ideas that oppress females in the first place. Critiques of liberal feminist interventions in sport likewise suggest that such interventions maintain the maleness of reason in sport. Females are asked to participate and be judged in sports that have a male history and male structure of control. However, because Rortian pragmatism recognises that sport is a symbolic medium, liberal interventions should not be discarded. There are a number of sports which women either are not allowed to play or are discouraged from playing. The liberal intervention may allow women to participate in sport, and gain authority through their local and specific languages of participation.

Chapter Five is an application of feminist standpoint theories to women's authority in sport. Feminist standpoints will be suggested as an important method for doubting the certainty of gendered truth statements in sport and society. The truth statements, which oppress women in sport reporting, and reinforce different modes of sport participation, will be deconstructed using feminist standpoint theories. Rortian pragmatism offers tools with which alternate candidates for truth status may be produced and disseminated throughout the sporting world. These alternatives may grant women greater authority in performing and talking about sports.

Chapter Six will look at the postmodern and Foucauldian treatments of the female body as another mechanism of challenging the 'his-story' about female athletes, which continues to limit both their participation in sports and their commentary about sports. It will be suggested that the fuzziness of the athletic body allows women all sorts of opportunities to challenge the maleness of authority in sport. One case study, which will be particularly investigated here, is the suggestion that women athletes could look at

drugs as a mechanism for approaching the narrowly defined (by men) participation standards of male athletes. And as authority in sport is partially granted on the basis of 'objective' sporting performance, females should view the drug ban as potentially a piece of phallogentric legislation designed to maintain male power. Other case studies that could be investigated at a later date are the suspicions about genetic engineering and virtual reality 'sport', and the distaste for female athletes aborting before sporting performance. Are these suspicions and distaste mechanisms of the control of the female athlete's performance which females should oppose?

The final chapter summarises the opportunities that a reformed Rortian pragmatism, reformed by the female question, provides for females in sport. Sport as a bodily activity may offer some potentials and obstacles that are not present in theoretical activities like education and politics. This is not to imply a dualism, but simply to suggest that sport, like dance and theatre, is an activity where the body's movements and actions are symbolically communicative.

PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS ARISING FROM DISSERTATION

Journal/Book Publications

- 2004 Burke, M. "Female Sport and Equal Opportunity Legislation: Protecting Male Discourse by 'Protecting' Female Bodies." *Australian Feminist Studies*, (Accepted for publication, 2004).
- 2003 Burke, M. "Could a 'Woman' Win a Gold Medal in the 'Men's' One Hundred Metres? Female Sport, Drugs and the Transgressive Cyborg Body." *Philosophy in the Contemporary World* (Accepted for Publication, 2003).
- 2003 Burke, M. "Drug-Taking, Bodybuilding and Sporting Women: Utilising 'Otherness' for Feminist Purposes." *Professional Ethics: A Multidisciplinary Journal*. (Accepted for Publication in 2003).
- 2002 Burke, M. "Can Sport Cope with a "Wimpy Virus"? Questions not asked in the HIV and Sport Discourse" *Journal of Philosophy of Sport*, XXIX/1, 2002, pp.54-65.
- 2002 Burke, M. "Joshing and Nudging the Big Boys: Sports Comedy Shows on Television" *Anthology on Gender and Sexuality in Sport*, Edited by Dennis Hemphill and Caroline Symons, Walla Walla Press: Sydney, 2002, pp.81-91.
- 2001 Burke, M. "Obeying Until it Hurts: Child Sexual Abuse in Sport" *Journal of Philosophy of Sport*. Volume XXVIII/2, 2001, pp. 147-160.
- 1999 Burke, M. "Is Boxing Violent? Let's Ask Some Boxers" In *All Part of the Game: Violence and Australian Sport*. Edited by Dennis Hemphill. Petersham, NSW: Walla Walla Press, 1998, pp.111-132.
- 1997 Burke, M. "Drugs in Sport: Have We Practiced too Hard? A Response to Schneider and Butcher." *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport*, volume XXIV, 1997, pp.47-66.
- 1997 Burke M. and Roberts, T.J. "Drugs in Sport: An Issue of Morality or Sentimentality." *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport*, volume XXIV, 1997, pp.99-113.

Non-Refereed Publications

- 1999 Burke, M. "Creating Consensus: A Response to J. Neville Turner." *Bulletin of Sport and Culture*, Number 18, July 1999.
- 1999 Burke, M. and Symons, C. "Re- Asserting Drugs as a Feminist Issue" *Bulletin of Sport and Culture*, Number 17, March, 1999.
- 1998 Burke, M. "Drugs and Postmodern Female 'Identities'- A Response to Tara Magdalinski" *Bulletin of Sport and Culture*, Number 15, July, 1998.

- 1994 Burke, M. "Sport, Feminist Theory and Foucault", *Discourse on Sport: 21st. Annual Conference of the PSSS*. Edited by Simon Eassom. Fort Worth, Texas, June, 1994

Conference Presentations

- 2000 "Child Sexual Abuse and Coaching in Sport" *International Association for the Philosophy of Sport Conference*, Melbourne, Australia, September 1-3, 2000.
- 2000 "Drugs in Sport and Postrational Feminism" *International Association for the Philosophy of Sport Conference*, Melbourne, Australia, September 1-3, 2000.
- 1999 "Obeying Until it Hurts: Child Sexual Abuse in Sports"  
Sport and Social Justice: Policy and Practice Conference, July 1, 1999 (VUT)
- 1999 "Drugs, Sport and Human Rights"  
Human Rights and Sport International Conference, Sydney, Sep. 1, 1999.
- 1997 "Joshing and Nudging the Big Boys"  
Gender, Sexualities and Sport Conference, June 25, 1997 (VUT)
- 1993 "Sport and Foucauldian Feminism"  
Philosophic Society for the Study of Sport Conference, Fort Worth, Texas, Oct. 7-10, 1993

# **Sport and Traditions of Feminist Theory.<sup>1</sup>**

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **Introduction**

It is over twenty years since Jane English (1988, pp. 330-333) suggested three reforms to the contemporary organisation of sport that would advance the position of females within the sporting world. The first strategy was to integrate males and females in sports where there are negligible differences between the sexes, or where the differences between males and females cancel each other out. For example, pistol shooting and equestrian sports rely on categories of skill where the differences between males and females are negligible. Similarly, physiological and anatomical differences between male and female children may be insignificant to sporting performance before the onset of puberty. Also, the integration of children's sports may reduce differences in adult performance, which have partly been the results of social factors such as differences in access and financial support for boys and girls who play sport.

English's (1988, p. 331) second reform was to have separate sex teams, based on physiological criteria, in sports where the differences between men and women in these criteria are relevant to performance in these sports. Further, females should be allowed to 'move up' to the male teams<sup>2</sup> if they are skillful enough to counteract these physiological differences, or if they are physiologically or anatomically eccentric in ways that mean they do not suffer from the differences that other members of their sex experience.<sup>3</sup> Also the social rewards for achievement should be made equal between men's sport and women's sport. The justification for this equalisation of rewards is that it is important for the self-respect of all women to identify with females who are rewarded equally to men for their athletic achievements.

The final suggestion offered by English (1988, pp. 332, 333) was to create new sports that favour the physiological and anatomical advantages which females possess over males. Historically, sports have been developed which favour characteristics, such as height, weight, speed and strength. In statistical terms, most men will have an advantage over most women in these criteria, and this is reflected in the level of achievement of men

and women in sports such as football, basketball or athletics. The development of new women's sports would allow women the opportunity to succeed as the best athlete, rather than being marked as the best *female* athlete in a 'male biased' sport.<sup>4</sup>

Some of the aims of the women's movement in sport have been achieved with the incorporation of reforms along the lines suggested by English (1988). The integration of many junior-sporting competitions allows boys and girls to participate together. Legislation, such as Title IX in the United States and Equal Opportunities Acts in other countries, has endeavoured to equalise the resources, if not the rewards, available for participation in sports for females. Professional tours and competitions in women's sport have gained greater public exposure and created greater financial rewards for the athletes, in sports such as golf, tennis and basketball. Other sports where differences are negligible, such as marathon swimming, have been integrated on some occasions. In 1992, the first female player entered the North American professional ice-hockey league (Theberge, 1998, p. 10 n. 4).

However for all these various gains, there has been an apparent reticence toward the relevance and application of English's (1988, pp. 332, 333) third proposal. The continued participation by women, as if they are (can be) ungendered 'human' athletes, in those sports which carry a male bias in their rules may perpetuate and legitimise any anatomical or physiological bias that exists against females in most sports (Messner, 1994, p. 200). Rather than being critical of this bias reflected in the limited set of modern sports, and offering radical additions to the set, the majority within the women's sporting movement may have accepted and adopted the safer alternative of endorsing the male-biased sport structure as the only structure to operate within. Hence, the sporting movement for women may be reformist and safe, rather than revolutionary and threatening, and the danger is that the structures and discourses that create the situation of women's oppression in sport remain in place. These structures and discourses may even gain strength as one potentially opposing group endorses them. Much of the women's movement has effectively contributed to the desexing of sport and athletes, a move that is necessary in maintaining the apparent naturalness of men's superiority, and hence, authority in sport.

To describe sport as a neutral or desexed practice, and participate in it as a desexed person, rather than challenging its gendered and gendering discourse, is to permit male authority to be granted on the basis of apparently neutral criteria of performance (Theberge, 1998, p. 1)<sup>5</sup>, rather than reveal that male authority is partly taken via the perpetuation of oppressive practices and discourses towards women (Hall, 1996, p. 6). For example, one oppressive practice is the certainty with which many in the sporting community link authority in sport, including intellectual, moral and organisational authority, to these neutral measurements of performance. As Theberge suggests: “The centrality of physical performance to sport and the relentless preoccupation with measurable physical differences between men and women make sport fertile territory for constructing and legitimizing an ideology of masculine superiority” (1998, p. 1). Excellence in sports has been narrowly defined in terms that generally suit male athletes (Watson, 1993, p. 514; Messner, 1994, p. 201), and hence, the perpetuation of male authority. Within the current set of sports there are few in which elite women outperform elite men in terms of the quantifiable criteria of measurement that dominate the contemporary sporting discourse.

Whilst there is much that could be said and done about English’s third proposal, this thesis will also neglect its relevance and application. The thesis will engage with the participation of females in the current limited set of sports. However, it is hoped that this engagement will be innovative, and that this innovation will produce spaces for females to appropriate positions of authority, positions that are difficult to discern within contemporary sporting communities.

### **Purposes Of The Dissertation**

Generally, this thesis is about authority, understood as the capacity to have your explanations of your actions and beliefs treated as credible by the community of which you aspire to be a part. This moves the issue of female opportunity in sport further on from English’s (1988, p. 331) concern for the self-respect of women, to the political notion of the freedom for women involved in sport to be respected publicly as the author of their own stories, and for those stories to be regarded as valuable. The general purpose of this

thesis is to attempt to explain the mechanisms that some selected feminist theories offer women in the production of spaces for such authority in sport.<sup>6</sup>

The first specific goal within the general purpose of this dissertation is to reveal the lack of dialogue that has taken place between feminist social theory and philosophy of sport, and to start to redress this deficiency.<sup>7</sup> This thesis will explore feminist views of society, and endeavour to use these views to gain an increased understanding of female participation and authority in sport. Conversely, the thesis will also suggest that political/mainstream feminism has ignored the situation of the female athlete and their sporting body to its detriment. As Theberge explains, sport can be investigated as an area of male control including “control of access, control of practice and control of the very definitions of sport and gender” (1991b, p. 385), in order to reveal sites of resistance to that control. Some authors argue that the ignorance of sport by feminists is detrimental to the understanding of female subordination because the practice of sport is one of the most overt sites of male dominance (Bennett, Whitaker, Smith and Sablove, 1987, p. 369; Hall, 1985, p. 38; Hall, 1996, p. 89). Aside from some notable exceptions (English 1988; Young 1980, 1988; MacKinnon, 1987; Bryson, 1983, 1987) mainstream feminism has rarely devoted sustained attention to an analysis of sport.<sup>8</sup> Sport is a fertile area to display the way that ideas and practices, as well as bodies, are sexed through discourse. Sport is a practice that makes public the apparent sexed differences in performance between men and women. These differences help to underpin the dominant conceptualisation of human bodies as members of one or the other of two natural, dichotomous and hierarchically organised categories of gender in modern society. Each of the two categories of bodies has differential access to authority in sporting discourse production. As Hall suggests, “sport plays a significant role in the reproduction of a specifically patriarchal social order and could, therefore, be significant in the transformation of that order. At the very least, it can provide a site of resistance” (1985, p. 38).

Participation in, and reflection on, sport can also make obvious both the overlap of male and female performances and bodily characteristics (Kane, 1995), and the opportunities for females to manufacture new bodies and empower themselves politically through physical activity (Bennett *et. al.*, 1987, p. 370; Hall, 1996, p. 50). If females hope

to challenge the power of males in society, as well as in sport, then it may be necessary for them to reconceive the notions of athletic bodies, excellence and authority as being produced to support the dominant discourse of dichotomous and hierarchical sex categories, rather than as accurately described within this discourse. In other words, it will be necessary to re-sex sporting discourse as dominated by males.<sup>9</sup> This will allow the female to tell her story with authority, or at least, reveal that the authority the male possesses in sport is produced by his control of sporting discursive sites.

A second specific goal of this thesis is to extend feminist theories of sport beyond the boundaries that often appear to be in place. There is an implicit essentialism concerning the female body in English's (1988) reforms. It seems that difference in performance, and hence authority, between male and female athletes is related to both different corporeal socialisation patterns and different bodily structures. Whilst there is much that feminists can purportedly do about the former, with regards to the latter the best that females can do is invent new sports. Why not invent new bodies? Poststructural and Foucauldian understandings of the body will be used to denaturalise female sporting bodies so that the sex and constituents of the body are not fixed. This thesis will look at the way that the sports' community maintains the apparently essential differences in male and female bodily structure, by resisting the instability of the sex of the body. As an example, the drug laws will be re-viewed from the position of the poststructural feminist, as an intervention that refuses the opportunity for women to change their bodies. And the controversy surrounding drugs may become trivial when genetic engineering of athletes becomes a possible reality. Will the male-dominated sports community again fall back on naturalistic claims about the human body and sex that serve to limit 'natural' female (and substandard 'natural' male) access to these treatments?

How a male-defined way of sport becomes legitimated as 'the' authoritative way of sport (both playing and commentating) involves questions of power, knowledge and domination, and the control of language and rational space. In this regard, Richard Rorty's work is instructive because he offers suggestions about the techniques of power and dominance and the nature of subjectivity in society, and some mechanisms to promote resistance to the controlling forces in society and social practices. In other words, he offers

suggestions about how individual women, or groups of women, may gain a position in the community from which to speak, and be respectfully listened to, about their past experiences in, and future desires for any practice in their lives, a position that this thesis will consider as useful for creating radical change in sport. The third specific goal of this thesis is to move beyond deconstruction of existing discourses to produce a romantic (or perhaps, less romantic) vision of how sport could be redescribed so that opportunities for the authoritative female voice are increased. Taken together, feminist theories and Rortian pragmatism, may be a theoretical tack which may help in the practical restructuring of sport, or elements of sport, and help oppose the conventional discourses which accompany sport and silence female athletes, so as to provide female athletes with greater space in which to practice their craft in the way that they wish to (Duncan, 1998; Markula, 1995; Maguire and Mansfield, 1998). Many women athletes have not enjoyed such an opportunity in the past.<sup>10</sup>

The achievement of the general purpose, and the specific goals, of the thesis will be carried out in the following way. Chapter Two of this thesis will provide the foundation to the rest of the thesis by explaining important parts of Rortian pragmatism. This explanation will include an antifoundational view of truth, language, humanity and the human body, the production and sustenance of abnormal discourse in an ideal liberal society, and the split between private freedom and public morality that any member of a community must negotiate. Roberts' (1997, p. 67) utilisation of this framework to describe sporting practice as a symbolic language-without-words practice, where individual athletes have the opportunity to remake themselves and their communities will then be explained. Finally, the starting point for the feminist analysis of sport will be that women have been excluded from some uses of sport as a symbolic medium in which to gain authority. Chapter Three will be a historical description of women's participation in sport during the late nineteenth century and the twentieth century. It will demonstrate that female athletes of this period did recreate themselves and, to a lesser degree, their societies by negotiating changes to the dominant scientific, moral and medical discourses of the time about women. But such individual freedom was rarely translated into public discourse that included empowering notions of women's capabilities in sport. Any changes to discourses about women in

society or sport were negotiated within a framework of male power and female subordination. This chapter will provide some much needed historical information necessary in reading and judging the possibilities for more free subjectivities for contemporary female athletes that will be discussed in Chapters Four, Five and Six. Chapter Four will suggest that the shift towards equal opportunities legislation in contemporary sport is useful in publicly challenging the exclusion of women from certain sports. But it is important that equality of access to sports, including sports which were exclusively male such as football and boxing, is translated to the equitable treatment and respect displayed towards female athletes in these sports. At the very least, participation in sports which women were previously excluded from allows women to gain authority through their individual languages of performance. The purpose of Chapter Five is to develop ways that these private languages may be made public in a sporting media, who often ignores, trivialises and objectifies female athletes. Feminist standpoint theory and Rortian pragmatism will be used to demonstrate how privately produced abnormal discourse may be forced into the public media. Finally, Chapter Six of the thesis utilises parts of both Foucauldian and poststructural feminism to argue for the creation of new female bodies which may take epistemic authority<sup>11</sup> via the production of outstanding sporting performance in the narrow terms expressed by males. Once female athletes and reporters win epistemic authority, they and their male allies may work to broaden notions of equity, athleticism, entertainment and excellence within the sporting discourse.

### **Rortian Pragmatism**

Western Enlightenment Liberalism defends, and legislates for, the right of all people to freely speak. Rortian pragmatism recognises that, in practice, to whom any community chooses to listen is constrained by the socialisation and language available to the members of that community. While all members of a society may speak, only certain members of a society say things that can be heard. Put differently, whilst most speakers within any community are granted the right to tell their personal stories as they wish, using the words and phrases that are currently available, some members of society are effectively silenced by those words and phrases. Those oppressed or silenced by the stories normally

told by members face the difficult task of forcing the speakers who use the dominant language to recognise the pain that their words are causing the silenced 'others' (Rorty, 1989, p. 94). Rorty explains this transition as follows;

The Kantian tradition says that we are unconditionally obligated to feel a sense of moral community with all other rational agents.... I am not sure I can tell a rational agent when I see one, but I can distinguish the beings which seem enough like me to let to imagine... them as members of a possible moral community.

I think that Hume, rather than Kant, shows us how we get people to form, larger groups: namely, by appealing to sentimentality, and thereby inviting imaginative identification. Consider the example of emotional attraction between people of different sexes and different cultures. If you want to break down xenophobia, one practical way to do so is to encourage such emotional attraction by making intermarriage legitimate and easy. If you cannot... you can at least tell stories about them, stories in which imagination takes the place of actual physical relationships (1996, p. 48).

For Rorty, an ideal liberal community is one where the freedom to speak in these novel ways is expanded to as many members of the community as possible (1993a, pp. 10, 12; 1996, p. 48). We expand our community by listening with respect to those members who had been excluded or silenced by our words. Yet, such expansion is difficult, because the dominant members of the community explain the 'naturalness', and therefore the 'legitimacy', of their powerful position in terms of their contrast with the excluded other. The members of the dominant community explain themselves and their descriptions as 'different to', and 'better than', the others (Griffiths, 1995, p. 121). So any inclusive expansion of freedoms threatens the position of power which some members of the community occupy, and from which to speak with authority (Rorty, 1993a, pp. 12, 13).<sup>12</sup>

We are more likely to respect the freedoms of people, including the freedom to speak<sup>13</sup>, of those people who are like us, either in ideas or in looks. We are less likely to respect others who threaten our safety, or our identity-forming ideas. Others gain our respect when they tell their stories in such away that we recognise their pain as a consequence of adherence to past ways of speaking, and such recognition is not threatening to us. But we cannot feel such sympathetic respect for people who we have silenced because their words are threatening, and whom we therefore have no chance to hear (Rorty, 1993a, p. 12). So, those who are silenced must find some innovative and powerful

method of putting their story across which is less threatening, and Rorty offers some ideas about methods that may be successful. He states:

...it would be better- more concrete, more specific, more suggestive of possible remedies- to think of them [the people who cannot see how they oppress others]<sup>14</sup> as deprived of two ... concrete things: security and sympathy. By *security* I mean conditions of life sufficiently risk-free to make one's difference from others inessential to one's self-respect, one's sense of worth.... By *sympathy* I mean the sort of reactions that the Athenians had more of after seeing Aeschylus's *The Persians* than before, the sort that white Americans had more of after reading *Uncle Tom's Cabin* than before, the sort that we have more of after watching TV programs about the genocide in Bosnia. Security and sympathy go together, for the same reasons that peace and economic productivity go together. The tougher things are, the more you have to be afraid of, the more dangerous your situation, the less you can afford the time or effort to think about what things might be like for people with whom you don't immediately identify. Sentimental education only works on people who can relax long enough to listen. (1993a, pp. 14-15)

The methods of sentimentally educating people who are secure enough to listen can be considered Rorty's politics.

### **1) Rortian Politics: Making a Private Voice Public**

Nancy Fraser describes the 'politics' of Rorty in the following way:

In Rorty's view, vocabulary choice is always underdetermined. There are no non-question-begging arguments, no reasons not already couched in some vocabulary, that could establish once and for all that one had the *right* vocabulary...

The mere redistribution of truth-values across a set of propositions formulated in some taken-for-granted vocabulary is a paltry thing compared to a change of vocabulary. With vocabulary shifts, urgent questions suddenly lose their point, established practices are drastically modified, entire constellations of culture dissolve to make room for new, heretofore, unimaginable ones. Thus, vocabulary shifts are for Rorty the motor of history, the chief vehicles of intellectual and moral progress...

A vocabulary shift is the literalization of a new metaphor,...the adoption by an entire community of some poet's idiosyncrasy. It follows that poets, in the extended sense are "the unacknowledged legislators of the social world"<sup>3</sup> it is their chance words, coming like bolts from "outside logical space," that determine the shape of culture and society. (1989, pp. 95, 96)

Whilst Fraser (1989; 1990; 1991) is critical of the application of some of Rorty's views to the feminist challenges in society, a criticism that will be considered in Chapter Two of this thesis, she has displayed several of the ingredients that are important to understanding Rorty's position. Rorty's politics relies both on the deconstruction of the dominant ideas that potentially oppress others, and the replacement of these ideas with a new set of ideas that are more inclusive, more tolerant, and less oppressive. This new vision is achieved by sentimental storytelling by oppressed individuals that resonates with powerful groups, but the success of such storytelling may be aided by several ideas drawn from Rortian pragmatism, which will also be discussed in Chapter Two.

Rorty (1992a, pp. 588-591; 1989, pp. 7-9) sees the history of expansions and contractions of freedom in the practices of society, as produced with the changes in/of vocabularies of members of these practice communities. Changes to language occur when the alternative to a set of words and phrases is made to look more plausible than the current set of words. Such change is made necessary when the effects of a certain set of words and phrases are revealed as different to what the community thought they were, and so some change is forced on the community by the revelation of these previously hidden effects. It is possible to imagine some of the changes and conflicting forces that would have to be considered when for example, a devoutly catholic mother, who has always understood homosexuality as venal because that is how it is described by the Catholic community of which she enjoys membership, is confronted by the news that the son that she has always loved and mothered is a homosexual. What changes must she make to her allegiance to the normal vocabulary of her Catholic community? What new sounds, previously viewed as irrational or immoral babble within her community, might she now hear and have to incorporate?

These changes, produced by the revelation of an inadequate language, can be 'forced' on the dominant community in a number of ways. The confidence in saying certain words may be undermined by a comic parody of those words. And so the speaker might be forced to say different things that, for the moment, are immune to such parody. Or, the effects on others of saying certain accepted things may be revealed as painful, and, when this pain is communicated in such a way that the speakers of such words can

empathise with it, the speakers may be forced to review their vocabulary. Both these mechanisms of change will be discussed using sporting examples throughout the thesis.

## ***2) Using Rortian Pragmatism to Create a Public Audience for Women's Abnormal Discourse***

In practice, Moira Gatens suggests that the historical exclusion of women from public space and discourse may be considered a strength, rather than a weakness. However, it will only remain a strength in terms of its critical or radical potential if a space is developed which continues to reject the "... isomorphism between male bodies and political bodies..." (1988, p. 66) or if "... feminists who are in a position of (relative) social power do not use this power to further entrench polarities that function negatively" for females (1988, p. 67). Catherine MacKinnon argues:

I think that the real feminist issue is not whether biological males or biological females hold positions of power, although it is utterly essential that women be there.... My issue is what our identifications are, what our loyalties are, who our community is, to whom we are accountable. If it seems as if this is not very concrete, I think it is because we have no idea what women as women would have to say (1987, p. 77).

In other words, we have little idea what women as women, nor women as black or white, old or young, rich or poor women, would have to say about the notions of 'justice', 'fairness', 'reason', 'intuition' and 'nature'. The feminist hope is that women are able to use this isolated position to produce new understandings of these terms, or to create new terms, which produce a more inclusive society. The solution is not to overcome differences between women, but to revalorise these differences between women in a manner that will take account of as many womens' perceptions, needs, interests and activities as possible, in the production of these new terms.

This revalorisation can occur with the development of an alternative language which challenges the male production of the normal knowledge, whilst avoiding the essentialism and romanticism of some early radical feminist standpoints. Only with the development of an alternative language, one which elevates the differences in, and between, women to an esteemed position in society, will the biases in culture which

account for womens' 'silences' on issues of 'nature', 'justice', 'fairness', 'personhood', and 'the structures and practices of society and of sport' be shown to be biases. Without an alternative language or discourse, opposition to these biases is limited to the rationalist language of the male oppressor, and this language does not have the ability to reveal these biases as abominations. Opposition, if it is voiced in the rationalist language, will be contained (Rorty, 1989, p. 94; Griffiths, 1995, pp. 126, 127). The novel development of different metaphors by feminists will overcome this problem. In Rorty's terms:

By describing themselves in Deweyan [pragmatic]<sup>15</sup> terms, feminists would free themselves from Lovibond's demand for a general theory of oppression- a way of seeing oppression on the basis of race, class, sexual preference, and gender as so many instances of a general failure to treat equals equally. They would thereby avoid the embarrassments of the universalist claim that the term 'human being'- or even the term 'woman'- names an unchanging essence.... Further, they would no longer need to raise what seem to me unanswerable questions about the accuracy of their representations of 'woman's experience.' They would instead see themselves as *creating* such an experience by creating a language, a tradition, and an identity. (1991a, p. 5)

Iris Young (1990b, pp. 315, 317) suggests that a liberating politics should conceive of society not as communities of sameness, but as a multiplicity of actions and struggles that adhere and contradict. Some of these structures producing exploitative effects whilst others create liberating effects. The purpose of any revolutionary politics is to take what is given in history and society and create possible alternatives that are more liberating for the group that desires change. Changes will occur by using the contradictions and tensions created by discourses already present in society, as they affect those members of society subordinated by the dominant language. As previously explained, these recreated discourses will be accepted in society when the pain and suffering caused by the contradictions and tensions in the old discourse are conveyed to listeners in such a way that they no longer feel comfortable saying the words and phrases that they said comfortably in the old way.

Chapter Two of this thesis will explain some of the ideas of Richard Rorty that may be useful in redescribing sporting practice generally, female sporting practice specifically and female sporting bodies. Throughout the rest of this thesis, this pragmatic feminist position will be used to expand on some of the various feminist understandings of the

social practice of sport, in an endeavour to demonstrate ways that the discourses of sport silence female participants. Also Rortian pragmatism will be utilised to create some spaces for alternative and authoritative female discourses in sport.

### **'Defining' Feminist Strands**

'Feminism' is a difficult concept because it embraces a wide variety of positions that, in turn suggest a wide variety of reforms to various practices in society. This difficulty in forming a precise and universal definition has meant that the opponents of feminism have been able to reduce its definition to the images of some of its more extreme adherents. De Sensi (1992, p. 80) views the stereotyping in the following way:

The term *feminism* for both women and men often involves a gross misrepresentation of its real nature and significance. Images of women- not very attractive based on the socially constructed concepts of feminism- who are constantly protesting their status in society, demanding abandonment of family, abortion, and alienating significant others in their lives are the impressions which tend to prevail in the stereotypic connotation of the feminist.

Feminism has been equated with the most obvious and threatening aspects of the term for the powerful in mainstream society, by those same powerful groups who control the delivery of information in society and whose power is undermined by the various ideas of feminism (i.e. media, religious groups, politicians, athletes). As a result, it has been made easier for those who could benefit from feminist viewpoints, for example female athletes, to ignore many of the important and beneficial contributions that feminists have endeavoured to make to public discourse, especially in practices such as sport. The story that has been told by feminists has not received a sympathetic hearing by many in sport (Young, 1997, p. 302; Hall, 1996, p. vi).<sup>16</sup>

There are diverse and divergent strands of thought and political action within the movement of loosely collected traditions that are called feminist. In modern times, this problem of definition has spawned the acknowledgement of a variety of feminisms, including liberal feminism, radical feminism, black feminism, gay feminism, postmodern feminism, and existential feminism amongst others. What all these groups share is a concern with improving the position of women in society.

The danger in such a diverse community of feminists is, according to Delmar, the separation between the various factions, and the internal squabbles amongst the members of the feminist community; "...each group with its own carefully preserved sense of identity. Each for itself is the only worthwhile feminism; others are ignored except to be criticized" (1986, p. 9). The quest for feminist 'unity' or feminist 'truth' has resulted in this marginalisation as each group endeavours to assert its authority, its 'true' discourse of female consciousness and feminist political action, its own version of the quest of male rationalism. What is revealed by this drive to produce feminist unity is that identity of consciousness is neither achievable nor useful because females feel oppression in a variety of ways. The various strands of feminism arise because of the effects of personal histories of individual females that result in a plethora of different concerns for individuals.

This difference in explanations, campaigns and solutions displays the plurality of possible feminist positions, and such difference should be celebrated as a potential strength of opportunity rather than seen as a lack of 'true' understanding. In this thesis, the usefulness of *some* of these strands of feminism will be discussed. Hence, the purpose of this thesis is to treat the various feminisms as stalls at a bazaar, selecting what is useful from each, without limiting the feminist project to any one stall (Rorty, 1991c, p. 209; Harding, 1989, p. 200).<sup>17</sup> Or, as Iris Young asserts (1997, pp. 152, 153), we would be better served as feminists if we recognised that, at certain times it will be necessary to argue as a liberal feminist, concerned with public issues such as the inequality of funding for female sports bodies, or the lack of access to certain sports for females. At other times, it will be more useful to argue in the terms of the radical feminists and challenge the male bias in the descriptions of sporting excellence or sporting entertainment. Adherence to any one feminist tradition will not allow for the use of the wide variety of political interventions that the various feminisms have developed. By presenting the three feminist traditions that I will investigate in the chronological order in which they arose, I do not wish to imply that later formulations of feminism completely, or even partially, superseded previous formulations in some progressive historical sense.

It is unfortunate but limitations of space and time necessitate the focus on only some of the feminist streams. I will completely ignore the socialist and Marxist feminists,

the queer theorists, many Continental feminists, and many feminists from the three streams, liberal, standpoint, and poststructural/Foucauldian feminisms, I have chosen to use. This does not indicate that I think the strands of feminism I have chosen to ignore cannot be useful to an understanding of female authority in sport. It simply means that at this point in time, I have recognised certain uses of the selected feminisms to the achievement of the main goal of this dissertation, the production of authoritative positions for females in sport. In subsequent works, other feminisms may reveal themselves to me as also useful in producing these positions for women in sport.

### **Strands Of Feminism- Trying To Discover Authoritative Political Voices**

#### ***1) Liberal feminism***

According to Moira Gatens, the seventeenth century was witness to the birth of the ideas of the free human subject and the modern political state. The free human subject, through reason, was thought to be able to manage and dominate the passions of the body, and was free to devise and accept social rules. The modern political state was represented as the product of collective reason, one designed to govern and manage the needs and desires of its subjects. The modern state created the ‘artificial man’ of reason and right desire (1988, p. 61).

Early liberal feminist theories accepted the validity of all these claims. Their contention was that females had been excluded from this modern state because of “... an insidious assumption that they are less rational and more natural than men” (di Stefano, 1990, p. 67). Differences between males and females had been used to legitimise the unequal treatment of females in the modern political state. Mary Wollstonecraft and J.S. Mill argued that women are trained to be irrational. With proper education, women were capable of the human capacity for reason. Women should be allowed to assume their rightful place as the equals of men in society. The tools for this transition are available in the ideas of ‘humanity’, ‘reason’, ‘respect’ and ‘justice’ already present in the modern state.

The third and fourth chapters of this thesis will look at the usefulness of liberal feminist theory in terms of advancing women’s position in sport; that is, in terms of

creating a radical/revolutionary change to the structure and discourse of sport so that women have greater opportunity to be authoritative. Whilst liberal feminism has been strongly criticised as reinforcing the current patriarchal structures of society, it will be suggested that early liberal feminists in society and in sport, for all of their ‘faults’<sup>18</sup>, created new ways of speaking authoritatively, which were previously seen as eccentric. Hence, liberal feminists commenced a tradition of talking differently to others in the community, a tradition that led to the development of a variety of feminisms.<sup>19</sup>

Secondly, it will also be suggested, following from Rorty (1989, p. 53; 1993a, pp. 14, 15)<sup>20</sup>, that radical change is more likely to occur when the dominant group is secure and wealthy enough to be able to listen to the stories of the oppressed with a sympathetic ear, and the oppressed group can produce some new way of thinking about their relationship with their oppressors. It is unlikely that members of either group who feel economically or physically threatened will come up with new and creative ways of thinking about society and sport so that there are no longer oppressed people. People who are oppressed are usually too busy trying to survive, to give time to the creation of new languages. It may be that liberal legislative interventions such as the Title IX Act in United States colleges, give female athletes the security and position necessary so that they may produce change, whilst also suggesting that male sport is secure enough to sympathetically encounter female stories. But the question becomes whether those who benefit from the liberal intervention of Title IX, will be able to identify with the oppression that other female athletes feel, and produce a radical redescription of sport which is liberating for all females? Or will they identify with, and speak in the words of, the successful and oppressive males in sport? In other words, do successful female athletes identify with the we-community of females, or with the we-community of athletes who speak in male languages? Paraphrasing Moira Gatens (1988), will the historical exclusion of women from sport produce different and less oppressive languages of sport, or will the inclusion of women in sport further entrench the very polarities in sporting discourse that oppress women in sport?

## ***2) Feminist Standpoint Theory***

The second strand of feminism that I have chosen to investigate is feminist standpoint theory. But to understand the development of feminist standpoints, it is important to recognise the historical background of radical feminism in that development. The second-wave radical feminists opposed the liberals' claims about the neutrality of institutional structures and ideas in the modern state. These feminists claimed that the mere positioning of females into institutions and practices, which have been traditionally occupied and controlled by males, would not, by itself, produce an authoritative female voice. The earliest radical feminists, such as Kate Millett (1969), claimed that the oppressed position of women in patriarchal society was due to the social construction of gender-appropriate behaviour which limited women's access to positions of authority in that society. Women were trained to accept and value the virtues of passivity, nurturance, deference and care for others. These virtues were enacted in their roles as wife or lover, mother, homemaker or in the limited employment opportunities that women were deemed capable of filling. The response by these early radical feminists was to oppose these gender-roles and imagine a society where androgyny was a possibility.

One of the criticisms of the earliest radical feminists was that the language that they chose to use maintained the negative valuation of women's roles and abilities that had been produced in patriarchal discourse. In contrast, anti-rationalist, radical theories of feminism oppose the denigration of the feminised nature that is contained in both the patriarchal and the liberal perspectives. This view celebrates the feminised 'irrational', as the alternative to, and not the female deficiency of, the supposedly gender neutral terms of rationalism and androgyny. It suggests that 'intuition', 'nature', 'the body' and 'natural contingency', all offer valid, but different, descriptions. In this school of feminism, the social order will better accommodate women "... in their feminized difference rather than as imperfect copies of the Everyman" (di Stefano, 1990, p. 67).

Anti-rationalists believe that the liberal discourses of 'reason', 'freedom', 'human nature' and 'gender difference' are historically and culturally specific and biased in favour of those people in power. In the modern state, and in sport, these people of power are males. Feminist anti-rationalism levels its criticism not at the fairness or unfairness of

current configurations of society, nor at understandings of gender labels in society, but at the legitimacy of the rational/masculine; irrational/feminine construct. Or, as McMillan suggests, the problem with the rationalist perspective is that it uncritically accepts the hierarchical division between femininity and masculinity. This acceptance is demonstrated by the attempts by liberal feminists, and some of the early radical feminists, to break the links between women, nature and irrationality, rather than to contest the dichotomous link in this construction (McMillan, 1982, pp. 55, 56), and the difference in value of the categories of people that result from it. Contemporary radical feminists hope to redescribe the elements of female consciousness and understanding in such a way that they are no longer denigrated. In order to achieve this, the radical feminists both break down or deconstruct the existing structures and ideas that maintain the priority of the rationalist patriarchal perspective, and also create new structures and ideas that produce new freedoms and opportunities for women from their own experiences.

Denise Thompson exemplifies this feminist standpoint position. For her,

Feminism is centrally concerned with questions of power, power in the sense of relations of domination/subordination, and power in the sense of ability, capacity and opportunity to control the conditions of one's own existence.... (1994, p. 173)

Thompson goes on to suggest that "...the idea of male supremacy ...is that the male represents the 'human' norm at the expense of human status for women" (1994, p. 174). The interests, values, virtues and descriptions which men use are set up as human categories. At the same time, females are excluded from these categories and the production of discourse about these categories. As a result, the interests and values of women are ignored or trivialised, and the status of women exists in relation to their subservient role towards men. Thompson states that the status of women is "...at best, a second-rate 'human' status acquired through relations of subordination to men; at worst, women's needs and interests are ignored, sometimes our very existence obliterated" (1994, p. 175).

But what is particularly disabling for women is that the male language includes women in compliant roles of support. It achieves this through a series of subtle descriptions, including the 'naturalness' of heterosexual desire, the 'pleasure' produced by

romantic love and marriage, the ‘goodness’ of female’s nurturing character and the ‘protection and comfort’ which comes from men controlling positions of power. So, these subtle mechanisms suggest ‘pleasures’ that the women gains in agreeing to consent to the descriptions provided for her by the dominant discourse, and consent is a more efficient and stronger form of ensuring compliance, than coercion. The ‘naturalness’ of both heterosexual desire and woman’s nurturing role has had a particularly limiting effect on the type of sports in which women are seen to properly participate<sup>21</sup>, the intensity of that participation, the media coverage and administration of these sports and athletes, the authority of female athletes and the opportunities for females to redefine these limits.

In practical terms, this school of feminism looks to use difference as a power to oppose the hierarchy in society. Inclusion of females in the male-neutral institutions of law, education and sport will only perpetuate the myth of female as inferior or inadequate. Inclusion will, at some time, become necessary as a starting-point to enunciate these myths in a public forum. However, it is important that inclusion does not occur before females decide what alternatives they can offer to the current structures of society. Yet the production of alternative standpoints is only one step in a path to greater authority for females. Standpoint feminists hope to go further, and force their descriptions into the public forum for consideration by others. Rortian pragmatism may be useful in providing some tools with which the male supremacist community is ‘forced’ to listen to the descriptions produced by feminists (Rorty, 1991a), and possibly take them up in the reformation of society, and of sport.

Chapter Five will both elaborate on this introduction to the feminist standpoint position, and apply discourses produced by this position to the situation of women in the sporting media. Whilst the investigation of females in the sports media abstracts one mechanism of female oppression from an interlocking system of that oppression which includes corporeal socialisation, control of sporting organisations and legislative bodies, sports typing and more, the point of this chapter is to demonstrate the opportunities for gaining epistemic authority for females in the media. Demonstrating how such authority may be gained in one abstracted area of the female sporting life may be indicative of how the dominance of males may be resisted through other areas of life.

### **3) Poststructural and Foucauldian Feminism**

The third strand of feminism to be used is a combination of poststructural feminism with Foucauldian feminism. A poststructural feminist view suggests that gender is an oppressive fiction which "... runs roughshod over multiple differences among and within women who are ill-served by a conception of gender as basic" (di Stefano, 1990, p. 65). According to Bordo, attempts to "theorize culture or history along gender lines... [serves]<sup>22</sup> to homogenize diversity and obscure particularity" (1988, p. 619). In di Stefano's terms:

The argument here is that a notion of gender as basic merely serves to reify, rather than to critically contrast, transform and escape the imposed myth of difference, while it ignores other crucial and as yet subjugated areas of difference. (1990, p. 65)

Iris Young argues that the opposition of genders in liberal and early radical feminism arises from structures of description present in modern culture and language, and any attempt to reverse the valuation of these gender descriptions does not provide a genuine alternative to patriarchal society (1990b, p. 307). Post-rationalism offers new, decentred, nonidentical, fractured narratives of opposition to the modern state. A proliferation of differences is counterposed to the singular difference of gender (di Stefano, 1990, p. 67). What a post-rational feminist adds to the anti-rationalist position is to lose the privileged position of gender as the basis for this skepticism, and attune to the multiple and varied differences which produce this skepticism amongst a variety of people.

Foucault offers a critical reading of many of the subjects discussed by poststructural feminists, including power, knowledge, the body, subjectivity and resistance.<sup>23</sup> According to Arnold Davidson (1986, p. 221), three areas of analysis can be found in the writings of Michel Foucault, each area dealing with a separate form and topic of analysis. Foucault's earliest works deal with systems of knowledge, using an archaeological method of investigation. The middle period of Foucault's work deals with modalities of power, using the genealogical method. Foucault's final writings in the later volumes of *The History of Sexuality* are his ethical theory dealing with the self's relationship to itself. The latter two methods of analysis should be viewed as adding to, rather than replacing, the archaeological work.

In *The Subject and Power*, Michel Foucault states “My objective... has been to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects” (Foucault, 1982, p. 229). His purpose, through the use of his archaeological and genealogical methods, is to provide an analysis and critique of the methods modern societies use to control and discipline their populations by sanctioning certain knowledge claims and practices; that is, certain forms of subjectivity. Hence, any society, because of its historical development of laws, mores and beliefs, is active in proscribing the choices that the person can make in terms of being a subject (Grosz, 1990b, p. 84; Ewald, 1992, p. 170). Foucault’s ethics deals with the opportunities taken by individuals to liberate themselves from the disciplining effects of power in these rigid systems of knowledge (Ostrander, 1988, p. 174; Fox, 1998, p. 424). Foucault’s earlier genealogies of the domination of medical, religious and social sciences over the human subject (1975; 1976)<sup>24</sup> are complemented by analyses of technologies of subjectivification (1984a; 1984b). These technologies allow the individual to “... *actively* fashion their own identities” (McNay, 1992, p. 3). Through this work on themselves, individuals can escape the normalising disciplines of power. Each of these methodologies will be described in greater detail in Chapter Six of the thesis.

The archaeological and genealogical writings of Foucault have shared several important insights with feminist theory. The idea that sex is not a natural quality, but is the effect of historically specific power relations, has provided feminists with an analytical tool for revealing the disciplined condition of females’ existence (Grosz, 1990b, p. 92; McLaren, 1997, p. 109). The suggestion that the body is produced through power, and is a cultural, rather than a natural, entity, has also been used as an effective rebuttal against any essentialising theory of the female, whether feminist or patriarchal (Bailey, 1993, p. 101; Jagger, 1988, p. 99). And the idea that power has diffuse and personal effects, has allowed different females to explain their experiences of patriarchal domination in their own way, rather than being lumped together in a general category of oppression (Young, 1990b, p. 320; Ahmed, 1996, p. 75). Foucault’s work also locates resistance to power structures in society at the level of micropolitics; that is, at the level of relationships and compromises

between people in small groups (Fraser, 1989, p. 18; Grosz, 1990b, p. 90). This locates resistance at points where many females have the opportunity to effect change.

### **Utilising These Feminism Strands in a Discussion of Sport**

The three strands of feminism have been used by a variety of authors to discuss the position of females in sport. The last section of this introductory chapter will briefly describe some of the work of authors that utilise these feminist strands. This work will be more fully described in the chapters that deal with each of the feminist strands.

Ann Hall (1996, p. 11), the feminist sport sociologist, describes three types of research about gender in sport. Categorical research investigates the differences in athletic participation and performance between the genders, and tries to explain these differences in terms of biological or sociocultural factors. Distributive research looks at the distribution of resources between the genders in sport and focuses on inequality. Both these types of research treat the two genders as distinct and unrelated entities. In contrast, relational research investigates the historical and social construction of sport that produces the reinforcement of the idea that men are powerful and women are powerless. Sport is viewed as one of a number of practices where this relationship between the two genders is made explicit, and is maintained. Feminist research tries to create a discourse where this unequal relationship of power may be broken down.<sup>25</sup> Hall (1996), Kane (1995, p.191) and Shogan (1988, p.272) all argue that the shift towards a research which deals with the relationship between femininity and masculinity, and females and males, in sport has been an important development in feminist critiques of sport. As Kane describes, feminist research in sport:

has evolved from an initial stage of analysis that produced numerous descriptive studies of women's participation patterns and their lack of access to various resources- what Ann Hall has referred to as the "add women and stir" phase- to an increasingly sophisticated feminist analysis in which relational issues of power and domination between women and men have become the primary focus ( Andrews, 1993; Birrell, 1988; Hall, 1987; Whitson, 1990). This latter body of knowledge has produced an impressive critique on the fundamental role sport plays in producing and maintaining patriarchal ideologies and arrangements with respect to gender. At the heart of this critique is the notion of biological determinism whereby all human beings are assumed to fit, by nature, into unambiguous and oppositional bipolar

categories of “female” and “male” (Frye, 1983; Kessler & McKenna, 1978). Within this biology-as-destiny paradigm, the apparent given-by-nature dichotomous category of gender forces a polarization between the sexes that ignores overlap; differences are systematically emphasized whereas similarities are ignored (Davis & Delano, 1992). (1995, p. 191)

Both Shogan (1988) and MacKinnon (1987, pp. 117-124) agree that this shift towards investigating the relationship between the genders is crucial to any understanding of male power in sport and society. As Shogan explains:

Remedies to inequality in sport cannot occur if gender is seen to be an irrelevant characteristic which we must ignore in order to be just. This is because inequality is a necessary condition of gender. If gender is ignored, so too will inequality be ignored. As Barbara Houston writes: “...In short, gender is taken to be totally irrelevant to social organization. I have no special quarrel with the claim that this is precisely how a good, just society ought to treat gender. My worry is that this ideal is not especially helpful in the detection and elimination of present gender bias” (1988, p. 274).

Recognition of the priority of male dominance in society will mean that women will also be better able to recognise how any form of female resistance to that dominance will invoke more subtle methods of maintaining the dominance. Lois Bryson suggests that there are a number of layers of oppressive practices which reinforce sport as a male domain, and each layer “ensnares a certain number of female participants” (1987, p. 350). If one mechanism for maintaining male dominance is overcome, then the next mechanism replaces it. The female athlete is fighting against male dominance, and may need a variety of programs to fight the changing mechanisms of maintaining that dominance.

### ***1) Liberal Feminism and Sporting Authority in Participation***

The liberal program for women in sport would seem to align with the first two of English's (1988, pp. 330, 331) proposed reforms in sport which were outlined in the introduction of this chapter. The exclusion of females, based on their gender rather than their sporting ability, would seem to mirror the exclusion of women from the political state based on characteristics assumed to be associated with their gender. This exclusion has been fought against and transcended by many females in sport, as indicated earlier in the introduction. Each transcendence occurred because individual females challenged the

‘truth’ or ‘naturalness’ of the dominant sporting discourse of the time which excluded female participation, in such a way that adherents to that discourse were forced to reform their vocabularies.<sup>26</sup>

Yet it was also suggested that this course of action may be at least an incomplete response by females, who wish to take control of the discourse which is used to describe them. The inclusion of women into ‘male-biased’ sports, whilst challenging the oppressive discourse at the level of participation, may perpetuate many of the biases which restrain females’ participation in sport, and thus restrict the potential for the development of radically different structures and languages of sport produced by females. In addition, it may allow the male sports media to use integrated sports as an ‘objective’ indicator of the natural superiority of men (Messner, 1994, p. 201; Palzkill, 1990, p. 221).

Most modern sports were developed to distinguish between males, in terms of features that were valued by males. So the criteria chosen to distinguish males were skills important to males. Yet these ‘skills’ were equally important in distinguishing males from females. Sport can be considered as one of several examples of practices, which together create the prevailing *episteme* of the dominant male and the fragile and subjugated female. This early contrast was maintained by the simple exclusion of females from sport, a practice which still exists in many of our most popular sports today, and a practice which was exemplified in the 1978 cliff diving championships, a competition which is held annually at Acapulco. A Texan woman qualified for the finals. However the Mexican men threatened to withdraw from the finals if she did not. The organising committee subsequently disqualified her. As one of the Mexican competitors explained: “This is a death-defying activity- the men are taking a great gamble to prove their courage. What would be the point if everyone saw that a woman could do the same?” (Bryson, 1983, p. 422).

Mary Jo Kane explains that “We must explicitly outline the role segregation plays when women are denied opportunities to participate or are denied access to various resources because they are said to possess innately inferior capacities” (1995, p. 212). Segregation is most ferociously defended when women wish to enter male sports, or when women in male sports begin to outperform men. The sport of skeet shooting was integrated

at the Olympics until 1992 when a Chinese woman, Shan Zang, did so well that she won the gold medal and tied the world record. The IOC responded by segregating the event (Kane, 1995, p. 214 n. 7). Segregation serves to protect men from the recognition that there is an overlap between male and female performance. Integration exposes a continuum of performance where any differences are only partially explained by gender. Little else could explain the hostility, and the abuse of certain principles underlying clauses in equal opportunities legislations, which arise when women try to participate on male sporting teams.

If one's identity as a male is displayed by one's contrast with others (i.e. females), and sport is one of the remaining areas where that contrast is overtly performed and displayed, then allowing talented females to display the overlap of the sexes is disruptive to this particular moral order of the patriarchal community, where men are capable and authoritative and women are not. As one man said: "A woman can do the same job as I can do - maybe even be my boss. But I'll be *damned* if she can go on the football field and take a hit from Ronnie Lott" (Messner, 1994, p. 200). Apart from the likelihood that most men could not 'take the hit' either (Messner, 1988, p. 202), a suggestion which implies overlapping rather than dichotomous sex categories, it is an interesting statement because *all* women are not allowed to be on the football field with Ronnie Lott, because they are formally excluded from participating in football against men. And so, the liberal starting point of equal opportunities becomes a crucial mechanism in dealing with the maleness of authority in some sport. One way of gaining authority in sports such as football and boxing may be to be given the legislative opportunity to play such sports and possibly create new languages of performance. Chapter Four of this thesis will investigate the usefulness of equal opportunity legislation in producing authoritative positions for women in sport.

## ***2) Feminist Standpoints and Sporting Authority in Commentary***

The entrance of females into some sports, so that they were no longer exclusively male activities, created problems for the preservation of male knowledge/power in sport. How were the masculine biases in the rules, practices and discourses of sport communicated as 'natural' or 'normal' to those who were subjugated by them? And how

has this communication remained in place in contemporary sport? The inclusion of females into more sports, was the 'accident', which demanded the creation of newer and subtler discourses by men in order to maintain their powerful position in the modern versions of these sports.

Several methods of silencing females in sport arose, and have been revealed by feminist historians, ethicists and sociologists of sport. There are the medical, legal and scientific pronouncements against female participation in sport, still current in discussing women's participation in traditionally male sports such as boxing and football (McArdle, 1999). Another act of silencing performed in many communities is the active education and positive reinforcement of female passivity, both generally and in sport (Young, 1980; Palzkill, 1990; Lenskyj, 1987, 1994; Bryson, 1983; Landers and Fine, 1996). The use of homophobic discourses to 'silence' female athletes who displayed man-like skill is also responsible for stifling the authority due to exemplary female sporting performance (Lenskyj, 1990, 1994, 1995; Burroughs, Ashburn and Seebohm, 1995; Hall, 1987; Daddario, 1995). And finally, the trivialisation and sexualisation of female performance by the sports (male) media is another powerful silencing act performed by the dominant speakers in the sports community (Duncan 1990, 1993; Lenskyj, 1990, 1995, 1998; Mikosza and Phillips, 1999; Hargreaves, 1994; Messner, 1988; Boutilier and San Giovanni 1983; Halbert and Latimer, 1994, Daddario, 1995). All of these silencing acts maintain the male athlete and male sport as the standard, with the female athlete treated as an 'add-on' to the supposedly natural and hierarchical structure of sport (Fairchild, 1994, pp. 67, 68). Some of these silencing acts will be discussed briefly in Chapter Five of the thesis.

If these mechanisms did not catch all female athletes, then to further support the idea of 'natural', dichotomous and hierarchical categories of the sexed body, the 'rational' principles of fairness and equality of opportunity were embraced and used by males to display female inferiority. Let females participate in all sports, as this will show their inferiority to males. Willis describes the contemporary scientific discourse in the following way:

Ideology can claim biological discrepancy fully for its own: to present cultural legitimations as biological factors... The fact that no-one can deny female difference becomes the fact of female sports inferiority, becomes the fact that

females are innately different from men, becomes the fact that women who stray across defining boundaries are in a parlous [sic.] state. An ideological view comes to be deposited in our culture as a common sense assumption- of course women are different and inferior (1982, p. 130 cited by Theberge, 1991a, p. 132)

The formal organisation of sport which favours male's physiological advantages over females, allows for the "ideology of equality" to display female's inferiority (Messner, 1988, p. 206; 1992, pp. 166-168). Whilst this inferiority is no longer reliant on laws of exclusion or trivialisation, it provides equally powerful support for the dominant ideology, by being based on fair and equitable principles, and being legitimated by the new sports science disciplines. According to Duncan: "Focusing on female difference is a political strategy that places women in a position of weakness" (1990, p. 40). The female can find no enemy to fight against within the rationalist discourse; truth, science, justice, fairness and objective measures of performance appear to all be non-sexist principles. And the female, informed by the 'truth' of objective science agrees to the foundations of her oppression, as a member of a fixed category of humans that are sexed female.

All these silencing acts maintain the position of men as strong and authoritative speakers in sport. Female athletes do not know the games as well as male athletes; a belief produced because of their inferior performances. This inferiority is displayed in the apparently neutral and objective measurements of results. Hence, regardless of the reasons for producing these differences in results (and knowledge), females are denied access to the institutional positions in the sports media, administration and coaching that control public morality and knowledge, because of these results.<sup>27</sup> And where female performance is displayed as not inferior, a secondary set of undermining epitaphs are ascribed to the performer; 'drug-taker', 'lesbian', 'masculine', or 'ugly', that are equally as powerful in denying females access to authoritative positions in sport.

All sports occur as public spectacles, where the opportunity to create new vocabularies is scrutinised by a public wary of change, and largely under the control of powerful speakers in sport. So what can females, who feel oppressed by the dominance of certain ideas produced by the strong (male) speakers within the community of athletes, do? To begin with, the female would do well to inform the wider, and judgmental, public about

*her* attachment to *her* description of *her* specific practice; that is, assert her right to freedom of speech. What the female may do is tell her particular story using words and phrases which describe the pain and suffering that she endures whilst her practice or her body is redescribed in words by the media that do not convey the attachment she has to her craft or herself.

How might the female athlete produce this manipulation of feelings within the sporting community, such that her feminist standpoint is given credibility within the broader sporting community? She may point to the ‘possessions’ she owns as an athlete; those possessions being her skill at her practice and the creative control over her own ‘language-without-words’ vocabulary of that practice and her body (Roberts, 1997; 1998c). What happens when these personally valuable possessions are trivialised by being redescribed as ‘butch’, ‘abnormal’, ‘masculine’, ‘useless’ or ‘second-rate’ by the sporting community and media? What does the female athlete suffer when her body is described in ways that she cannot identify with? The female suffers the pain and suffering of being redescribed, using someone else’s words and phrases, a pain which is familiar to anyone who has suffered such a fate and been silenced by such descriptions. As Rorty comments:

...most people do not want to be redescribed. They want to be taken on their own terms- taken seriously just as they are and just as they talk.... the best way to cause people long-lasting pain is to humiliate them by making the things that seemed most important to them look futile, obsolete and powerless. Consider what happens when a child’s precious possessions- the little things around which he weaves his fantasies that make him a little different from all other children- are described as “trash,” and thrown away. Or consider what happens when these possessions are made to look ridiculous alongside the possessions of another richer child (1989, pp. 89-90)

This suffering is the loss of the opportunity to search for and experience private autonomy and public authority in the social practice of sport. Such a search is explained by Blake as; “I must create my own system, or be enslaved by another man’s” (Rorty, 1991d, p. 193), and such enslavement to the system of male-defined sport is a regular part of the female athlete’s experience. The female athlete performs her sport within a limited array of choices of appropriate language of play, all of which make clear her inferiority to the male

athlete. She must create ways of expanding the discourse of the sporting practice community and media.

Chapter Five will investigate how the female athlete, who experiences the private freedom possible in sporting participation, can force her expanded discourse into the public media. As stated above, many authors have displayed the ways that the sports media silences the standpoints produced by women athletes and women reporters. This thesis proposes the use of Rortian pragmatism as a set of tools with which the authoritative female may voice her standpoint on sport publicly and have it listened to with respect.

### ***3) Poststructural and Foucauldian Feminism and The Authoritative Sporting Body***

Far more subtle and controlling acts of silencing were those that the female sport's community took up as beneficial, profitable and pleasurable for female athletes. Some institutions which governed female sports such as ice dancing, synchronised swimming or women's bodybuilding, opposed the 'masculinisation' (or athleticism) of their athletes by legislating against certain practices such as excessive muscle bulk, and requiring other practices such as make-up, which maintained the trivialisation and stigmatisation of females as second-class athletes. Other sports, such as netball, basketball, cricket, athletics and hockey, promoted the use of body-tight clothing to highlight the sexuality (heterosexuality) and eroticism of their athletes (Theberge, 1991b, p. 390; Kolnes, 1995, p. 72). Other female athletes participated in the production of soft-porn calendars which reinforced the idea that athleticism and emphasised femininity are compatible (Lenskyj, 1994, 1995, 1998; Mikosza and Phillips, 1999).

Hence, Iris Young's suggestion that "sport and females are mutually exclusive categories" (1988, p. 336) is validated by some women at the level of their bodywork. It involves women accepting practices in order to be included in the community of appropriately sexed humans, even when such practices make them marginal and non-authoritative members of the smaller community of athletes (Kolnes, 1995, p. 61). To ignore the way that female athletes' bodies are sexed, by males and females alike, and thereby implicated in patriarchal power structures is to ignore an important controlling mechanism that is subtly imposed on women in many practices in society. And

controlled by these discourses, the female athlete, through monitoring her own bodywork, and accepting the 'fair and just' drug laws and aesthetic judgements that limit the development of her body, maintains the 'essential' inadequacies of her body when compared to male athletes on male terms.

Paraphrasing Foucault's ideas (Lacombe, 1996, p. 342), whilst oppression occurs from a variety of points, including the sexing of the female athletic body, using a variety of discourses, it also encourages a variety of resistances or pains which produce a desire to challenge normal knowledges. Sites of resistance to femininity in sport commence at the same time as training in femininity begins. During childhood, the young girl enters society learning about the importance of restrictions in movement and physical manners of expression and appearance, for females. Opposition and resistance to these restrictions occur in many young girls, and may continue to grow through an athletic woman's life (Palzkill, 1990, p. 222; Lenskyj, 1994, p. 357). It is a contention of this thesis that sport offers females a practice in which they can challenge the way that their bodies are normally inscribed as female. But it is an extension of that contention that females would be well served to become more creative in thinking about their bodies and their activities in ways that do not perpetuate the idea that either are fixed. So females could consider drug laws and discourses, mores against abortion, arguments against genetic manipulation and engineering, and other beliefs in our sporting society from a more creative and resistant Foucauldian standpoint.

Foucault's ethical theory endeavours to locate and support these spaces for resistance in the areas of disparity in the dominant discourses. The technologies of power that attempt to produce docile bodies always create pockets of resistance and opposition (Fraser, 1989, p. 18). Sawicki (1991, p. 165) explains that there are females who develop new images of women through resistive participation in sport. Female body builders are one group of athletes who show such resistance to the dominant image of female athletes in society. Miller and Penz (1991, p.149) agree that bodybuilding offers one such disparity in discourse, which has allowed females to claim some sense of power in a previously male-dominated sport. This power goes beyond participation and incorporation into the dominant discourse. It involves the development of an alternative discourse created by the

accidental instability of the exclusively male discourse. This instability occurs at the contradiction between the dominant masculine, active 'sport of strength' and the previously repressed feminine part of bodybuilding as a 'sport of appearance.' This destabilisation affects discourses about females throughout society. The authors argue:

Their efforts to feminize the sport are further solidified by their ability to use a traditional feminine characteristic- namely, their culturally derived expertise in "bodywork", the management of appearance- in a distinctly non-traditional way. The outcome is that the entrenched meanings of both the sport and the female body are not reaffirmed, but expanded. (1991, p. 150)

The discourse of feminine bodywork in the service of male desire has been reframed to challenge the dominant beliefs about females. This argument, that bodywork has been the exclusive domain of females, has traditionally been used by males to exclude females from, or confine females to, certain positions in society. The female bodybuilders have reclaimed ownership of their sport by the use of this subordinating discourse in new ways. How far this example is indicative of other sites of resistance in sports of appearance, will be a major theme in Chapter Six of this thesis. Yet, throughout the thesis, similar cracks in the dominant discourse about female bodies in sport will be exposed as potential sites of resistance, freedom and female authority.<sup>28</sup>

### **Conclusion**

The possibility of this Rortian-influenced feminist politics of sport is the basis upon which many of the ideas in this thesis will be discussed. The problem with liberal and early radical feminism lies in remaining within the dominant discourses of modern, patriarchal, hierarchical society. This position, although offering the political weight of numbers or unity, does not suggest changes to the dominant institutions, practices and discourses in society, and in sport, which sex the female body. Yet, in the cautious spirit of Rortian pragmatism, it may still be useful to select from the bodies of discourse, broadly labeled liberal and radical feminism, ideas which may both create uncertainty in the dominant discourse about women, and sympathy for womens' descriptions of themselves. As Bryson suggests, women must adopt a variety of techniques to resist male power in sport (1987, p. 359).

A politically strategic use of liberal, poststructural and standpoint feminisms, using the Foucauldian analyses of technologies of power and subjectivisation and the Rortian techniques of changing, or expanding, the rational space of dominant language, gives women other tools to form radically and challenging alternatives to current structures and discourses in society. The magnitude of such a challenge should not be underestimated. The oppressive dominant languages will only be challenged when the disparities and differences in their histories are revealed and accepted as creating pain and suffering for females in sport. The success of this alternative politics will be revealed in the development of new discourses; discourses that do not subordinate women in sport or society. Changes in the dominant discourse structure will be displayed when these new discourses are viewed, not as crazy or eccentric, but as liberating, authoritative and just; for example, when lesbian athletes are not described as ‘deviant’, ‘abnormal’ or ‘butch’, but as ‘independent’, ‘strong’, ‘sensitive’, ‘human’, and ‘worthy of being listened to’.

**CHAPTER TWO**  
**COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN RORTY AND FEMINISTS: FOUNDATIONS**  
**AND METHOD**

**Introduction**

Catherine MacKinnon describes the situation faced by Linda Marchiano, the actress who played Linda Lovelace in the pornographic film *Deep Throat*:

During her two and a half years of captivity, she was never out of the sight of her pimp Charles Traynor. When she tried to leave, he threatened her life and the lives of her family. He guarded her with weapons. She had to ask his permission to go to the bathroom, where he watched her through a hole in the wall. He prostituted her; johns who beat her got her for free.... When he recaptured her after escape attempts, he tortured her horribly. He forced her to marry him and, with a gun, to have sex with a dog. These are the conditions under which *Deep Throat...* was made. (1987, p. 10).

Marchiano also had to be hypnotised to perform her deep throated act in order to repress the gag response that such an act would normally evoke (1987, p. 181).

Yet the revelation by Marchiano in her autobiography *Ordeal* of what she had to go through to produce this role was greeted with surprise and disbelief. Marchiano ‘loved it’ in the film; she was smiling and orgasmic (MacKinnon, 1987, p. 181). She was ‘paid’ for her performances as a prostitute, and surely anyone who was in the position to make money from such an act must doubly enjoy it. If she really had it that badly, all she had to do was say no!

That is, at least what most men have been trained to believe about human sexuality; that apparent orgasm is the mark of enjoyment, consent and freedom. Marchiano’s film role as an excited and hypersexed prostitute was more believable and authoritative than her personal story as a victim of cruelty and imprisonment (MacKinnon, 1987, p. 181).<sup>29</sup> But men and women do not share equal access to authority. Men control most of the important positions in law, where the space for women producing eccentric or gendered discourse is reduced because of precedent and abstract neutrality (MacKinnon, 1987, pp. 164-165, 167).<sup>30</sup> Men also control important positions in the media, where the space for women to produce eccentric comment is limited because of profit. Hence, it was easier to support the

male ‘truth’ of women enjoying this sexual act, rather than the female myth of women requiring protection from pornographers by the law because pornographers make explicit the idea that females are powerless and able to be dominated and males are powerful. Pornographers eroticise the dominance of women by men (MacKinnon, 1987, p. 172).<sup>31</sup> Even some self-professed feminists had trouble believing the extent of powerlessness that Marchiano displayed. If she was a victim, she was partly a self-made one because of decisions she herself made. It was impossible for these feminists, socialised within an era of apparent female assertiveness and rights, to think of any woman in a situation where she had no opportunity to make an authoritative and autonomous decision. It was also impossible for these feminists to see that the ‘freedom of speech’ laws that permit pornography, contributes to the objectification of women, which then reduces or eliminates their credibility as speakers (MacKinnon, 1987, pp. 183, 184).

How can women gain the authority that is necessary to have personally produced eccentric commentaries listened to with respect by the public? This chapter will suggest that Rortian pragmatism offers some useful tools which women can use to gain such authority. The explanation of Rortian pragmatism, and its utility for feminist speech, will be divided into three sections in this chapter. The first will look at Rorty’s pragmatic foundations, commencing with a redescription of liberal society in Rortian terms, which Guignon and Hiley accurately describe:

This new vocabulary drops the outdated notions of objective truth and rational justification that were central to the old scientized culture, and instead promotes an aestheticized culture which glorifies the creation of new vocabularies as what is most valuable for moral and intellectual progress.... The vocabulary of an aestheticized culture, Rorty thinks, is better equipped to articulate the liberal ideals of freedom and pluralism. By emphasizing the value of an ever-expanding repertoire of alternative descriptions, this culture sees its goal as protecting ‘the poets and the utopian fantasists, the people who do not talk as we do... [in order to] ensure that its language keeps changing’. It is a culture which does not try to normalize abnormal discourse. (1990, p. 342)

This section will go on to discuss how abnormal discourse produced by oppressed groups, which is challenging to and endangered by normal discourse, can be sustained from the threat of incorporation into that normal discourse. The second section will move on to investigate how Rorty deals with the particular problems faced by women in liberal

society. It will suggest, following Fraser (1989,1990,1991) that the female question is one that necessitates a shift in position for Rorty, to a discussion of the systematic oppression, rather than the personal oppressions, suffered by women. The third section will deal with how feminists have viewed Rortian pragmatism. It will present one feminist re-description<sup>32</sup> that includes the changes caused by the inclusion of the sexed body/speaker (Griffiths, 1995, p. 5). The systematic oppression of women in society has made it difficult for them to accept a theory that suggests a private space from which abnormal discourse can be produced. For the woman, there may be no such space; all aspects of her life are public and political. As Jagger suggests, “One respect in which a feminist conception of practical moral discourse differs from that of classical discourse ethics is that it addresses directly issues of discursive equality and openness in situations inevitably structured by power” (1998, p. 2). With this feminist re-description of Rorty in mind, Rortian pragmatism will be offered as a set of potentially useful tools for females, oppressed in society and in sport, to gain a space to have their descriptions of their pain recognised, and their potential poetic re-descriptions listened to. These feminist-reformed Rortian foundations and method will then be utilised in discussing the options for female authority offered by different strands of feminism.

MacKinnon (1987) continues by discussing the lack of authority held by Marchiano in terms of the politics of supporting the ideology of universal and inalienable human rights that the American legal system is said to impose and civil libertarians purportedly to defend. She states:

At one American Civil Liberties Union meeting at which I spoke, a woman told me she thought all speech should be protected, including *Deep Throat*. Asked what Ms. Marchiano should do now, she replied, “Deal with whatever in herself allowed her to let this happen to her.” Linda’s desire not to be dead, is what she was referring to....

The erasure and trivialization of what was done to Linda... is the key to women having civil rights against pornographers. Turning that key could break the lock of liberalism on women’s advancement through law. Linda’s violation is made insignificant by making it sex.<sup>33</sup> (1987, pp. 13-14)

Erasure and trivialisation of Marchiano’s story occurs because the universalist, liberal philosophies which people use to explain such stories as ‘oppressive’ can only deal with

sex-specific problems in ways which silence the centrality of sex, and the relative degrees of authority that each sex enjoys, from such an issue. Pornography, whilst involving both men and women as objects, is not oppressive in the same way for both sexes. In a society where women are rarely seen as authoritative public figures, and men are often seen in this way, the objectification of women in pornography reinforces their subordination, whilst the objectification of men in pornography does not challenge their gender's public position as powerful and authoritative. The sex of the object is a crucial factor in the message that is transmitted by pornography (MacKinnon, 1987, p. 164).<sup>34</sup> And such 'educative' messages about the position of men and women in society, produced via the medium of pornography, make it difficult for a woman to resist her position by speaking up. The woman oppressed by pornography, as with any woman, is a powerless being, an unthinking object whose responsibility/ability is partly linked to the satisfaction of male desire, and therefore, is unlikely to have her resistant testimonies considered by those who oppress her (MacKinnon, 1987, p. 164).

MacKinnon (1987, p. 166) explains that the problem with universal rights to freedom of speech, an abstract philosophy, is that in substantive practice, one person's right to speak may silence another person, or another group of people. That is, there is a politics to asserting universal rights, and it is a politics that is not gender-blind. In the world of most practices, men's freedom of speech silences women's words. That is, the 'rights' of women to have their stories listened to with respect are undermined by the dominance of men over women, and the so-called universal rights granted to women give them no protection from disrespectful ignorance of their stories (Lumby, 1997, p. 104; MacKinnon, 1987, pp. 164, 169, 195; Griffiths, 1995, p. 2). Asserting authority, being heard, is a learned ability, and women have few role models from which to learn. But asserting authority is also an embodied ability limited by what it is possible for a listener to hear, and many women find it impossible to make people hear their cries of pain and oppression partly because they are embodied female in a male oriented world (Griffiths, 1995, pp. 66, 67,78). And, in a world of presumptive equality, the inability to have your words listened to is taken as a silence that is chosen by, rather than forced on, the speaker (MacKinnon, 1987, pp. 168, 170).

What should women do? According to MacKinnon (1987), it is important for women who are faced with this type of helplessness to break free from the constrictions imposed on them by normal language and abstract ideas of universal rights. She explains this feminist program as:

Try thinking without apology with what you know from being victimized. Give up the Olympian partiality of objectivity and try for a fairness and an authority that neither dominates nor submits to your material or your audience.... Be more radical than anyone has ever been about the unknown, because what has never been asked is probably what we most need to know. Take the unknowable more seriously than anyone ever has, because most women have died without a trace; but invent the capacity to act, because otherwise women will continue to. (1987, p. 9; also see Griffiths, 1995, p. 3)

Richard Rorty (1991a) would agree that stories like Linda's should make us wary of the dangers of an unquestioning attachment to an abstract universalisation of liberal rights. The point of a universalist philosophy is to try to show what all humans "have in common thereby explaining what is essential to being human" (1991a, p. 3). Once this type of philosophy is used to convince males that females share the essential features of humanity (and that Muslims, savages, blacks, homosexuals and any other oppressed group in history also share those features), the community of 'we-humans' expands. This desire, to open up our freedoms to other people, is the hope of a liberal philosophy that claims a rational base to freedoms, which is transhistorical and transcultural, and therefore appropriate to any human being. Anyone, at anytime, will accept this philosophy if they are rational, and therefore, human. And any failure by a group to accept the universality of this idea, as when Muslim fundamentalists try to silence Salmon Rushdie for good, is a mark of their irrationality. These illiberal people forfeit their right to be part of the negotiating committee of freedoms, until they are educated to change their views and/ or actions (Rorty, 1993a, p. 14).

In contrast, Rorty suggests that stories like Linda's indicate that the revelation of a foundational view of the human is misguided, if not dangerous, in attempting to expand the community's ability to listen to the voices of those who feel oppressed. Like MacKinnon (1987):

Rorty claims that the Enlightenment rationalism that gave rise to liberal political philosophy has taken on a life of its own and has come to define

political life in certain constricted ways. The upshot is that appeal to the vocabulary that underwrites liberalism ironically subverts that very same liberalism. (Weislogel, 1990, p. 304)

In order to expand the moral community, the logical/rational space of that community, and not simply the geographical borders, must be expanded to include the words of the oppressed group (Rorty, 1991a, p. 3). In Rorty's terms, for oppressed people "[n]othing politically useful happens until people begin saying things never said before- thereby permitting us to visualize new practices, as opposed to analyzing old ones" (1993b, p. 100).

The difference between Rorty, and feminists such as MacKinnon (1987, 1989), Fraser (1989, 1990, 1991) and Bickford (1993), is that Rorty believes that possibilities for such an expansion exist by using some of the important institutions and practices which currently exist in the liberal society in which we live, and which pragmatists like himself have made evident. The practice of our liberal culture reveals that there are still several people suffering pain and oppression who do not have a medium for telling their stories. For Rorty, such suffering should not result in change to political frameworks and ideals. The suffering can be revealed because our political framework allows the "free press, free universities and enlightened public opinion" to voice the oppressions on behalf of the oppressed group (1989, p. 63), so that the opportunity for freedom is more widespread than it currently is.

### **Rortian Redescriptions of 'The Ideal Liberal Society'**

The Enlightenment belief in a universal human nature, as justification for the provision of rights and freedoms, and the consequent belief in the compatibility of all goals that are pursued by possessors of this rational human nature, creates philosophical problems for the liberal state. Who is to decide between what is a rational good and what is an irrational good? How is the irrational individual to be educated, if he or she does not agree with the judgment that they are irrational? Is coercion possible within the philosophy of liberalism? The beliefs, that all humans have a common nature and pursue compatible and rational goods, have traditionally been used to support the liberal demands for

individual freedom and autonomy for all people. But these beliefs end with potentially authoritarian and non-liberal consequences including the inability to hear the stories that those labelled irrational tell about themselves.

Iris Young argues that an ideal liberal society should be different in that it would recognise that:

In a society differentiated by social groups... the perception of anything like a common good can only be an outcome of public interaction that expresses rather than submerges particularities. Those seeking the democratization of politics in our society, in my view, should reconceptualize the meaning of public and private and their relation, to break decisively with the tradition of Enlightenment republicanism...

To promote a politics of inclusion, then, participatory democracy must promote the ideal of a heterogeneous public, in which persons stand forth with their differences acknowledged and respected, though perhaps not completely understood, by others (1990a, p. 119).

Rorty has given up the metaphysical underpinnings which the Enlightenment discourse supplied, because he feels that the liberating practices and institutions which Western democracies have produced can survive without these metaphysical buttresses (Rorty, 1988, p. 258; 1993b, p. 100). He has returned to the original historical conditions and premises of liberalism, and has resisted misguided attempts to push these premises too far toward the discovery of either the essential human nature or the perfectly harmonious society. In Rorty's terms:

...Hegelian defenders of liberal institutions are in the position of defending, on the basis of solidarity alone, a society which has traditionally asked to be based on something more than mere solidarity....

I [Rorty]<sup>35</sup> want to contrast bourgeois liberalism, the attempt to fulfill the hopes of the North Atlantic bourgeoisie, with philosophical liberalism, a collection of Kantian principles thought to justify us in having those hopes. Hegelians think that these principles are useful for *summarizing* these hopes, but not for justifying them... (1985a, pp. 215, 216)

For Rorty, "...in its ideal form, the culture of liberalism would be one which was enlightened, secular, through and through. It would be one where no traces of divinity remained either in the form of a divinized world or a divinized self" (1989, p. 45).<sup>36</sup>

The mistake that the Enlightenment philosophers made was in trying to join two things together that are incompatible; private freedom and public perfection (Rorty, 1988, p. 258; 1989, p 53; 1992b, pp. 330-333). Individuals can pursue their private quests for perfection in any way they please provided they do not harm others, nor interfere with others' quests for private perfection by using too great a share of the community's resources. But the aim of a just and free liberal society is not to produce any particular form of perfection, as is the result of programs based on a belief in a universal human nature, but merely to provide the space and security for individuals to be "as privatistic, "irrationalist" and aestheticist" as they want (Rorty, 1989, p. xiv; Fraser, 1991, p. 261). The two aims are incompatible because the private aim of individuals allows them to create a language of their own and disaffiliate from the larger community, whilst the public aim calls on individuals to share a common language. Hence, the two aims cannot be joined because the discourses that are produced by each are sometimes incompatible (Rorty, 1989, pp. xiv, xv).<sup>37</sup> For Rorty:

... the Enlightenment should not have yearned for a world polity whose citizens share common aspirations and a common culture. Then we will not try for a society which makes assent to beliefs about the meaning of human life or certain moral ideals a requirement for citizenship. We will aim at nothing stronger than a commitment to Rawlsian procedural justice- a moral commitment when made by members of some clubs [e.g. the dominant community] but a matter of expediency when made by members of others [e.g. feminist separatists].(Rorty, 1991c, p. 210)<sup>38</sup>

The Enlightenment philosophers should have been satisfied with the practical advantages of the institutions and practices in liberal societies that allow diverse people and diverse communities to coexist peacefully with one another (1991c, p. 209). The value of the Enlightenment are just those institutions and practices which make the expansion of tolerance possible. Such tolerance is necessary in a society that must survive diversity and pluralism.

The liberal view of society cannot accept a theory of the good which is prior to the conception of justice, and which would exclude some competing conceptions of the good (Paul and Miller, 1990, p. 805). The state must rule with a chastened view of itself, allowing a respectful reading of all private views of the good which do not harm other

members of society, whilst not promoting any particular conception of the good (Rorty, 1992b, p. 331). In Rorty's own terms:

Societies are not quasi-persons, they are... compromises between persons. The point of a liberal society is not to invent or create anything, but simply to make it as easy as possible for people to achieve their widely different private ends without hurting each other. To work out the details of the continually shifting compromises which make up the political discourse of such a society requires a common, banal, moral vocabulary - a vocabulary which is no more relevant to one individual's private self- image than to another's. (1992b, p. 331)<sup>39</sup>

At the level of individuals, the political conception of justice is neutral when all people have a right to hold and express their own beliefs about the good, using the terms they wish to use, provided they do not infringe on anyone else's rights. Personal power and autonomy are not related to any specific conception of the good, but to the ability of any person to hold and revise their own conception, to be author of their own story. The social position that is held in society by individuals does not justify any expectation by those individuals that other people should accept their conception of the good. Individuals will accept the legitimacy of the political conception of justice if it fairly protects their interests of self-determination and the freedom to pursue their own goals, and it establishes fair procedures for resolving conflicts between various people's interests

In summary, the ideal liberal culture, according to Rorty, is one where individuals are granted the space and security to manufacture their own descriptions of their practices. Yet in a number of papers, including two concerning feminism (1991a, 1993b), Rorty explains that a number of western communities, and a number of practice communities within Western societies, do not yet approach this ideal. He offers some suggestions for how people who cannot currently author their own story in these practice communities may create the space and security to do so. This problem impinges greatly on women's position in sport, and will be dealt with throughout the rest of this thesis. Whilst expanding the decision-making community to make it more inclusive may be an ideal for which to aim for, in our present society different individuals and groups have different levels of authority in decision making in sport. The bargaining advantages associated with sex still exist in sporting discourse.

## Antifoundationalism and The Contingency of Language

In Rorty's terms, there is still a lot of work to be done to ensure that the principles of liberalism apply to *all* members of society (Guignon and Hiley, 1990, p. 351). The institutions and practices that provide space for some individuals to create themselves in their own way need to be expanded to allow those members who are silenced to be heard. What happens to groups of people who have rarely been given a chance to enter the debate concerning things such as the discursive content and formal organisation of practices? How can they gain a voice, so that their views are taken into account in the resolution of these issues? Will they be able to speak after years of silence? Contemporary feminists suggest that such a voice is possible to achieve. Richard Rorty (1991a) suggests that such a voice is more likely to be heard if feminists use the tools that pragmatists can offer them. These tools include an antifoundational view of language, the self and community, the protection of abnormal discourse from normal discourse that results from this antifoundational view and some techniques for the promotion of abnormal discourse in the community.

Rorty's (1989) ideas of language, practices, the community and the self are antifoundational. There is nothing essential, transcendental, ahistorical or foundational which grounds descriptions of any of these things. 'True' or 'moral' or 'just' or 'rational' are merely compliments paid to those ideas which 'we', the judging community, have found useful in dealing with any issue at this particular moment in time (1989, p. 49; 1986, p. 44; Griffiths, 1995, p. 55). Descriptions of any concept or practice, like 'sport', 'the body', 'the self', and 'femaleness', must only be responsible to the community in which they are uttered, and have nothing but the inertia of tradition standing in the way of change. Hence, following Rorty, Roberts states, that new words and phrases, and current words and phrases may be either "savoured or spat out" (1997, p. 9; Rorty, 1989, p. 18) according to the contingent whims and positions of the people who are affected by their use.

The choice of any set of 'truth' statements is effected by many contingencies. Guignon and Hiley describe the effects of such contingency in the following way:

... "all problems, topics, and distinctions are language-relative- the results of us having chosen to use a certain vocabulary." Since all criteria of truth and all standards for conducting enquiry are predefined by the language-game we have chosen to play, and since there are no vocabulary-neutral criteria for

assessing different vocabularies, we are free to spin off new vocabularies whenever they might seem useful. (1990, p. 342)

A desire to produce a better, or more just, or more beautiful description normally motivates such choice. But for any speaker, there can never be complete certainty that the chosen vocabulary is the best one to choose. The irony felt by the individual is the mix of a certainty that the chosen vocabulary is the best available in these contingent conditions, with the acknowledgement that future vocabularies, yet to be produced, or silenced vocabularies, yet to be voiced and/or recognised, may reveal how misplaced such certainty was (Rorty, 1989, p. 61).

The choice of a language is what Rorty describes as most deeply constitutive of any human being. The chooser of such vocabularies has nothing foundational behind him or her grounding such choice of a particular set of words and phrases. The speaker is a “more or less complex web<sup>40</sup> of beliefs and desires which is continually reweaving itself” to accommodate the words and phrases uttered by other members of both the practice community and the wider society (Roberts, 1997, p. 69). For most people, such accommodation takes the form of accepting the current ways that one’s community uses words and actions. Some people are able to oppose the common usage of words and phrases, and create new usages, which are esteemed by the community, and force a rethinking of each other members’ personal vocabularies. And so the community’s web of beliefs is changed and all people must adjust to a new set of ‘truth-full’ descriptions.

This contextual view of truth allows anyone to think and act, treating “alternative vocabularies as more like alternative tools than like bits of a jigsaw puzzle” (Rorty, 1989, p. 11). This allows communities to select from a variety of vocabularies with the underlying choice being guided by the pragmatic question; “Does our use of these words get in the way of our use of those other words?” (Rorty, 1989, p. 11)<sup>41</sup>. If they do, and this concerns the community enough, then we must search for a new, ‘truer’, more useful combination. In Rorty’s terms:

The world does not speak. Only we do. The world can, once we have programmed ourselves with a language, cause us to hold beliefs. But it cannot propose a language for us to speak. Only other human beings can do that... The moral is not that objective criteria for choice of vocabulary are to be replaced

with subjective criteria, reason with will or feeling. It is rather that the notions of criteria and choice... are no longer in point when it comes to changes from one language game to another. Europe did not *decide* to accept the idiom of Romantic poetry, or of socialist politics, or of Galilean mechanics. That sort of shift was no more an act of will than it was a result of argument. Rather, Europe gradually lost the habit of using certain words and gradually acquired the habit of using others (Rorty, 1989, p. 6).<sup>42</sup>

This image of language as going ‘all-the-way-down’ with nothing grounding the beliefs and desires that produce the utterances allows us the capacity to be more tolerant of change and diversity when discussing such practices. It also allows us to locate oppression at the level of practices and language-choice, and to not undermine the specificity of oppressive practices by suggesting that they can be understood in some general way as the inability to grant certain rights to certain members of society. The pragmatic contextual understanding locates both oppression and resistance to oppression at the personal level of involvement in communities pursuing specific social practices. This will become an important point when discussing the use of standpoint and poststructural/Foucauldian feminism in Chapters Five and Six, both of which share important similarities with Rortian pragmatism on this point.

### **Philosophy and Poetry**

In his early work, Rorty endeavoured to reconceptualise political philosophy in order to produce this expansion of tolerance in Western societies. He ignored unsustainable claims to universal validity and objectivity and efforts to uncover transcultural and ahistorical morality and truth statements, as the useless and self-indulgent work of misguided philosophers; philosophers who believed that the universalisation of these rights was not a political or radical act. He suggested that writers about liberalism should instead take “...as its starting-point the pluralism, diversity and historical particularity of the real world which leads to competing accounts of truth, rationality and values, and therefore to incommensurability” (McGuinness, 1997, p. 30). With this in mind, philosophers, politicians and authors can try to work to make the institutions and practices which support such incommensurability in the democratic societies we live in, capable of expanding the listening faculties of the dominant members of society in an effort to produce an

understanding of the descriptions which come from those who were once considered 'irrational'.

Rorty's later work moved away from this reconceptualisation of political philosophy to an abandonment of it. McGuinness argues that since the publication of *Contingency, Irony, Solidarity* (1989), Rorty conceives of the literary genre as the most important in producing political change (McGuinness, 1997, p. 30). The expansion of rights to people who are not part of our community involves the production of stories that reveal cruelty, suffering and oppression where they hadn't been revealed previously. It will be necessary for the oppressed people to tell the story of their suffering. For Rorty, the novel is the preferred form for producing change. Political philosophy is seen as merely "one voice among many" (McGuinness 1997, p. 30), and useful only for reinforcing solidarity with a community with an established language. In contrast, the novel has the potential to create a new discourse. McGuinness explains the difference as:

The philosophical genre, in Rorty's view, invites rationality, strives after logical argument and searches for truth and objectivity. Political philosophy is within this genre, and therefore does the wrong sort of things and asks the wrong sort of questions. The literary genre, on the other hand, is different from the philosophical. It makes no claims to objectivity or truth, but instead asserts, engages in propagandre [Sic.] and appeals to feelings and emotions. The novel... is Rorty's preferred alternative for solving the problems of the West. (1997, p. 30)

This move away from philosophy, and towards poetry, is assisted by several ideas from the tradition of pragmatism. The change towards poetic attempts at expanding our community is served by dropping the search for foundational differences between what is considered real and imagined, rational and irrational, moral and prudent, and absolute and relative by any community (Rorty, 1989, p. 44). The terms 'rational', 'moral' and 'absolute' are words used to describe ideas and practices that have been conventionally believed or performed by members of a community.<sup>43</sup> But such conventionality doesn't make the performer of these practices or the holder of these ideas any less subjective than those irrational, immoral and relative people who hold unconventional ideas. As Paula Treichler argues:

To talk of language, discourse, and definitions sometimes evokes desire for a return to certainty about what is real, but the retrogressive protectionism of certainty is ...[not] the answer.... The real is always linguistic, unsentimental, and political (1990, p. 133 cited in Brook, 1999, p. 29)<sup>44</sup>

Conventional ideas are redescribed by pragmatists as partial ideas that are shared by the members of a particular community. The promise of the new vocabulary is that people who were once marginalised and silenced by the conventional vocabulary, that is, the irrational, the ignorant and the immoral (the subjective), will have a space within which to speak as 'one of us'; that is, as one of the community whose words we are now willing to listen to, where previously we would discard these words, and the people who said them, as irrational, emotional, eccentric or mad. Rorty's method of achieving this change in philosophy is to redescribe truth, morality and rationality in local, contextual ways rather than transhistorical and transcultural ways. This will break down the stranglehold that certain statements currently have in, and on, our language. Once this stranglehold is broken, it will become easier for alternative ideas to gain a respectful hearing, for new metaphors to replace old ones.

### **Liberal Protection for the Irrational**

Rorty hopes to produce a view of society, driven by this antifoundational view of language and change that allows for an expansion of the conversational participation in any community. Society needs a changed view of rationality to accommodate any expansion of the conversational community. Rationality is understood contextually within any community; it is simply understood as how members of a community generally act to retain membership. Rorty states:

... rational behaviour is just adaptive behaviour of a sort which roughly parallels the behaviour, in similar circumstances, of the other members of some relevant community. Irrationality, in both physics and ethics, is a matter of behaviour that leads one to abandon, or be stripped of membership in some such community (1985a, p. 217)

The moral force of such behaviour consists wholly in the relationship between the actor and the judging community. The ideal liberal society recognises the contingency of such

commitment, but does not try to embellish such contingency with justifications for belief (Hollis, 1990, pp. 245- 247).

Rorty champions this sense of 'rational' as nothing more than a commitment to think in the ways that the rest of the community, at this historical moment, thinks. There is no deeper foundation to rationality than solidarity. For Rorty: "Such a sense makes us receptive to the possibilities that our descendants may transcend us" (1992a, p. 590). But Rorty also champions the protection that the ideal liberal society gave to the private individual. In agreement with Dewey, Rorty states that members of an ideal liberal society, "...would inhabit a social democratic utopia in which humans caused each other far less suffering than they presently do" (1992a, p. 587). The unifying virtue in such a community would be a tolerance of different methods of practice, which do not cause harm to others. The desire would be to minimise suffering for all members of the community, whilst expanding the community to include the self-authored descriptions of as many different people as possible.

### **Oppression Revealed- Rortian Methodology**

Rorty explains the possibility that those who use the dominant language may be oppressive without being aware by using the following example:

When we Americans ask how our forebears could have condoned the cruelties of slavery, 'the right answer is that they... were using a language which was built around this practice, a language different from the one in which we are now condemning it.' (Rorty, 1989, p. 14 cited by Guignon and Hiley, 1990, pp. 354, 355)

When confronted with other people's stories we must start somewhere in trying to understand them. We must "congratulate ourselves on our current moral practices" because we cannot escape our own languages and practices<sup>45</sup>. We consider ourselves more moral or enlightened than "...the slave-owners of the past or the fascists of the future" (Guignon and Hiley, 1990, p. 355).

At the same time, it is considered useful to endeavour to hear other people's stories even if their words and phrases are irrational by our standards. We listen to the irrational person's self-description because we may expand our community by listening. By allowing

the irrational person to speak, we may “decrease our chances of acting badly” and ignoring the story of someone who is “after all, one of us” (Rorty, 1982, p. 202 cited in Bickford, 1993, p. 106), and secondly, of ignoring a story which might later become more useful to us than the current set of stories we have at our disposal.

Expanding the ‘we’ is the product of “hearing sad and sentimental stories” (Rorty, 1993a, p. 7), from, or about, those people who are oppressed by our current rational discourse. It involves a sentimental education about the effects of our exclusions. For Rorty:

That sort of education gets people of different kinds sufficiently well-acquainted with one another so that they are less tempted to think of those different from themselves as only quasi-human. The goal of this sort of manipulation is to expand the reference of the terms *our kind of people* and *people like us* (1993a, p. 10)

In other words, expansion of our community occurs when the imagination of those people in power is expanded to include as possible conversation partners, people who they once considered as irrational (Rorty, 1991c, p. 207). The stories that were told, originally viewed as the private, isolating and eccentric ramblings of the irrational other, become part of normal discourse through repetition. When that occurs, ‘we’ rich, safe, comfortable and powerful people are able to respect, and possibly cherish, those who we once labeled irrational, “people whose appearance or habits or beliefs at first seemed an insult to our own moral identity, our sense of the limits of permissible human variation” (Rorty, 1993a, p. 19).<sup>46</sup>

Such expansion is seen by Rorty, not as produced by clearing away prejudice and irrationality, but as “a goal to be achieved” through storytelling about the unfamiliar (1989, p. xvi). It is created by courageous and imaginative exposition, which increases the sensitivity of people in power to the particular forms of pain, and humiliation suffered by those excluded from our community.<sup>47</sup> For Rorty, this replacement of foundational theory, by sentimental narrative, in attempting to expand our community, will be emblematic of the liberating movement towards antifoundational views of language and community (Rorty, 1989, p. xvi)<sup>48</sup>. Such a move will ensure that our liberal community is not frozen

over by static beliefs about truth and rationality, that instead it continually expands because of the creation of newer and better truths.

Rorty considers that storytelling is powerful because it engages with actual practices and forms of oppression in communities which are felt by oppressed individuals including females. In this respect it is similar to feminist standpoint theory, to be discussed in Chapter Five, because it doesn't give empty and reductive abstract categories like oppression, false consciousness, freedom and autonomy (Nash, 1994, p. 68). It gives us descriptions of people's suffering and pain. For Rorty, novelists such as Dickens are more politically useful than the political theorist because "Dickens is 'all fragments, all details', identifying with particular instances of suffering, pointing out particular cases of cruelty, injustice and so on. Political theorists are too concerned with high-flown overall theory to worry about such detail.... All he [Dickens] wanted, according to Rorty, was for people to notice each other and take account of each other's suffering" (McGuinness, 1997, pp. 38, 39). Such acknowledgement forces us to both redescribe the other as one of our community and to recreate ourselves in light of our recognition of our solidarity with the previously irrational or immoral other. Literary "genres such as ethnography, the journalist's report, the comic book, the docudrama, and, especially, the novel" may invoke a sympathetic response to the suffering of others, and to our own cruelty (Rorty, 1989, p. xvi).<sup>49</sup>

McGuinness offers a number of criticisms of this promotion of literature as the method of promoting empathy for the suffering of others. Firstly, it is not clear whether such stories will evoke sympathy, or incite greater cruelty. Secondly, Rorty relies on purely subjective responses to this literature to produce change: the contingent hopes for rejecting the suffering of others. What happens if such hopes are not fulfilled? Finally, McGuinness suggests that Rorty's view would "also be unable to make much progress in resolving conflicts of suffering; for example, to arbitrate in the Rushdie affair between the suffering of Muslims following the blasphemous portrayal of their prophet, as opposed to the suffering of Rushdie" (1997, pp. 41, 42).

To all these charges Rorty would suggest that if literature may not be successful, then he would be certain that political philosophy would not be. Political philosophy has

nothing to offer which has not already been considered by the oppressors. We can simply tell our own stories and hope that someone is capable of listening. But Rorty does mention Rushdie as an author whose work crosses cultures and who can potentially converse with both groups. So to solve this dilemma, Rorty would look to Rushdie and Stoppard<sup>50</sup>, rather than himself and McGuinness. This is difficult for those who are oppressed, like Rushdie and like females in society, to cope with. As Rorty explains:

To rely on the suggestions of sentiment rather than on the commands of reason is to think of powerful people gradually ceasing to countenance the oppression of others, out of mere niceness rather than out of obedience to the moral law. But it is revolting to think that our only hope for a decent society consists in softening the self-satisfied hearts of a leisure class (1993a, p. 16).

But that is the best we can do. Hearing the voice of the oppressed unfortunately relies on a benign, ironic and sentimentally touched oppressor.<sup>51</sup>

Respectful listening to such abnormal or eccentric discourse is helped by the antifoundational ideas explained by Rorty in his descriptions of the self, language and community (1989). If there is nothing deeper in truth and morality claims than adherence to the commonly used language, then there is nothing deeper which stands in the way of people who wish to change a language because they feel oppressed by it. There are significant obstacles to redescription, but there is nothing essential which makes the oppressed person stay within the language game which oppresses them.

As Rorty explains,

...injustices may not be perceived as injustices, even by those who suffer them, until somebody invents a previously unplayed role. Only if somebody has a dream, and a voice to describe that dream, does what looked like nature begin to look like culture... For until then only the language of the oppressor is available, and most oppressors have had the wit to teach the oppressed a language in which the oppressed will sound crazy- *even to themselves*- if they describe themselves *as oppressed* (1991a, p. 3).

Such injustice is revealed by the work of strong-minded individuals who are willing to think and speak eccentrically. It is exemplified in Nandy's explanation of the ways that society have raised their awareness of oppression during the twentieth century, when he states, "Who, before the socialists, had thought of class as a unit of repression?... How

many believed, before Gandhi's rebirth after the environmental crisis in the West, that modern technology, the supposed liberator of man, had become his most powerful oppressor?" (1987, cited in Rorty, 1992a, p. 591)

The heroes of Rorty's liberal society are such strong poets or liberal ironists. Ironists may be<sup>52</sup> aware that their own self-descriptions are radically unstable because of the absence of final vocabularies and the possibility that their descendants may change vocabularies. Such ironists constantly confront themselves with the possibility that their selection of vocabulary is oppressive, and requires changing in some way (Weislogel, 1990, pp. 307, 308). But ironists are also aware that such instability offers freedom. As Guignon and Hiley explain:

Nonetheless, as none of the "languages which speak us" are privileged beyond their histories, that is privileged in the sense of more closely corresponding to reality than the alternatives, there is nothing more than the inertia of tradition to stop us from tinkering with or overhauling our current public and private vocabularies as we see fit (1990, p. 344).

Whether aware of the contingency of truth or not, poets produce their own story in words never used before. Rorty's ideal liberal society recognises that "...it is what it is, has the morality it has, speaks the language it does" because of the innovative storytelling of strong poets and revolutionaries in the past (1989, p. 61). These strong poets spun off eccentric descriptions of their liberal society, and through strength of will, forced that society to change and become the society we live in today (Bickford, 1993, p. 108). These strong poets were able to force such redescriptions on society because of the protection our ideal liberal society gave to free and open encounters between the eccentric and the community, between abnormal and normal discourse.

McGuinness describes the problems associated with such a view, when combined with an antifoundational view of truth and morality. She states:

People who are ironists are those who realize 'that anything can be made to look good or bad by being redescribed' (Rorty, 1989,73), which may of course be true. However, the point is that were one to redescribe the Holocaust, famines in Africa caused by civil war, or the recent ethnic conflict in the former Yugoslavia in such a way that they were somehow portrayed as good, then to do so would surely require a distortion of facts, of the truth of what

actually happened? Otherwise it seems that there could be no recognizable sense in which these events could be good. (1997, p. 34)

The answer to such charges is that the judgements of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ are still only recognisable in an ethnocentric, historical sense. Some Germans may possibly have described the Holocaust as good at the time it occurred. Deaths in Africa may be described by some Westerners who fear overpopulation as unavoidable, but good. Such redescription is not a distortion of facts, merely a re-evaluation of the notion of personhood, using the conceptual tools that are available to the various communities that they are part of. Such conceptual tools may be part of a mostly lost language, looked back on with nostalgia, or part of a partially formed language, looked forward to with hope. It may not be the language that most of the community uses, but it is a language. Pragmatists can only explain the wrongness of past acts as the suppression of past possibilities produced by the use of an inadequate language in comparison to a current one, rather than explaining it as the injustice of past actualities (Rorty, 1991a, p. 8). This is because the past actuality did not have our advantage of our language with which to judge their practices. They simply did not have the discourses available to them that would be necessary to label these practices ‘bad’.

### **Oppression Opposed- Producing Semantic Authority**

Pragmatists recognise that authority is related to the control that an individual has over the words and phrases that limit or enable their actions. Masters had a greater control over the language than slaves, and so were able to create a discourse which presented the position and occupation of the slave as something natural rather than contingent, something to be borne rather than resisted (Rorty, 1991a, p. 8). It was only when slaves were given, or took, at least partial control over descriptions of slavery that the dominant groups’ eyes were opened to the oppression of their discourse.

The acquisition of semantic control for groups of people who have been oppressed, such as blacks, females and gays, occurs in much the same way as semantic control was obtained by Galilean scientists or Romantic poets. Within separate groups, these eccentrics had the space to invent new identities for themselves by producing answers to different sets

of questions than those that were being addressed by normal scientists and poets. They gained semantic authority over themselves within their exclusive community/club. Without the support of this club, the individual speaker would be unable to decide whether their description was the courageous, imaginative and useful words of a heroine or strong poet, or whether it was merely the lunatic ramblings of a maniac. People who wish to develop a less oppressive language for themselves as individuals, need to first band together and form clubs to be able to make this distinction between courage and madness (Rorty, 1991a, p. 9; Jagger, 1998, p. 7).

This previously eccentric discourse of oppression and injustice may become literally 'true' as our, the dominant community's, beliefs are reweaved by the stories that we hear about those others (Rorty, 1991b, p. 13). When this occurs, it can be said that the previously oppressed group has "succeeded in having the language they had developed become part of the language everybody spoke" (Rorty, 1991a, p. 10). Again, Rorty explains the process:

Insofar as this sort of thing happens, eyes become less arrogant and the members of the group cease to be treated as wayward children, or a bit crazy.... Instead, they gradually achieve what Frye calls 'full personhood' in the eyes of everybody, having first achieved it only in the eyes of fellow members of their own club. They begin to be treated as full-fledged human beings, rather than being seen... as beings entitled to love and protection, but not to participate in deliberations on serious matters. For to be a full-fledged person in a given society [ or a community of practitioners]<sup>53</sup> is a matter of double negation: it is *not* to think of oneself as belonging to a group which powerful people in that society thank God they do *not* belong to. (1991a, p. 9)

Their abnormal discourse, fortunate to be created at a tolerant and inclusive place and time, is incorporated into our dominant language. This is the point where males and females have 'forgotten the traditional androcentric language' because new courageous descriptions have both revealed the oppression in the prior discourse and replaced it with something which looks better.

But Rorty also reminds us that the publication of the currently eccentric, but potentially 'true' discourses is likely to result in 'ruthless suppression' by those who previously had control of the discourse (1991a, p. 9). As Morwenna Griffiths (1995, p.121) aptly summarises:

It is more likely that the masters... are included in rather than excluded from groups where they desire to be: the power to exclude others is itself characteristic of being in the master's position.... Insiders are likely to remain as insiders through the perpetration of, or at best collusion in, systems of harassment and bullying.

And the forms of suppression to re-invigorate the attachment of the 'swinging voters' to the dominant discourse, are the same as the forms which challenge the dominant discourse. The powerful in the community will use the 'propaganda' of sentimental and comic stories to recapture their power from the subversive separatist group who has infiltrated their society. The backlash against feminism, with claims of breakdown in family values and marriage, a rise in youth crime and unemployment, a rise in lesbianism and single-motherhood, and even damage to our defense and law enforcement units (not to mention, college sports), is the type of sentimental storytelling, and the subjects for comic parody, which endangers the semantic authority that women have started to gain over their experiences.<sup>54</sup>

### **Use of Rortian Pragmatism in Discussing Sport**

The antifoundational view of language and social practices allows us to view sport as something that is created by humans, and that can provide opportunities for individuals to make and remake themselves, and, to the extent that such remakings are embraced by the community, their sport. A sporting practice is understood in this view as a web of beliefs and traditions that are shared by the community of practitioners. There is nothing essential or foundational which grounds the practice and allows us to suggest that we are moving toward a 'truer' or 'better' form of sporting practice. All that we must remain loyal to, as continuing members of this sporting community, is our current 'ethnocentric' understanding of the practice (Roberts, 1998b, p. 4). Rather than discovering a 'reality' of sport, the sporting community is now understood to actively create a, or many, 'realities' of sport; some supported by some members of the community and some supported by other members of the community; some dominant in terms of numerical support, others marginal.<sup>55</sup>

Additionally the sportperson is a shifting web of beliefs, desires and actions, continually reweaving itself in the light of new discoveries within a particular discourse, and new creations of abnormal discourse which are normalised in the various communities that an individual counts themselves as a member of. A large proportion of the athletic self is made up of those beliefs and desires that he/she shares with the rest of his/her practice communities. Some are manifested in rules of play, others are apparent in conventional beliefs and tales (Roberts, 1997, p. 69). Some creative, imaginative and courageous athletes may produce remakings of their sport and themselves by expanding the logical space of the sport discourse. In other words, they produce the unbelievable, and force it to be believed. To not believe it is to exclude oneself from membership of one particular community. But the acceptance of a new belief may cause a change to other strands of the web of beliefs that the person is.

This allows us to redescribe the ‘truth’ or ‘morality’ of sporting actions and commentaries as related to the fit of those actions and commentaries to the sporting public’s web. Actions that the community are familiar with may receive the commendation of being called ‘true’, ‘just’ or ‘moral’. Actions that challenge the normal understandings of sport may be labeled eccentric, deviant or irrational. But the ascriptions of truth and irrationality are related to our familiarity with such actions, rather than “... a function of their true correspondence to reality” (Roberts, 1992, p. 21). And the movement from irrationality to truth comes with shifts in community solidarity, expansions in community membership to include the oppressed, rather than any discovery of an essence to sport. The production of such shifts is the work of propagandists; literary giants who redescribe so as to make the eccentric look more attractive than the previously normal to members of the community.

There is much to be gained by this antifoundational view of sport, according to Roberts (1992, 1995, 1997, 1998a, 1998b, 1998c). The most important gain for those oppressed by current descriptions of sport is “...the clear recognition that we... are free... to make and remake sport action, as we see fit...” (1992, p. 28; also 1998c, p. 250). Whilst there exists in modern sport, very strong forces which control our sporting practices, and limit descriptions and practices in them, this antifoundational view of sport demonstrates

that there is nothing binding in these descriptions. People are free to spin off inventive new descriptions and practices in sport in order to remake themselves and their sporting practices, and these redescrptions may be “savoured or spat out” by the practice community (Roberts, 1997, p. 74; Gruneau, 1983, p. 50 cited by Hall, 1985, p. 33).

For Roberts there are numerous examples of strong poets in sport. In terms of cricket, he describes the initiator of the change from underarm bowling to overarm bowling, John Willes, the inventor of the googly, B J T Bosenquet, and the producer of Bodyline Bowling, Percy Fender, amongst others (1997, pp. 71-73). The established community greeted these three changes with outrage. Some were eventually accepted as useful, and therefore moral. Others were rejected after a short trial period. The difference between those that were accepted as redescrptions of cricket, and those that were rejected as immoral or irrational, had nothing to do with either some essential nature of cricket or cricketers. Support for a redescription is merely the result of the good fortune of producing a description at a time when a community was open to change. As Roberts describes the potential of strong poetry in another paper:

If time and place and contingency are kind, these metaphorical fantasies may lose their curious eccentricity and become part of a new language that will help us, and those who follow, to see and understand sport in a new way. Sport will then be remade and so will the possibilities and opportunities it provides. (1995, p. 94).

What was indisputable for Roberts was that: “All [strong makers in cricket] changed logical space, expanding it for some, contracting it for others. All challenged existing rationality, most the accepted morality. All threatened to change significantly the set of beliefs that both defined the practice and what it meant to be a cricketer. None could be ignored” (1997, p. 74). Any producer of abnormal discourse forces the community to readjust their “existing webs of belief to make room for the new belief”, and so recreate their practice and themselves (1997, p. 75).

However, according to Roberts, the sports community is one which is usually strongly conservative, and so is a danger to the opportunities for the production of abnormal discourse in sport, and a particular danger to those members of the sporting community who cannot find a space to be listened to with respect. Roberts explains:

Here we can see two sides of one of the major dreads which Rorty's public-private split is designed to avoid: the dread of the loss of opportunity for private self-creation and the flip-side dread of a culture so frozen over and encrusted that it is pretty well blind not only to its opportunities but also the ways it might be oppressive and humiliating. (1998c, p. 251)

Tolerance to such changes will occur where a community has the security and time to contemplate such identity-transforming changes, and evaluate whether the proposed future is better than the experienced past. It is indicative of such security and time that a community plays sports. Yet sports remain tightly bound by convention and rules, indicated by the cost and time spent ensuring rule compliance, the time, energy and money invested in the rigorous training of young athletes in 'normal' ways of playing games, and the commensurability of expert discourse about sport across different nations and cultures (Roberts, 1997, pp. 75, 76). Roberts suggests:

It is at such sites of intolerance that we might profitably first look for cracks of contention out of which might bubble the sort of irrationalities and eccentricities that lead to metaphors and change... By paying close attention to the movements and noises of the cheats, the children, the eccentrics and the excluded, we will be keeping alive not only the possibility of transcending our games and ourselves, but of making both more just and maybe more interesting (1997, p. 76).

What can women do to reveal the oppression and humiliation they might feel in sport, a practice so tightly bound by its dominant discourse of male power and superiority?<sup>56</sup> How might a woman, or women as a group, use Rortian pragmatism to gain the space to make her/their commentary about sports public? One intervention, which should not be underestimated for women, is their inclusion as participants in sport. Some radical feminists have questioned this liberal intervention, suggesting that because men will continue to control the structures and discourses of sport, inclusion of females will do little to alter the power structures within these sports. But Roberts' Rortian-inspired, pragmatic depiction of sport as a 'language-without-words' game, conveying meaning through symbolic performance, means that language change is made possible by participation. So liberal interventions such as Title IX, and inclusion in male sports such as boxing and football, may give women the opportunity to reform sports 'from the inside'. But also, because the community often links authority with athletic performances, the

exclusion of females from certain sports makes it more difficult for them to gain authority. Intellectual or theoretical authority for males may fall in their laps because they are good athletes. For females, excluded from particular sports, intellectual authority in these sports is far harder won. With inclusion into sports, more subtle ways of maintaining the dominant discourse of male power in sport must be produced, and these will necessitate more eccentric ways for females to create space for their stories about sport. The second section of this chapter will investigate the ways that Rortian pragmatism deals with the specific problems faced by women in society, and in sport.

### **Rortian Encounters with Feminism**

According to Fraser (1991), there are several useful ideas which feminism may borrow from Rortian pragmatism to produce the conceptual changes towards a more democratic society that it requires.<sup>57</sup> The embrace of both antifoundationalism and the possibility for narrative to produce societal change, means that feminists are left with a decision about whether any particular dominant description in the practices of society, including sport, are working well for them. Are these dominant discourses freeing or oppressing women? In many practices, including sport, it would seem that such ‘truth’ statements are severely limiting the opportunities for women to both enter professions and practices, and to speak in the authoritative ways that they may desire. The freedom that Rortian pragmatism offers feminists is that they may attempt to change or expand oppressive discourses. Rortian pragmatism opens up the space to produce such changes, by forcing us to question the certainty with which we support such oppressive discourses and by unshackling strong (individual or collective) poets and giving them the opportunity to recreate society. If someone feels oppressed by the current languages that are being used, Rortian pragmatism suggests that they should, and are free to, step outside those languages and produce poetic redescriptions. As Rorty suggests:

Feminist intellectuals who wish to criticize masculinist ideology, and to use deconstruction to do so, must... say that the question of whether their criticisms of masculinist social practices are “scientific” or “philosophically well grounded,” like the question of whether masculinism has “distorted” things, is beside the point...

The way to rebut the accusation that literary theory, or deconstruction, is “oblivious to social and historical reality” is to insist that “constitution of objects by discourse” goes all the way down, and that “respect for reality”... is just respect for past languages, past ways of describing what is “really” going on. Sometimes such respect is a good thing, sometimes it is not. It depends on what you want.

Feminists want to change the social world, so they cannot have too much respect for past descriptions of social institutions (1993b, p. 99).

Rorty explains that, “...the most efficient way to expose or demystify an existing practice would seem to be by suggesting an alternative practice, rather than criticizing the current one”(1993b, p. 96). Deconstruction of an existing practice can be considered an important clearing-away exercise. It tries to reveal the tensions and distortions both within the various discourses that support the current practice, and between the discourses of the current practice and the discourses of other practices in the community. It makes the community more open to the possibility of hearing alternate discourses (Nash, 1994, p. 71). Lather (1991, p. 13 cited by Hall, 1996, pp. 76, 77) suggests that deconstruction is an important part of postpositivist feminist inquiry because it aims “to disrupt, to keep the systems in play, to set up procedures to continuously demystify the realities we create, to fight the tendencies for our categories to congeal.”<sup>58</sup>

However, “anomalies within old paradigms can pile up indefinitely without providing much basis for criticism until a new option is offered” (Rorty, 1993b, p. 96). It is the work of revolutionary groups or poets to redescribe whilst this ground-clearing is being done,<sup>59</sup> to put forward alternative descriptions of social practices for consideration. The analysis of old practices does not provide new practices. As Gross suggests, “If... feminist theory remains *simply* reactive, *merely* a critique, paradoxically it affirms the very paradigms it seeks to contest.... To criticise prevailing theoretical systems *without posing viable alternatives* is to affirm such theoretical systems as necessary” (1986, pp. 195, 196). It is the provision of an attractive alternative discourse by some ‘strong poet’ that might reduce the oppression caused by old descriptions.<sup>60</sup> Therefore, it is hardly surprising that the ‘human’ or ‘rational’ discourses, which currently produce and reinforce the oppression of women, are not the only ones that women should be using in order to be freed from their enslavement. To be freed, it is important that women develop new ways of speaking,

expand the boundaries of discourse; that is, “invent a reality... by selecting aspects of the world which lend themselves to the support” of *female* desires and descriptions as worthwhile (Rorty, 1991a, p. 7). The political method of feminist standpoint theories has been to try to produce a female ‘reality’ of the world from within the gaps in dominant and hegemonic male discourses.

Another advantage of this antifoundational view of language and the self is that feminists would locate oppression at the level of the languages and practices in society. Rather than dealing with any “general theory of oppression... [as] a general failure to treat equal equally” (Rorty, 1991a, p. 5), feminists would deal with the specific “historical facts in which masculinist power is entrenched” (Rorty, 1991a, p. 9), and through which females are subordinated at any specific site. A general theory of oppression drains the personal oppressions felt by women in practices that invoke pain or humiliation. Any attempt to produce a general theory of oppression will be “...likely to be [as] fruitless as are theories of evil, or of power. I think that abstraction and generalization have, in such attempts, gone one step too far, and that we need to get back to the rough ground” (Rorty, 1992a, p. 594 n. 3). To go back one step is to go back to the individual and collective stories that describe the particular oppressions felt by women, those stories that are revealed in ethnographies, autobiographies, oral histories, journalist’s reports and so on.

Kaufman-Osborn (1993) criticises Rorty for collapsing experience to language games and stories. He uses the example of contrasting the responses to the experience that both a mother and a daughter had in unfulfilled marriages to exemplify his problem with Rorty. He comments:

But what distinguished daughter from mother is the availability of feminist discourse to the former, and hence her ability to say why she will not tolerate the compromises, the self-denials, the indignities, that marked the life of her mother. But must we assume that because Feminist's mother had no such language, her oppression assumed the form of so much sense- less suffering? Must we assume that because political oppression *is* a condition of political speechlessness, "the job of putting [her] situation into language is going to have to be done for [her] by somebody else" (Rorty 1989, p. 94 cited by Kaufman-Osborn, 1993, p. 133)?

Kaufman-Osborn sees this claim he attributes to Rorty as paternalistic. In making the claim, Rorty portrays women stereotypically, as incapable of acting or speaking for

themselves. They require someone to create a new identity for them. Secondly, Kaufman-Osborn accuses Rorty of simplifying the process of revealing oppression to one where "... he pays virtually no attention to questions of institutional transformation and so comes perilously close to holding that Feminist's mother can change the love she feels for her husband into rebellion simply by calling it oppressive" (1993, p. 133).

Rorty would suggest that because of the strength of traditions, and the skill of the oppressor, it is difficult for any oppressed person to create redescriptions and force them into the dominant language. The Feminist's Mother cannot redescribe her experience as oppressive, rather than loving, until a new set of words and phrases are developed. And the oppressed/loving mother may not be in such a position of safety and comfort to produce these new descriptions. The Daughter, in contrast, can thank strong poets from the past for the conceptual tools she had to explain her situation differently from her Mother.

But in regards to the second charge, Rorty would dispute this simplification of his theory of change. He does suggest that liberal society is the best one yet developed to produce change (1985a; 1993a), but he also suggests that our current society and practices are not yet ideal. There are numerous obstacles in the way of any redescription, not the least of which are the structural inequalities between men and women in being able to gain semantic control over your practices. But Rorty (1992b, p. 332) considers that there are indications that our society is becoming more open to change and revolution.

When trying to produce change in discourses, the oppressed person is bound by the tenets of antifoundationalism. In suggesting a change in discourse, the person cannot point to anything foundational to support their new discourse. The utopianism of Rortian pragmatism has no deep foundations, merely the hope of producing a less painful future. For Rorty, pragmatism offers feminism this shift so that:

...when prophetic feminists say that it is not enough to make the practices of our community coherent, that the very *language* of our community must be subject to radical critique, pragmatists add that such critique can only take the form of imagining a community whose linguistic and other practices are different from our own (1991a, p .6).

What pragmatic philosophy offers feminists are some tools with which the path may be cleared. It drops the distinction between appearance and reality, suggesting that

any description of an event is made to satisfy the interests and purposes of the individual making the description. 'Truth' or 'objective reality' becomes compliments given to those descriptions that have been used to support the interests of the dominant group in any discussion; that is, support the interests of 'us' (Rorty, 1986, p. 44). In other words, pragmatic feminists would understand the important distinction as that "...between beliefs which serve some purposes and beliefs which serve other purposes- for example, the purposes of one group and those of another group" (Rorty, 1991a, p. 4). And finally, pragmatic philosophers would see reality as something that is created rather than found. So, if a person is oppressed within one description of reality, they are free to spin off new and different descriptions of reality to suit themselves.

MacKinnon calls this the "utopian conception of the task of political [feminist]<sup>61</sup> speech" (MacKinnon, 1987, p. 221). Its role is to imagine and describe a new reality, to create a new world which is different to the current oppressive one. It invents a fantasy. But in expressing the fantasy, the speaker hopes to produce a newly supported 'truth'. The speaker makes a new truth by expressing it. As she states "Speak as though women are not victimized and we will not be anymore" (MacKinnon, 1987, p. 221). And understood in this way, neither the feminist nor the pragmatist should support such a utopia, because it separates the speech from the ability to be heard. This flippant statement about speech does not convey the struggle that goes on when a new language or practice is trying to replace an older, oppressive one. The next section of the thesis tries to capture the courage that is needed, and the strength of will that is needed, to force these conversation-transforming changes on the dominant members of the community.

### **Metaphoric Change for Females: Courage and Strong Poetry, but especially for those who are Women**

The shift towards an antifoundational view of truth creates space for those who are oppressed by the dominant descriptions in any practice to create new descriptions of the practice, which are less oppressive. Imagination rather than accuracy becomes the mark of useful descriptions (Duncan, 1998, p. 97). Are our redescriptions imaginative enough to allow society to think of those who were once considered 'others' as 'one of us'?

For Marilyn Frye (1983) this shift in descriptions occurs because the person with imagination takes the courageous step to separate him/herself from the logical space that he/she shared with the rest of the community. For Rorty, this “courage is indistinguishable from the imagination it takes to hear oneself as the spokesperson of a merely possible community, rather than as a lonely, and perhaps crazed, outcast from an actual one” (1991a, p. 6). According to Frye, this means feminists must “...dare to rely on ourselves to make meaning and we have to imagine ourselves capable of... weaving the web of meaning which will hold us in some kind of intelligibility’ (1983, p. 80).

MacKinnon (1987, p. 50) is another who sees normal discourse about truth and rationality as something that needs to be rejected because it is “the epistemological stance... of which male dominance is the politics”.<sup>62</sup> Through this epistemological stance, “[t]he liberal state... constitutes the social order in the interest of men as a gender” (MacKinnon, 1989, p. 162). She cites as a clear-cut example of this the conservative function of the objectivity of the courts:

...their methodological solution- judicial neutrality- precludes from constitutional relief groups who are socially abject and systematically excluded from the usual political process... If over half the population has no voice in the Constitution, why is upholding legislation to give them a voice impermissibly substantive and activist, while striking down such legislation is properly substanceless and passive?... The result is, substantivity and activism are hunted down, flailed, and confined, while their twins, neutrality and passivity, roam at large (MacKinnon, 1989, p. 166).

So the moral and legal principles, based on this realism and universalism, are impotent to feminist claims of power differentials between the genders. In order to produce change, feminists need to recreate the ‘data of moral theory’ by telling their stories in their own words. Such telling forces women to step outside of the protective solidarity of normal/rational discourse. But only this step will force society to recognise the oppression of women where it hadn’t seen it before; and ”... get people to feel indifference or satisfaction where they once recoiled, and revulsion and rage where they once felt indifference or resignation.” (Rorty, 1991a, p. 3). Or, in a more practical example, MacKinnon suggests:

when you are part of a subordinated group, your own definition of your injuries is powerfully shaped by your assessment of whether you could get anyone to do anything about it., including anything official. E.g. a non-crazy claim to have been raped is one acceptable to those (usually males) in a position to offer support or reprisal. Only where there is a socially- accepted remedy can there have been a real (rather than crazily imagined) injury. (1987, p.105)<sup>63</sup>

As Rorty states, “Argument for the rights of the oppressed *will* fail just insofar as the only language in which to state relevant premises is one in which the relevant emancipatory premises sound crazy” (1991a, p. 5). Prior to the development of such abnormal discourse by feminists as marital rape, date rape, workplace sexual harassment, the revelation of the politics involved in pornography, men opening doors for women, the meaning of pronouns, the sexual division of childcare and housework (Young, 1990a, pp. 120, 121), the female oppressed by these actions felt either abnormal or impotent. Whilst females relied on the benign oppressor to accept their redescription, a battle which is still being fought by feminists with many of these terms by both the oppressor and the incorporated oppressed female, the continued revelation of stories about such oppressions eventually forced a change in the community’s language.

Frye captures this transition between abnormal and normal discourse impressively. She calls her own writings “...a sort of flirtation with meaninglessness- dancing about a region of cognitive gaps and negative semantic spheres, kept aloft only by the rhythm and momentum of my own motion, trying to plumb abysses which are generally agreed not to exist” (1983, p. 154). This meaninglessness is the time between departing an old discourse that the oppressed has no use in using, and producing an abnormal discourse that has yet to become part of common language (Rorty, 1991a, p. 7; Jagger, 1998, p. 5). In those moments the oppressed wonders whether they are imaginative or merely crazy. And that flirtation with craziness is why such movements are courageous, and often individualising.

The third section of this chapter will review the reformations to Rortian pragmatism that are called for by feminists. According to Upin, feminists have long held suspicions about any proposed split between public and private in society. As early as 1904, Charlotte Perkins Gilman stated that a society in which we “...maintain side by side, in the same age, a democracy for men and a patriarchy for women is a brain-splitting anachronism”

(Gilman 1904b, p. 345 cited in Upin, 1993, p. 53). Whilst in theory, the split between public and private may appear a useful one for feminist strong poets trying to produce social change, in practice it is still females who occupy the private sphere and males who occupy the public sphere, for the most part. And these placements have repercussions for the differences in authority of male and female speakers. The freedom to spin off inventive redescriptions in the private sphere may be related to the opportunities and power that any person receives by being a member of a certain group in the public sphere.

### **Feminist Reformations of Pragmatic Foundations to Suit Women**

For Fraser (1989, 1990, 1991), this struggle in conceiving of the relationship between the public and the private, or the Romantic ironist and the Liberal pragmatist, is one that Rorty never adequately deals with from a feminist perspective. She locates three periods of Rorty's writing, each period offering different conceptions of the relationship. Rorty's earliest writings which promote the image of a Romantic individual spinning off new and exciting redescriptions in every arena of knowledge in society, offers an image of society with which Rorty himself is never entirely comfortable with. And, according to Fraser:

for good reason. Consider what a politics which gave free rein to the Romantic impulse would look like. Recall the individualist, elitist and aestheticist character of that impulse, its deification of the strong poet... It takes only the squint of an eye to see here the vision of a Georges Sorel: a "sociology" which classifies humanity into "leaders" and "masses"... (1990, p. 304).

This is the image that a number of feminists criticise (McGuinness, 1997; Weislogel, 1990; Fraser, 1991). It is the image of an elite group of extraordinary (male)<sup>64</sup> individuals in private quests for perfection, which are so powerful that they create an ideal of society for the rest of us (male and female) to pursue, an image which is not that far from fascism (Fraser, 1991, p. 261). But it is also an image from which Rorty has moved on.

The second stage of Rorty's writings, Fraser suggests, claims that the aesthetic stance and the moral stance are not antithetical; that the aesthetic stance "disenchants the world" which produces the space necessary for tolerance and liberal freedoms to be expanded (1990, p. 307). So, expanded freedoms for all peoples' voices, and not the

fascism of the elite strong poet, is the result of Rorty's antifoundationalism. Fraser explains Rorty's position as:

contrary to initial appearances, it is not really elitist to "treat democratic societies as existing for the sake of intellectuals". On the contrary, only by making society safe for poets can we ensure that language keeps changing. And only by ensuring that language keeps changing can we prevent the normalization of current practices which might later look cruel and unjust. Thus, to make society safe for poets is to help make it safe for everyone. (1990, p. 307)

So private invention and public morality go hand in hand in producing liberal freedom and tolerance. Or in Guignon and Hiley's terms:

... we should 'let a hundred flowers bloom' in the hope of creating new forms of intellectual life. The antidote to the 'freezing-over of culture' is to create an environment in which new forms of abnormal discourse constantly spring up (1990, p. 344).

The hero of this society is the liberal ironist who recognises the contingency of potentially cruel descriptions, and re-describes in words which are less cruel by honing the dominant community's understanding of the oppression contained in its 'moral' languages and practices. But the range of the ironist's re-descriptions is far broader than the personal effects felt by the ironist.

According to Fraser (1990, p. 310), Rorty himself offers a criticism of this view of the relationship between the public and the private in his later writings. He acknowledges that the liberal ironist is necessarily cruel. Weislogel explains the fractured identity involved here: "How would the ironist be a protector of the liberal state if she goes around re-describing everybody else's cherished beliefs out of existence? How can we- we liberals, we postmodern liberals- how can we be ironists and still remain committed to our liberal pluralism?" (1990, p. 308). The ironist re-describes the languages of the dominant community. The ironist "...delights in re-describing others instead of taking them in their own terms.... To make matters worse, the ironist cannot claim that, in re-describing others, he is uncovering their true selves and interests, thereby empowering them.... Only the metaphysically minded politician can promise that" (Fraser, 1990, p. 310).

Rorty's response during his later works is to suggest a partition of spheres. In the public sphere, the duty one has to the community takes precedence. In the private sphere, the duty one has to oneself is important, and the individual can disaffiliate from the community (Fraser, 1990, p. 311; Griffiths, 1995, pp. 124-126). This effectively neutralises the ironist's private descriptions and precludes the illiberal consequences of these descriptions. Ironists who endeavour to force their cruel descriptions on others are being oppressive, and are reigned in by the political conception of justice.

For Fraser, it is a limiting view of abnormal discourse which forces Rorty to produce a sharply dichotomous view of the ideal liberal society, where ironic theory must be apolitical and reformist practice must be non-critical, atheoretical discourse. In this view "both culture and theory get depoliticized" (Fraser, 1990, p. 314; Fraser, 1991, p. 263). The problem, according to Fraser (1991, p. 262), is that this view of liberal society assumes that there are "no deep social cleavages, no pervasive axes of dominance and exploitation that could fracture" the political community. The irony for Fraser is that:

... such a dichotomous picture should be the upshot of a body of thought that aimed to soften received dichotomies like theory versus practice, aesthetic versus moral, science versus literature....

Consider that Rorty makes non-liberal, oppositional discourses non-political by definition.... Thus Rorty casts the motive for operational discourse as aesthetic and apolitical. He cast the subject of such discourse as the lone, alienated, heroic individual. And he casts the object or topic of radical discourses as something other than the needs and problems of the social collectivity. (1990, p. 314)

In dismissing ironic or non-hegemonic redescriptions to the private sphere, the ironist is, by definition, acting/speaking apolitically. There is no place for the genuinely innovative redescriptions of political practices produced by a politically marginalised group, such as feminists (Fraser, 1991, p. 262). As Griffiths suggests, Rorty's position suggests that women must choose between either self-creation or the pursuit of justice (1995, p. 126).

Prior to Rorty's investigations of feminism, his mapping of cultural space was based on the idea of the private liberal ironist, motivated by a need to create him or herself and "outstrip his predecessors or cultural fathers" (Fraser, 1991, p. 261), by disaffiliating from the public space to produce new and creative descriptions of it. Members of the

public space were concerned with practical problem solving and social reform. Such practical problems are endangered by the individualistic recreations of strong poets. Apart from being individualistic, and masculinist, redescription, thus understood, was thought to be politically dangerous to the liberal community, and for the sake of peace and solidarity, had to be positioned in the private realm.

Unfortunately, when so conceptualised, Rorty excluded some significant things from public space. According to Fraser

There is no place in Rorty's framework for *political* motivations for the invention of new idioms, no place for idioms invented to overcome the enforced silencing or muting of disadvantaged social groups. Similarly, there is no place for *collective* subjects of non-liberal discourse, hence, no place for radical discourse communities that contest dominant discourse.... In sum, there is no place in Rorty's framework for genuinely radical political discourses rooted in *oppositional* solidarities (Fraser, 1990, p. 316).

Radical feminism is one of many groups that have questioned the separation of spheres that Rorty proposes. According to Fraser:

Is it really possible to distinguish redescriptions which affect actions with consequences for others from those which either do not affect actions at all or which affect only actions with no consequences for others?... Women's movements, as illuminated by feminist theory, have taught us that the domestic and the personal are political. Finally, a whole range of New Left social movements,... have taught us that the cultural, the medical, the educational... is political. Yet Rorty's partition position requires us to bury these insights, to turn our backs on the last hundred years of social history. It requires us, in addition, to privatize theory. Feminists, especially, will want to resist this last requirement, lest we see our theory go the way of our housework. (1990, pp. 312, 313; also see Schultz, 1999, p. 4)

In response, Fraser contrasts Rorty's view of abnormal discourse with another. She suggests that feminists would be better served by a view of abnormal discourse as "...discourse in which such matters are up for grabs. It involves a plurality of differentiable if not incommensurable voices and it consists in an exchange among them that is lively if somewhat disorderly" (1990, p. 313). This produces the opportunity for collective, political and democratic redescriptions of oppressions.<sup>65</sup> The problem with Rorty is that he produces an excessively individualistic, aestheticised and private view of radicalism, a view which might not take into account the gendered nature of strong poetry, and the

possibility for protection of abnormal political discourse produced by females who, as a group, feel oppressed in the current society (Ahmed, 1996, p. 79; Schultz, 1999, p. 4).

Fraser suggests that the problem with this view is that it overstates the individuality of abnormal discourse by the strong poet. Rorty's strong poet or ironic theorist is the individual who is "a solitary voice crying out into the night against an utterly undifferentiated background" (Fraser, 1990, p. 313). The two responses possible are cruel, humiliating but understandably uncomprehending ignorance, or identificatory imitation. There is no room for communication with other discordant voices (Fraser, 1990, p. 313). According to Fraser (1991, p. 262), it was the linking of pragmatism with the specific issues produced by feminism that changed his view of political society and abnormal discourse. Rorty recognised that the sharply dichotomous views of public and private, practice and theory, community and individual, political and aesthetic, could not be sustained in engaging with the female question. Females had experienced such systematic oppression, that the ironic redescriptions which females make must also recreate society, and are thus political actions. In the case of feminism, there is no dichotomy between remaking oneself and 'cruel' political transformation. Rorty's meeting with feminism is an "...instance of the sort of paradigm-breaking transformation that feminists have long said must occur whenever androcentric modes of understanding are forced to confront the problematic of gender" (Fraser, 1991, p. 262).

Feminists (Bickford, 1993, p. 114; Fraser, 1991, pp. 261, 262; MacKinnon, 1989, pp. 120-124; Ahmed, 1996, p. 75) suggest a redescription of Rorty's liberal utopia to include the importance of collective and political world-making. These attempts at world-making are shared by political groups. They tap into commonly held, though not identical, experiences of oppression. As Jagger suggests:

Language is a public construct and its absence is a public, not a private, deficit. Creating a new language is by definition a collective project, not something that can be accomplished by a single individual; if the subaltern woman seeks to enter practical discourse alone, therefore, her experience is likely to remain distorted and repressed. She can overcome her silence only by collaborating with other subaltern women in developing a public language.... Articulating women's distinctive interests requires a language and this, in turn, requires a community. Without either of these, the emergence of counterhegemonic moral perspectives remains impossible (1998, pp. 5, 6)<sup>66</sup>

Similarly, Fraser suggests that her disagreement with the feminist-reformed Rorty, is that his continued explanation of the feminist as a prophet and/or member of an outcast club, belies the reality that feminism is a large, heterogeneous and politically forceful social movement that has already developed a publicly consumable, counter-hegemonic language prior to any meeting with pragmatism. So Fraser's call is to move beyond the transition from irony to prophecy, and recognise the move from prophecy to feminist politics that is ongoing (1991, pp. 263, 264).

### **Feminist Ironic Difference and Political Change from within Structural Dominance**

When Salmon Rushdie redescribes the cherished Muslim prophet in *The Satanic Verses* in new and exciting ways, it is cruel and humiliating for offended Muslims (Weislogel, 1990, p. 308). Or, in terms of this thesis, the feminist(s) who redescribes patriarchal society and its cherished traditions is as cruel for not respecting the terms of the patriarch, in this conception, as the patriarch is to the feminist. Each party's voice silences the other. Rorty's initial solution to this cruelty was to produce a barrier between the private redescription of the liberal ironist and the public solidarity of the liberal community. The community may take up the redescription if it catches on, but there is no certainty it will. The problem for females, according to Jagger (1998, p. 4) is that the voice used by the patriarch and the voice use by the feminist are not equally audible in our society. Our society is structured to listen to the male voice and ignore or reject the female voice. As Jagger states:

... we must never forget that empirical discussions are always infused with power, which influences who is able to participate and who is excluded, who speaks and who listens, whose remarks are heard and whose dismissed, which topics are addressed and which are not, what is questioned and what is taken for granted, even whether a discussion takes place at all (1998, p. 4; also see Ahmed, 1996, p. 79)

Feminists have long seen the need to politicise private space precisely because the cruelty and humiliation, exacted against females, which occurs in the private realm has been structurally protected and made acceptable by this division in society. MacKinnon states that "...the domain in which women are distinctly subordinated and deprived of

power, has been placed beyond reach of legal guarantees. Women are oppressed socially, prior to law, without express state acts, often in intimate contexts” (MacKinnon, 1989, pp. 164, 165). Hence, the ideal liberal state, so conceptualised, does favour males by not interfering. That is, past legal and social systems have protected men from prosecution for crimes committed in the home (Poovey, 1992, p. 290 cited by Ahmed, 1996, p. 78). Rorty might counter by suggesting that once an act becomes cruel, it is necessarily public. For example, whilst marital rape might occur in the home, the cruelty and oppression of such an act makes it a public act, and the victim of such cruelty should have her story listened to with respect. Much of the good work of radical feminism has involved the revelation of these links between the private and the public.

But Bickford would suggest that there are mechanisms in society, which cross the private and the public sphere, which make such liberal irony an option that is not equally shared by men and women. Men have greater opportunities to produce redescriptions than women do. Women as members of a specific sex group are less autonomous, understood as less powerful in acting and speaking, than men are. The opportunity for the creation of a novel self-identity is an opportunity that is infused with political relationships of class, race and gender (Bickford, 1993, p. 110; also see Griffiths, 1995, pp. 130, 166; Ahmed, 1996, pp. 79, 87).<sup>67</sup> For Bickford, feminists must concern themselves with the relationships between irony and solidarity, between private and public. Women telling stories about their experiences in religion or sport, practices of the private realm, often must include a political analysis of the ways that all women are silenced in these activities. It is not merely that each individual is silenced, but that all women, even those who are more successful in these practices than other women, are silenced by the larger social and political context of these practices, and society in general (Bickford, 1993, p. 113). She concludes that the assertion by Rorty that ironic redescription of these practices should be confined to the private realm cannot be contemplated by the feminist tradition. For feminists, the value of the story, or the theory, is its relation to the practice; that it shows the relationship between the ‘self’ and the ‘world’ which females experience as always evident (Bickford, 1993, p. 113; Fraser, 1991, p. 262; Griffiths, 1995, p. 93). What Rorty has ignored is that the:

"constraints" of liberal society are felt differently by different people; not randomly but by virtue of one's gender, racial or ethnic heritage, class position,

sexuality, etc. The very institutions that Rorty would look to as the locus for change are themselves gendered... (Bickford, 1993, p. 114)<sup>68</sup>

MacKinnon (1989) and Bickford (1993) would suggest that because sexism is systemic in our Western societies, it is difficult to conceive of which institutions would be useful for protecting and advancing the private discourses of a woman. In other words, there may be no space for women in society that can be conceptualised as private.

MacKinnon explains:

But these demarcations between morals and politics, science and politics, the personality of the judge and the judicial role, bare coercion and the rule of the law, tend to merge in women's experience. Relatively seamlessly they promote the dominance of men as a social group through privileging the form of power- the perspective on social life- which feminist consciousness reveals as socially male...

Formally, the state is male in that objectivity is its norm. Objectivity is liberal legalism's conception of itself. It legitimates itself by reflecting its view of society, a society it helps make by so seeing it, and calling that view, and that relation, rationality. (1989, p. 162)

Women's existence suggests a web where the dominant strand, meshing with all other strands of discourse, is the dominance of men and the subordination of women. Whilst other strands of the web may be broken, reformed or strengthened, the dominant strand remains intact. And, even if the dominant strand is broken, it will reform because of the numerous and diverse strands that have traditionally relied upon the dominant strand.<sup>69</sup> Morwenna Griffiths also uses the metaphor of a web to explain the construction of a self, a language and a community. But, for Griffiths, such a construction occurs where "the circumstances of the making are not under her [the maker's] control" (1995, p. 2, 95).<sup>70</sup> The making of the web occurs within pre-existing relations of power and authority between people on the basis of sex, sexuality, race and class. The ability to remake existing and oppressive webs of belief is an opportunity affected by specific forms of embodiment (Griffiths, 1995, pp. 2, 66, 67). The next section of this chapter will investigate how some feminists have described the effect of gendered embodiments on the opportunity to remake society.

### **Gendered Embodiments and the Private/Public Split**

According to a humanist (male) reading of liberal society, sex creates differences, which underlie a basic, common humanity. The sameness branch of this philosophy calls for the inclusion of females in those practices that had previously been denied to them. That is, "... we [women] deserve what they [men] have" (MacKinnon, 1987, p. 33).<sup>71</sup> The special considerations that occur because of the differences between men and women values or compensates women for such differences which are produced under existing conditions. Whilst patronising to women, it is believed necessary in order to avoid the problems of competition between the sexes in practices where such competition would result in male dominance, such as in most sports (MacKinnon, 1987, p. 33).

MacKinnon explains that the point of feminism should not just be to uncover difference, but to show the "difference gender makes" (MacKinnon, 1987, p. 23), to the way bodies are socially inscribed as powerful or powerless, by the very mechanisms which the liberal society produces to support the notion of equality. As Carole Pateman clearly expresses:

... the profound ambiguity of the liberal conception of the private and public obscures and mystifies the social reality it helps constitute. Feminists argue that liberalism is structured by patriarchal as well as class relations, and that the dichotomy between the private and the public obscures the subjection of women by men within an apparently universal, egalitarian and individualist order... They [Liberals] do not recognize that 'liberalism' is patriarchal liberalism and that the separation and opposition of the public and private spheres is an unequal opposition between women and men... one reason why this exclusion goes unnoticed is that the separation of the private and public is presented in liberal theory as if it applied to all individuals in the same way (1987, pp. 104, 105).

This humanist reading of sex equality and neutrality conceals the way that the male standard in most practices has become the measure of things (MacKinnon, 1987, p. 34). What this 'sameness' standard fails to recognise is that, although male differences from females equal female differences from males, the rewards for such differences are not socially equal in public life. The hierarchy of the sexes produces differences that are systematically unequal (MacKinnon, 1987, p. 37).<sup>72</sup> Far from being neutral, this approach

creates reality to suit the powerful. The dominance of the powerful exists prior to the discourse of difference that is said to legitimate that power.

For MacKinnon, the example of Linda Marchiano is one in a society that systematically supports male authority and female powerlessness.<sup>73</sup> She explains in the following way:

The differences we attribute to sex are lines inequality draws, not any kind of basis for it. Social and political inequality are, I think, basically indifferent to sameness and difference. Differences are inequality's post hoc excuse.... Inequality comes first; differences come after. Inequality is substantive and identifies a disparity; difference is abstract and falsely symmetrical. If this is so, a discourse of gender difference serves as ideology to neutralize, rationalize, and cover disparities of power, even as it appears to criticize them. Difference is the velvet glove on the iron fist of dominance. (1987, p. 8).

Such domination is evident in the control of descriptions that men have over women, which is supported by supposedly gender-neutral liberal concepts. For MacKinnon, feminists, as defenders of women's rights to be heard, could cite the following cases:

We resent the society that protects pornography as freedom of speech without considering that it also terrorizes and silences women,.... This is a society that turns away from the beating of women in the home, which it calls a haven, and affirms the family to which battery is endemic.... We resent having motherhood forced on us by unwanted sex, being deprived of or discouraged from using contraception, having poverty or guilt keep us from abortions, and then being saddled with the entire care of children - alone.... We have had enough of the glorification of this heterosexuality, this eroticization of dominance and submission, while woman-centered sexual expression is denied and stigmatized. (1987, pp. 28, 29)

Such distortions are revealed as oppressive because the notion of freedom is tied to the possibility of being able to be considered a credible narrator of your own story. Liberal society suggests that all people have the right to tell their own stories; this is the notion of freedom of speech. But, powerlessness occurs when your story is not accepted. In Rorty's terms, powerlessness is to be excluded from society; to not "...be taken as a possible conversational partner by those who shape... society's self-image" (1991c, p. 206).

The dominance of males in society occurs because males have been able to silence the voices of females by excluding them from access to authority (MacKinnon, 1987, p.

128). Such silence does not mean that women don't have a story to tell. It merely means that no-one is listening when they use words that have not been used before (MacKinnon, 1987, p. 169), and that to be listened to they must speak in the words that men choose for them. She states:

...when you are powerless, you don't just speak differently. A lot, you don't speak. Your speech is not just differently articulated, it is silenced. Eliminated, gone. You aren't just deprived of a language with which to articulate your distinctiveness, although you are; you are deprived of a life out of which articulation might come...it is also silence of the deep kind, the silence of being prevented from having anything to say. Sometimes it is permanent. All I am saying is that the damage of sexism is real, and reifying that into differences is an insult to our possibilities. (1987, p. 39)<sup>74</sup>

In Young's terms, where a certain group controls the "power, resources, access to publicity" and positions of authority, neutral decision-making procedures that impartially allow all people to state their cases will merely perpetuate the interests of the powerful (1990a, p. 114). These impartial democratic processes often "silence, ignore and render deviant the abilities, needs and norms of others" (1990a, p. 116). But perhaps more importantly in terms of change, such neutral procedures make it easier to ignore the redescriptions proposed by the others to make their society, or their practice, less oppressive. The political question of understanding the 'other' in conditions of inequality is posed by Spivak (1990, p.59 cited by Griffiths, 1995, p. 41):

For me, the question 'Who should speak?' is less crucial than 'Who will listen?'. 'I will speak for myself as a Third World Person' is an important position for political mobilization today. But the real demand is that, when I speak from that position, I should be listened to seriously, not with the kind of benevolent imperialism, really, which simply says that because I happen to be an Indian or whatever...

The difficulty of the question includes the idea that the 'granting' of speech is itself a political manoeuvre, which reinforces power differences. A dialogue with an 'other' is made difficult by the social distance between the [less powerful] speaker and the [more powerful] listener. The more marginal the speaker is, the more difficult it is for even the most tolerant listener to engage with him/her (Griffiths, 1995, pp. 42-44).

MacKinnon begins the reconceptualisation of the liberalism with the starting point that in most substantive practices males are still dominant, and females are still powerless, after 200 years of neutral liberal principles. Hence, gender is an inequality first, which is socially constructed. Such inequalities are then constructed as legitimate by a resolute production of underlying sex differences by the powerful. But these differences do not explain the underlying sexual inequality. In her terms:

...if gender is an inequality first, constructed as a socially relevant differentiation in order to keep that inequality in place, then sex inequality questions are questions of systematic dominance, of male supremacy, which is not at all abstract and is anything but a mistake.

If differentiation into classifications, in itself, is discrimination, as it is in the difference doctrine, the use of law to change group-based social inequalities becomes problematic, even contradictory... This is only to say that, in the view that equates differentiation with discrimination, changing an unequal status quo is discrimination, but allowing it to exist is not.

[Why is this the case?]<sup>75</sup> From the point of view of the dominance approach, it becomes clear that the difference approach adopts the point of view of male supremacy on the status of the sexes. Simply by treating the status quo as “the standard”, it invisibly and uncritically accepts the arrangements under male supremacy. In this sense, the difference approach is masculinist, although it can be expressed in a female voice...(1987, pp. 42, 43)

The so-called ‘objective’ practices of the many institutions in society are revealed as practices that support the status quo, and therefore support those who are dominant in the practice. The shift in paradigms from sameness-difference to power-powerless makes questions of sex inequality into questions of eliminating oppression, and not extending human rights. Feminists should begin their story, as MacKinnon does by acknowledging that: “Sex, in nature, is not a bipolarity; it is a continuum. In society it is made into bipolarity. Once this is done, to require that one be the same as those who set the standard-those which one is already socially defined as different from- simply means that sex equality is conceptually designed never to be achieved” (MacKinnon, 1987, p. 44). Once this is the starting point for analysis and storytelling, the feminist can then begin to attempt to remake their society and their practices in new and exciting ways.

### **Feminist Conclusions on Rortian Pragmatism**

Fraser (1990; 1991) suggests a recipe for redescribing Rortian pragmatism that takes into account this structural oppression of women. She begins by suggesting that feminists should use the antiessentialism that Rorty espouses, but should not be limited by the liberal individualism he champions. Feminists should be open to a diversity of political movements including those that criticise the structure of liberalism. It may be that collective action and redescription is more useful for an oppressed social group such as females, than strong poetry is, although neither should be ignored. So the view of society is one that is neither hyperindividualised nor hypercommunitarian, because the feminist recognises the value of a variety of social collectivities and strong poets to the fight against sexism. Such a view should recognise distinctions in power between feminist groups and endeavour to listen to both the powerful and the subordinate within feminism.

Secondly, borrow from the radical feminists the idea of the relationship between private freedom and public authority. Such radicalism recognises the way that background institutions, practices and traditions limit the possibilities for strong poetry, storytelling or collective redescription by females in our society. As Pateman suggests, "Feminists have emphasized how personal circumstances are structured by public factors, by laws about rape and abortion, by the 'status' of wife, by policies on childcare..." (1987, p. 117). The female understands, because she experiences, the split between public and private life, whilst at the same time those experiences affirm the relationship between the two spheres. Iris Young suggests that we redescribe the notions of public and private so that "...the private should be defined, as in one strand of liberal theory, as that aspect of his or her life and activity that any person has a right to exclude others from. The private in this sense is not what public institutions exclude, but what the individual chooses to withdraw from public view" (1990a, p. 119). This results in two political principles that are important for victims of sexism. Nothing that happens to a person should be forced into privacy. But secondly, no institution or practice should be excluded from public discussion on the basis of being part of the private sphere (Young, 1990a, p. 120). This viewpoint corresponds with many of the important revelations of consciousness raising such as marital and date

rape, but equally it brings into public view such things as the unpaid nature of women's housework and care for children. As Young suggests:

Ours is still a society that forces persons or aspects of persons into privacy. Repression of homosexuality is perhaps the most striking example... Our society is only beginning to change the practice of keeping the mentally and physically disabled out of view... By extension, children should be kept out of public view, and of course their voices should not receive public expression (1990a, p. 120).

The female is another whose actions, artwork, literature, sporting performance, intellectual achievements, knowledges and experiences have often been silenced by being placed in the private sphere by males, often against her wishes.

Consider that the institutional structure of society may be sexist or unjust (Fraser, 1991, p. 262). This allows the feminist to recapture the importance of critical social theory in uncovering the systematic oppression of her gender, in addition to literature in revealing the personal experiences of oppression. When MacKinnon talks of all women needing protection from pornography, it is because they suffer both individually, and as a gender. A critical theory may explain links between apparently discreet experiences of oppression by individuals and systematic oppression suffered by females. As Ahmed explains, "a feminist pragmatic historicism points to the fact that social and linguistic practices and conceptual systems are sites of contestation and are overdetermined by an unequal distribution of power" (1996, p. 79).

But add to this an awareness of the importance of language and language-change to changing oppressive practices and communities. As Fraser states, "This distinction [between normal and abnormal discourse]<sup>76</sup> clears a space for those far-reaching redescriptions of social life at the heart of every new political vision.... This distinction also allows for contestatory interactions among competing political vocabularies" (1990, p. 317). Contestation is understood both at the structural level and in the area of semantic control. Females should endeavour to gain access to public offices that are denied to them, but equally they should gain a share in the discourses of those institutions. This allows for the combining of politics and poetry in producing social justice that cuts across both public and private life.

Next, add a view of the agents of social change as located within existing social practices which they view as partly oppressive, but which they do not necessarily want to depart from. This allows feminists to

Avoid a rigid, dichotomous opposition between playing the game in the same old way and starting completely from scratch.... Avoid, also, a dichotomy between sheer invention and mere application, between the heretofore undreamt of and its routinization. Instead, see these extremes as mediated in the social practice of social movements. See such practice as spanning the gulf between the old and the new... This allows for the possibility of a radical politics that is not Sorelian,...(Fraser, 1990, p. 318).

Combine all these things with a utopian vision of society which recreates the “relations of work and play, citizenship and parenthood, friendship and love” (Fraser, 1990, p.319) to create a vision which recognises the importance of relations between humans, rather than individual self-creation, in producing liberal freedoms. Add both optimistic social hope and the pessimism that comes with an intellectual understanding of the tradition of sexism, and a recipe is produced for a pragmatic feminist theory.

The next section of this thesis will demonstrate, in an abbreviated way, the utility for females in describing sport in this fashion. Such a demonstration will be abbreviated because the remainder of the thesis will continually return to this pragmatic notion of sport, and apply the ‘tools’ it supplies to a variety of situations which females confront in sport. Subsequent chapters in the thesis will move on to describe the selected traditions of feminism in terms of this reformulated pragmatic feminism, and what female athletes may find useful in the various traditions in order to gain a voice in sport. As MacKinnon expresses:

... if not participating in male-defined sport does not mean fear or rejection of failure or success, but the creation of a new standard, of a new vision of sport, the problem of pursuing a feminist perspective... is differently posed [to the liberal question of Title IX]<sup>77</sup>

This attempt at a new perspective... does not simply justify separatism. It is an argument that women as women in a feminist sense have a distinctive contribution to make that is neither a sentimentalization of our oppression as women nor an embrace of the model of our oppressor (MacKinnon, 1987, p. 123).

The creation and acceptance of this 'new' sports discourse/world may be assisted by the ideas that have been discussed so far in this chapter.

### **Possibilities for Females in Sport**<sup>78</sup>

Sport is one practice in Western society that, in a variety of ways, does not approach either the Rortian or the feminist ideal model of authority and justice. Rorty explains that there is a simple way that women are excluded from authority, understood as 'the opportunity to be a possible conversational partner'. The method is to "use *man* as a synonym of *human being*". Such symmetry is revealed by the "average male's thankfulness that he was not born a woman" and by his fear of feminisation that excludes some practices from the web he chooses to spin for himself (1993a, p. 3). And such an essential exclusion seems to be particularly relevant in the practice of sport.

This fear of feminisation is revealed by the exclusion of women from the conversations, as well as the practice, of certain important activities including sport. These activities are important because they reinforce the authoritative dominance of maleness over femaleness. According to MacKinnon:

Women athletes or academics or military women may be allowed to play with the boys, but we are not allowed to criticize competition or strength or profitability as the standard for athletics, to question objectivity as a measure of intellectual excellence or abstraction as the point of scholarship, nor are we allowed to reject combat as a peculiarly ejaculatory means of conflict resolution (1987, p. 74).

To resist efforts to include females in the discussion of these practices is to achieve two things for men. It is to ignore questions of the systematic way that 'neutral' principles in sport, academia and the military favour male power and female powerlessness. And secondly, it is to produce certain 'separatist' clubs for men that are extremely powerful in maintaining men's position of dominance by suggesting that such dominance offers 'protection' to women, from danger, from ignorance and from foreign invasion. Questions of gender power in sport reveal that any artificial boundary between private and public may not serve female athletes well. Sport may be an area of life where females are produced as powerless. In an ideal world, all individuals may have the opportunity to

produce new languages and discourses if they feel oppressed by the current ones. But in the world of sport, women and men for a variety of reasons may not equally share this opportunity. Roberts tells the story of how John Willes developed the overarm bowl in cricket. He was motivated to bowl like this in first-class English cricket because of “the bowling of his sister, Christina, which came awkwardly at the bat after the roundarm delivery forced on her by her voluminous crinolines” (Frith, cited in Roberts, 1997, p. 71). But would Christina ever be credited with discovering the roundarm delivery in cricket? Was Christina allowed to play cricket? Females who are oppressed by the production of discourse must make it a public issue that produces aesthetic distaste amongst the community, if change is to be produced. But the structural inequalities in terms of access to participation, access to a public forum via the media, and differential socialisation in terms of males and females making authoritative statements in public and private should not be ignored, and remain important mechanisms for maintaining male power in many contemporary sports.

But in addition, the sporting world creates and maintains strong and regulatory demarcations between men and women that maintain the power differential, based on historical ideas of the need to protect the female from her anatomical and physiological weakness. Women tennis players play best of three sets and men play best of five sets. The longest swimming race in the pool for women in the Olympics is the 800 meter race, whilst for men, it is the 1500 meter race. Similar differences occur in cycling, athletics, ironperson and triathlon championships. Some sports are exclusively male sports (at least at the elite level), whilst other sports are exclusively female, and the patronage of, and coverage given to, these two sets of sports are not equal. Rarely do men and women compete together, and when they do the focus is on demonstrating gender difference rather than similarities and overlaps in the performances of members of the genders. And when certain techniques, such as anabolic steroids, are developed which may reduce those gaps in performance between males and females playing in sports which are decided according to our current male-made conditions of sport, these performance enhancers are banned by the male-dominated institutions which run sport, again to protect women from, amongst other things, ‘masculinisation’. Whose power/freedom are the legislators protecting here?

The suggestion being put forward is that female and male bodies are created, maintained and disciplined through the sport discourse, and opposition to sporting inequality must include understanding the ways that sport is used to sex bodies as male or female.

But moreso, sporting practice is public practice where results and comparisons are usually obvious. And this evident result is often the criteria used for allocating power within the practice community. Those who run the fastest and jump the highest get to talk about sport and be listened to with respect. How are those women who wish to be listened to with respect going to respond? They must create imaginative ways of talking which replace the tired old metaphors about sporting excellence, which are labeled truth. As Roberts states: “While they [these conventional, traditional and masculine discourses about sport]<sup>79</sup> may have truth on their side, truth here should be understood more as the “kiss of death”- a mixed blessing that renders them powerless to perform new tricks, to right the wrongs, to reduce cruelty...” (1995, p. 95). And later on, he remarks that “[t]he time for metaphor is when the literal is no longer working” (1995, p. 99), for an oppressed group. Because authority in sport is related to excellence in performance, and excellence has been narrowly understood as measured performance, women must find ways of challenging this relationship if they are to gain greater authority. And such a challenge will involve the production of abnormal discourse concerning these things.

There are a number of methods of propaganda, which are currently having some success in revealing and resisting the oppression faced by females in sport. A number of critical sociologists, ethnographers, ethicists and feminists have demonstrated the masculine ‘nature/discourse’ of sport, and the problems associated with such a discourse. The destabilisation caused by novels, television shows and movies which parody the hypermasculinity, homophobia, violence and sexism in male sport should not be underestimated in terms of their revolutionary potential (Cook and Jennings, 1995), a valuation that is often placed on comedy<sup>80</sup>. Legal challenges, including those by female sports reporters such as Lisa Olson who was sexually harassed in the changerooms of a professional gridiron side when doing her job (Disch and Kane, 1996; Kane and Disch, 1993), and those by female athletes who have been excluded from their chosen sport because it is considered too masculine (McArdle, 1999), are all parts of the wider feminist

movement to challenge the dominance of the maleness of reason in sport, and in society. None should be underestimated as futile, and nor should they be overestimated as successful, yet. All may produce sentimental change in the oppressive community that will result in changes in sporting rationality.

But other women have used their silenced position as one from which to make incisive and creative commentary about sport, to produce a female standpoint. As Stephanie Holt suggests about female participation in the discourse of Australian Rules Football:

Neither interlopers nor intimates in a masculine realm, women seem, rather, invisible insiders.

This apparent contradiction, that women can be such passionate supporters of a game they (usually) do not play, may be what makes them such telling observers of the game.

Some of the most striking recent reflections of the game- Megan Spencer's film *Heathens*, Cassandra Tomb's behind-the-scenes photographs, and Elizabeth Gower's footy paintings- come from women (1996, p. B4)

These women have used their otherness to become creative commentators about the male sport, and occupy a position that is usually barricaded from women because of the exclusionary conventional belief that 'they cannot know footy because they have never played the game'.<sup>81</sup>

Many of these opportunities for change will be discussed in the following chapters. During Chapter Three, the early history of female participation in sport will be redescribed as a time when eccentric strong poets and separatist groups challenged the dominance of male medical, social and legal discourse which tried to restrict their participation. To paraphrase Roberts (1997), we can look back and recognise the courage and imagination of females such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and collective groups like the Womanhood Field Club and the Pinnacle Club, as important in creating new spaces for female athletes to partake in sport on their own terms. We can also recognise the potential for the incorporation of female autonomy and the reaffirmation of the maleness of sport that occurs with equal opportunities legislation in the 1970s. As MacKinnon states, equal opportunity legislation has been highly effective at getting men access to what women traditionally have, or provisionally have won (1987, p. 35). Equal access to participation

does not bring about equity of respect towards male and female participants. Chapter Four of this thesis will use both the feminist critiques of liberalism and the feminist promotion of difference to explain a broader potential for equal opportunities legislation in sport.

Chapter Five will investigate the importance of radical feminist critiques of sporting practice as one aspect of an unequal and sexist society. Such critiques fit with MacKinnon's (1987) line of argument that female athletics is one practice that contributes to a systematic oppression of women. What is interesting, in terms of MacKinnon's viewpoints on pornography, is how many of those ideas are repeated in sport. The dominance of male judgments, presented as universal or gender-blind rules and conventions in sport, are revealed as particularly oppressive for female athletes. The link between athletic success and 'feminine' attractiveness will be investigated particularly in terms of the issue of media portrayals in sport which, whilst apparently neutral between the sexes, affects women differently to men, and maintains a passive/athletic/ sexually attractive pose for women as the ideal. Women lose one opportunity to step out of the normal/male discourse about their participation in sport and their appropriate body shape because of their economically driven need to satisfy the aesthetic tastes for femininity decided by the media and major sponsors.

Finally, in Chapter Six, this thesis will investigate the links between Foucault and a feminism of the body, particularly in terms of both the 'pleasure' women gain in agreeing to their subordination to normal/male society, and the opportunities for transgression of these subordinations. It will follow from this that it is difficult to expect metaphoric change to come from all females who are successful in sport. Many can be considered as 'token' females whose identity is importantly shaped by their contrast with the other, but their others are unsuccessful females. But Foucault, like Rorty, believes that change occurs because at the micropolitical level of practices, certain women experience the oppression of their bodies and resist it. These women recreate themselves. In this chapter, I will investigate some of the recreations that have been apparent in female sport, and predict some that might yet become apparent.

But moreso, the sixth chapter will take up the feminist criticism of Rorty's pragmatism. It will be suggested that the authoritative voice is, for the most part, embodied

male (Griffiths, 1995, pp. 66, 67, 78). Using the works of body-feminists, such as Judith Butler (1999a; 1999b) and Anne Balsamo (1996) it will be suggested that we cannot separate the lack of authority of women from their embodied subjectivity. Women must challenge their opportunity to produce abnormal discourse at the level of their embodiment. This may involve a feminist, rather than a humanist, viewpoint on things that limit the female athletic body, such as drug laws, aesthetic judgements, male images of abortion<sup>82</sup>, and differential corporeal socialisation. Resistance to male authority may commence at the level of the body, and so sport may be considered one valuable area for the development of abnormal feminist discourse.

### Conclusions

Rorty is not deluded about the size of the battle that feminists are engaging in. He explains the proportions of the relative teams in the following way:

Masculinism is a much bigger and fiercer monster than any of the little, parochial, monsters with which pragmatists and deconstructionists struggle. For masculinism is the defense of people who have been on top since the beginning of history against attempts to topple them; that sort of monster is very adaptable, and I suspect that it can survive almost as well in an anti-logocentric as in a logocentric philosophical environment... (1993b, p. 101)

Yet, Rorty also recognises that, whilst masculinism may be an overwhelming opponent, separate masculine practices are not. There is an opportunity to attack masculinism in a piecemeal fashion, deconstructing and redescribing separate practices so as to chip away at the edges of this huge monster, and in so doing create greater space for women to speak as women. Sport might be an important piece of the masculine monster, and a sustained feminist redescription of sport might produce far-reaching effects of liberation for women outside of sport. Rorty explains:

The main advantage of ...pragmatists...is that they... admit that all they have to offer is occasional bits of ad hoc advice- advice about how to reply when masculinist attempt to make present practices seem inevitable. Neither pragmatists nor deconstructionists can do more for feminism than help rebut attempts to ground these practices on something deeper than the contingent historical fact- the fact that the people with slightly larger muscles have been bullying the people with the slightly smaller muscles for a very long time. (1993b, p. 101; also see Balsamo, 1996, p. 162)

The present chapter has supplied both the foundation and the methodology to the rest of the thesis in a way that demonstrates how closely aligned the two areas are in both Rortian pragmatism and feminism. The foundation that arises from the conversation between feminism and Rortian pragmatism is that females can use the antifoundational view of truth, discourse and the body to create new structures and practices in society that are more liberating for them. The method that arises from Rortian pragmatism is to ensure this opportunity to speak is given to as many people in our ideal liberal society as possible in the creation of these 'new' sports. So the remaining chapters of this thesis will borrow extensively from the ethnographic, historical, fictional and critical work of feminist scholars and sport scholars as the data for this study. The originality of this study will be related to how this data is re-worked using various feminist frameworks to open up potentially new opportunities for female speech in sport and society. The proximity of female experience, feminist epistemology and feminist politics will hopefully become evident throughout this study.

The following four chapters will treat the various theories of feminism as potential redescriptions of society which can create space for females to enunciate the conditions of their existence. It will celebrate the words of the various individual women and groups of women who have produced abnormal discourse in society and, through courageous conviction, forced it into the community's discourse. It will recognise the importance of sport as an often-overlooked (by many of these feminists) part of the systematic oppression of women because it exists as a mechanism of control experienced at the private level of the female's body. So, this dissertation will try to promote a conversation between feminists and sports theorists with the goal of revealing methods of resisting the control which women experience in sport.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **HISTORICAL FEMINISM AND SPORT**

#### ***“JUST TRYING TO PLAY THE GAME”***

##### **Introduction**

Anne Hall (1996, pp. 37-40) explains that in order to understand the current differences in access to authority between the genders, it is important to recognise the way that this difference has been produced and maintained in history. Feminist scholarship in sports history must move away from the inclusion of women as add-ons to the history of sport, to a recognition that sport played a historical role in the maintenance of hierarchical gender relations, and the notions of sport and feminist history must be expanded to include this role. Women’s participation and performance in sport has always been negotiated within this set of hierarchical gender relations. To fully understand, and possibly critique, the gender relations that exist today, it is necessary to understand the evolution of these gender relations from the past and the force that this history still exerts today. So Hall endorses Vertinsky’s call for historical research which explains the links between sport and the social construction and maintenance of gender relations and differences (1994 cited by Hall, 1996, p. 37).

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate historical examples of the relations between the genders in society and sport. Rather than completing a comprehensive investigation of the early history of the feminist movement, the chapter will introduce themes of oppression, cultural annihilation and strong poetry by presenting a series of vignettes. The first section of the chapter will detail the ideas of four selected feminists.<sup>83</sup> What these feminists share was a willingness to extend the gendered boundaries in society. What many of these feminists, and others, also shared was the ways that the dominant male classes in their respective societies silenced their ideas.<sup>84</sup>

The second section will move on to the presentation of stories about strong female poets in the sporting world. In line with Jennifer Hargreaves (1994, p. 4), it will be suggested that women’s participation and placement in the social practice of sport was influenced by a number of contingencies. At certain times in history, forces over which

neither women nor men had control compromised the commonly suggested conservative and hegemonic forces, which acted against female participation in sport. That is, whilst it will be acknowledged that there were stiff proscriptions in society limiting women's participation in sport, such proscriptions always encountered resistance, and such resistance was often facilitated by events which were occurring which seemed distant from female sporting participation. Within this contingent history, individual females and groups of females achieved large gains in autonomy in terms of both their participation in sport, and the authority they had over their participation. In Cole and Birrell's terms, the presence of women in sport has always made sport an example of "leaky hegemony", where female subordination was never complete (1986 cited in Theberge, 1998, p. 2; also see Theberge, 1991b, p. 387).

However it will also be suggested that the current differences in both participation and authority between men and women in sport can be linked historically to the more public beliefs about women's passivity, dependence and health which were partly produced and sustained through their limited sporting participation. Balsamo describes these public beliefs in the following way:

... women were discouraged from participating in sport through what we now understand to be culturally defined "facts" of the female body. These facts asserted that women were "eternally wounded" because they bled during part of their reproductive (menstrual) cycle. This popular myth- again supported by medical knowledge of the time- defined women as chronically weak and as victims of a pathological physiology.... Limiting women's participation in sport and exercise functioned both to control women's unruly physiology and to protect them for the important job of species reproduction. (1996, pp. 42, 43)

Hence, because of the medically produced, and public 'fact' of women's pathology and weakness, women were excluded from participation in vigorous activities such as sport. This made clear the differences between the sexes, naturalised the physical superiority of men and permitted for the construction of a set of appropriate behaviours and roles for each sex. Any abnormal discourses privately produced by women through their sporting participation, met strong resistance from a variety of male controlled institutions (Lenskyj, 1986, p. 11). Whilst participation may have had a significant effect on the private lives of

some women, it was not allowed to make public the type of radical relational changes between the genders that it could have.

In the spirit of Foucault's archaeology<sup>85</sup>, this chapter will provide a brief counter-historical narrative of women's participation in sport that endeavours to include that which has been omitted from the more dominant readings of the history of women's participation in sport. It does so to disturb the 'truths' about women's participation in sport, which exist today.<sup>86</sup> For, as Foucault argues:

It is fruitful in a certain way to describe that which-is by making it appear as something that might not be, or that might not be as it is. Which is why this designation or description of the real never has a prescriptive value of the kind, 'because this is, that will be.' It is also why, in my opinion, recourse to history... is meaningful to the extent that history serves to show how that-which-is has not always been; i.e., that the things which seem most evident to us are always formed in the confluence of encounters and chances, during the course of a precarious and fragile history... It means that they reside on a base of human practice and human history; and that since these things have been made, they can be unmade, as long as we know how it was they were made (1990, p. 37 cited by McHoul and Grace, 1993, pp. 11, 12).

The narrative will be necessary to position the analysis of contemporary feminist strands and their applications to sport in Chapters Four, Five and Six. It is important to recognise in any contemporary analysis and intervention the long history of male dominance of sport, the mechanisms used to maintain that dominance and the incorporation of female resistance to the dominance of men in sport. But it is equally important to recognise the contingency of all these things; that a different making of historical knowledge could have produced a different range of possible subjectivities for women to enjoy in sport today. Who women athletes are today, as with any subjectivity, is "constituted historically in terms of both what has been and its fragility" (McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. x). So the aim of this chapter is to both present the case that the limited range of possible subjectivities available to female athletes today is a result of historical forces, and that such forces could have been otherwise.

The conclusion to this chapter is that whilst men have apparent control over the public discourses of society and sport, there are counter-histories of feminism and female sport that reveal that such control is fragile. It will be suggested that early feminists in

society, and in sport, worked at the radical and progressive edge of liberal thought, expanding its ideals to their practical and logical extent for females (Jagger, 1988, p. 28). The reforms suggested and implemented by these feminists to the dominant episteme of male domination and female subordination approximated the most that could be expected at these times. Using Rorty's web metaphor, reforms occurred to some of the supporting strands of the web, whilst the main strand of male dominance remained intact. But these reforms should be celebrated as the initial moves in a radical reconceptualisation of society and sport, which may bring greater freedom and power for females.

However it will also be suggested that feminists need to move beyond this type of reform; that the male control of history and official knowledge in society, and particularly in male-dominated practices like sport, requires a critique that must co-exist with liberal principles of equal participation in sport. As Hargreaves argues: "... the general failure of the past to incorporate gender relations of power into analyses... to relate them to other structures of society, and to deal with conflict and change, needs now to be tackled thoroughly" (1994, p. 26).<sup>87</sup>

The next section of this chapter briefly describes the works of four selected feminists. The purpose of this section is to demonstrate the ways that authoritative feminist texts were accepted or dismissed within a cultural context where what could be said by feminists was severely limited by the maintenance of an apparently 'natural' and hierarchical gender order. So the reforms sought by these early feminists were granted or denied according to the whims of the dominant group of males in society. The choice between 'cultural annihilation' or 'strong poetry' was one produced, as always, by those who control the discourses of society.

### **Feminism Throughout History- Selected Strong Poets**

Many early feminists accepted the view of human nature and society espoused by liberals. Their desire has been to apply these liberal principles to females; that is, to establish females as rational human beings and gain the rights and opportunities for females that accrue to humans in a liberal society. Several of the early liberals, whilst advocating notions of freedom, autonomy and equality for all humans, were reluctant or

opposed to the inclusion of females as members of this human class. Jagger states: “modern philosophers, including many liberals, have held substantially the same view [as Aristotle]. Hume, Rousseau, Kant, and Hegel, all doubted that women were fully rational” (1988, p. 36)<sup>88</sup>, and hence, should be subject to forms of paternalistic control by the state, their fathers and their husbands.

Liberal feminism extends liberal principles to women, by displaying the necessity of such extension from within the principles of liberalism. Hence, it endeavors to change women’s position in society by using the available conceptual resources offered by liberalism (Jagger, 1988, p. 37). Throughout history, the overriding goal of such liberal feminism has been to display why females must be included in the category of humans, and be granted the rights which accrue to humans in the liberal state. Marion Tapper explains the early history of feminism in the following way:

Liberal feminism, from its origins in the late eighteenth century, has been based on two principles: that the liberal conception of the individual ought to be extended to include women, and that women ought to be accepted on equal terms with men in the public realm. The political effect of understanding the oppression of women in liberal terms is to ask for reforms within the status quo... and to alter the conditions of the private realm to make this possible. (1986, p. 37)

These claims for equality via the application of liberal principles to females have been justified in different ways, according to the limit of what women, and supporters of women’s rights, could say, whilst being heard, about the position of women in society and the ‘nature’ of women (Jagger, 1988, pp. 27, 28).

### ***1) Seventeenth Century Calls for Equality***

The social transformation from feudalism to capitalism that was taking place in the seventeenth century created the conditions that assisted in the development of liberalism as a political ideology and practice. The period was one in which many of the traditions and conventions of society were being questioned, and where “secular sanctions were being substituted for divine ones” (Kinnaird, 1983, p. 30). This transformation affected women’s

lives as markedly as it affected men's lives, and women were vocal in questioning their existing social arrangements. As Jagger states:

Simultaneously with the new bourgeois man's revolt against the monarch's claim to authority by divine right, therefore, the new bourgeois woman began to rebel against traditional male claims to authority over her. Writing on marriage in the year 1700, Mary Astell asked [" "] If absolute Sovereignty be not necessary in a State how came it to be so in a Family? Or if in a Family why not in a State? Since no reason can be alleg'd for the one that will not hold more strongly for the other? If *all Men are born free*, how is it that all Women are born slaves? As they must be if the being subjected to the *inconstant, uncertain, unknown, arbitrary Will* of Men, be the Condition of Slavery [" "]. (1988, p. 27)

Mitchell (1987, pp. 32,33) argues that this early use of the new liberal tradition by females was the beginning of political feminism in three important ways. Firstly, these feminists observed the difference in opportunity and treatment for women and men; that is, they acknowledged women as a social group united in terms of lack of opportunities in society. As early as the seventeenth century, women were politically active in "challenging the entrenched beliefs about female inferiority- particularly intellectual inferiority- and... were protesting about women's exclusion from learning..." (Kinnaird, 1983, p. 29). Secondly, they acknowledged women's position as subordinate *because of* men as a social group who felt threatened by the possibility of including women as possible producers of knowledge in society. In 1675, Mrs. Hannah Woolley wrote:

The right Education of the Female Sex, as it is in a maner everywhere neglected, so it ought to be generally lamented. Most in this depraved later Age think a Woman learned and wise enough if she can distinguish her Husbands Bed from Anothers.... Vain man is apt to think we were merely intended for the Worlds propogation... but... had we the same Literature, he would find our brains as fruitful as our bodies. Hence I am induced to believe, we are debar'd from the knowledge of humane learning lest our pregnant Wits should rival the trowing conceits of our insulting Lords and Masters (1675 cited by Kinnaird, 1983, p. 28)

Finally, the radical edge to their appropriation of liberal ideals was to question the male control of reason and authority. These early feminists did not undervalue female qualities, and felt that males could learn something from women. As Mitchell describes the beliefs of one seventeenth century feminist:

The mental agility of women is valuable. 'I know' (writes our anonymous author) 'our Opposers usually mis-call our Quickness of Thought, Fancy and Flash, and christen their own Heaviness by the specious Names of Judgement and Solidity: but it is easy to retort upon 'em the reproachful ones of Dulness and Stupidity with more Justice', and she goes on to claim that potentially the women's world of care-for-others could be as much a repository of the highest values of civilization as the men's world of pursuing material gain. (1987, pp. 32, 33)

The seventeenth century 'proto-liberal'<sup>89</sup> feminists, using a radically tinged liberalism, suggested that women, as humans, were entitled the rights that accrued to humans, and justified this suggestion by arguing that both men and women would learn from each other, and society would benefit, in this situation.

## ***2) Mary Wollstonecraft and Natural Rights Arguments***

Since traditional liberalism argued that rights accrued to humans on the basis that all humans are equally capable of displaying rationality, then early feminists had to display that women were also capable of displaying rationality. Where it was argued that women in seventeenth and eighteenth century society did not act rationally, feminists of this era suggested that this problem was caused by a lack of opportunity within society, and not by any natural deficiency in the female make-up. Given the chance women would be capable of acting as rationally as men act.

Mary Wollstonecraft<sup>90</sup>, influenced by the works of French radical feminists of the time, sought to change the society in which she lived (Mitchell, 1987, pp. 37, 38). She hoped to extend the rights of citizenship, including the right to education and to vote, being fought for during the French Revolution of the time, to women. She argued forcefully that women could not realise their potential for full rationality, and the moral responsibility that goes with it in normative liberalism, because of the structure of society which deprived women of education and restricted them to the domestic sphere.<sup>91</sup> Given sufficient education and opportunity, women were capable of displaying their natural human potential for rationality (Mitchell, 1987, p. 36).

The radical edge to this appropriation of the natural rights argument of liberalism is the concept of androgyny that Wollstonecraft suggests as the result of the newly

empowered females establishing their autonomous skills in society. Wollstonecraft's problem in the practice of her feminist liberalism was the common suggestion that if a woman acted autonomously, and avoided female subservience, she would be labeled 'masculine'. What, then, would happen to her 'femaleness'? How could it be celebrated? Wollstonecraft's solution is to expand the concept of humanity so as to include and unify the social characteristics of men and women. She states: "A wild wish has just flown from my heart to my head, and I will not stifle it, though it may excite a horse-laugh. I do earnestly wish to see the distinction of sex confounded in society..." (1792, p. 63 cited in Mitchell, 1987, p. 36). This introduces a new political edge to the feminist tradition of the seventeenth century. Because Wollstonecraft cannot see such a celebration of androgyny within current English society, she suggests the need to reform society before any education towards androgyny is possible. She argues: "It may... fairly be inferred, that, till society be differently constituted, much cannot be expected from education" (1792, p. 25 cited in Mitchell, 1987, p.36).

Wollstonecraft's feminism endeavoured to weaken the conventional links between domestic life and duty to one's husband and political life and the development of society for women. Brody summarizes Wollstonecraft's concern with domestic life as follows:

There is a danger to women alone and to their hopes to become part of the rational fellowship of citizens because men as sensualists have degraded and debauched women, their bodies and their minds.... Raised to believe they can have authority only insofar as they dissimulate, flatter, and manipulate the sex which has power over them, young girls become foolish women.... What is worse is that this corrosion incapacitates women as rational citizens and apparently justifies their subordination. (1983, p. 53)

Wollstonecraft's solution provides a logical argument to her oppressors, which asserts the rights of women as a necessary requirement for civic/public life for all humans. As Brody states:

Women must be educated so they may be reasonable, reasonable so they may be virtuous, virtuous so that all of society may be happier. There is no call to arms in the *Vindication*, no call to take power.... If the *Vindication* tirelessly reiterates the primacy of reason and subordinates its enemy, sensuality, it is because without this primacy, there is no hope for women. Such is its logic. If men will not be reasonable, they will be sensualists. If they will be sensualists, women will be slaves. (1983, p. 57)

But if women are slaves, then so will be society. So the redescription was of an older Cartesian and Enlightenment truth; the importance of reason over passion. The radical edge to Wollstonecraft's support of reason is that she used this description to also support women's political causes.

### ***3) Mill, Taylor and Equality before the Law***

Merle Thornton (1986) suggests that the main nineteenth century liberal feminists, Mill and Taylor, provide two theses in their writings on women. The first thesis follows from liberalism, and suggests that women and men have equal natures, but that women have been disadvantaged by a lack of education and opportunity which generally results in them rating lower on the categories of knowledge and virtue which define humanity. However, since individual women may excel many men, they are entitled to the opportunities and freedoms of men. Thornton understands this conception in terms of a dual grid, where women are the same as men on a grid of kind, but rate lower than men on a grid of degree (1986, p. 90). This is the major thesis of Mill and Taylor in *The Subjection of Women* and their other writings on feminism.

However, there also exists a minor thesis where the authors, like Wollstonecraft, celebrate the practical nature of women's knowledge as different to, and a complementation of, men's abstract reason. Hence, they suggest that women's nature may be different, but equally valuable, to men's nature; that is, women are different to men on a grid of kinds. The problem for this second thesis is that, in practice, it can be used to continue the subordination of women in lower status positions (Thornton, 1986, p. 90).

The view suggested by most liberals of the time that women thought differently to men is related to their view of women's nature as directed toward subordination and motherhood. If this was their true nature, then women would not need the encouragement, and social and legal constraints, in order to follow their nature. But this was not what nineteenth century society was like. Society masked social and legal constraints behind metaphysical appeals about the nature of women; this mask did not reduce the disciplining force of the constraints. In response to these constraints, Mill argued: "What women by

nature cannot do, it is quite superfluous to forbid them from doing. What they can do, but not so well as the men who are their competitors, competition suffices to exclude them from” (cited in DeSensi, 1992, p. 83).

Yet at the same time, Mill was able to appeal to the split of body and mind inherent in liberal theorists to oppose this oppression. The rational subjectivity of humans was ungendered. Hence, there should be no institutional or social structures of discrimination against the ‘minds’ of women. Mill’s liberal feminism of the nineteenth century, continued the expansion of the tradition of abstract rationality from the seventeenth and eighteenth century, by suggesting that the logical outcome of these liberal arguments was for society to create conditions which would *make* women the equal of men. According to Gatens:

The more influence that reason has in a society, he [Mill] supposes, the less importance physical strength will have and, in this state of affairs, women would not be at a disadvantage. . . . Hence, the subjection of women in an advanced culture, has no other basis than habit or custom, both of which are superstitious hindrances to the full development of reason. . . . That women lag behind men in their rational development is a result of the customary and prejudicial way in which they are raised. (1991, pp. 31, 32)<sup>92</sup>

Taylor agrees and argues, possibly with Rousseau’s *Emile* in mind, that: “Those who are so careful that women should not become men, do not see that men. . . are falling into the feebleness which they have long cultivated in their companions. . . . *In the present closeness of association between the sexes, men cannot retain manliness unless women acquire it.*” (cited in Gatens, 1991, pp. 29, 30) The education of women is important for, amongst other reasons, the defense against the degenerative effect that women’s lack of education may have on men.

What is important to consider here is the notion that education is important in conditioning the human as either developing and male, or restricting and female. Both Mill and Taylor argued for the importance of education in fostering all humans’ development. Females required education to become more like men, and so as to not hold back the climb of men from nature to reason. Mill and Taylor have failed to challenge the ground left by philosophers such as Aristotle, Kant, and Hume about the male control over what is to count as rational/cultural activities. As Thornton suggests, when it comes to the practice of what is to count as an improvement for females, Mill and Taylor use the male standard as

the criteria for comparison of female's current position with their past. In the major thesis, women are equal to men when they, for example, gain property rights like men or access to occupations currently exclusive to men. The standard to which women should aspire is the standard set by what men do (1986, p. 91).

It has been suggested that the society in which Mill and Taylor wrote had hardened into a more conservative one than that which confronted Wollstonecraft and the seventeenth century liberal feminists. Feminists of this period had turned back to the virtues of womanliness (Urbanski, 1983, p. 75). As a result, Mill looked to the best in the past as a hope to change the future. Mitchell suggests that the high ideals of traditional liberalism from which Mill wrote could no longer represent the society in which he lived (Mitchell, 1987, p. 38). Both Wollstonecraft and the seventeenth century feminists considered the contributions of females, freed from the oppression of their lack of education, as possibly valuable and useful for men. Wollstonecraft even goes so far as to suggest that women in their current subordinate position may provide knowledge and virtues which are useful for men, knowledge and virtues that grow out of their position as domesticated labour. These feminists, speaking in different times, were able to conceive of female skills, such as intuition, as virtues. Mill could not conceive of these skills as virtues, in his major thesis, possibly because of the conservative social circumstances of industrial capitalism, in which he lived (Mitchell, 1987, p. 38). Although, Mill does consider that women are denied equal rights in society because men require them to be confined at home caring for the family, Mill does not question this insight. Gatens argues:

Mill's opposition to socialism (which at least offers the *possibility* of the socialization of domestic work) is largely in terms of what he saw as its inhibitory effects on individual incentive and competition, both of which he regarded as crucial to the development of the individual. However, in that this individuality is predicated on the ownership of one's person and capacities, it effectively excludes married women to whom the market-oriented notions of 'competition' and 'incentive' are inappropriate....

It is clear that this preoccupation is the major obstacle to recognizing that the domestic organization of women's lives, and the relation of the domestic sphere to the public sphere, is the crux of the problem of women's emancipation. The fact that Mill intends leaving both structurally intact involves little more for women than liberty *in principle*... (1991, p. 41, author's insertion)<sup>93</sup>

Taylor's views on the emancipation of women are more radical than Mill's, because she argues that women should be able to enter the public realm and find employment. However, she remains an advocate of female domesticity and child rearing. She suggests that women may combine their natural 'functions' with a profession. So Taylor's radicalness applies in practice to only those wealthy women who are able to afford child carers (Gatens, 1991, p. 41). Neither type of reform challenges the implicit link between women and instinctive, natural and subordinate work (Gatens, 1991, p. 44).

In contrast in his minor thesis, Mill suggests a watered-down type of androgyny, where the abstract, rational knowledge of men is complemented by the practical, intuitive knowledge of women in decision making. Thornton suggests the problem with this complementarity thesis is that Mill is required to argue that women's doings are not less valuable or excellent than men's doings, and that women's distinctive style of thought is only inferior in a society which assumes that men's style of thought is the norm of excellence (1986, p. 93). Mill suggests that women's skills are needed to balance the cold, male reason in the future development of society. Yet this gives women value in a derivative sense only; their skills are only valuable as they affect the rational activity of men (Gatens, 1991, p. 41). So Mill presents a dilemma which is difficult to resolve. Will feminists be better served by accepting the male standard of knowledge, and remaining on the lower scale of the grid both in theory and in practice, or by producing a different kind of knowledge and being unable to compare their position to that of males?

#### ***4) Charlotte Gilman Challenging the Ungendered Discourse of Liberalism***

Patricia Vertinsky, in her short biography of Charlotte Perkins Gilman, the eminent feminist author, lecturer and social scientist of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, suggests:

Feminist historians have pointed to the latter decades of the nineteenth century as a time when tensions between the sexes became particularly acute. A growing number of women struggled to further their intellectual capacity and extend the parameters of their physical capabilities within a patriarchal tradition of female confinement and subordination...[A] number of feminists expressed a growing desire to control their own bodies and reproductive lives by pursuing health and wholeness. They demanded release from the rigid behavioral expectations which large numbers of males and doctors determined

as their birthright and sought to escape from the social script that women had both internalized and performed in response to social expectations. Demanding new roles and opportunities, these feminists aspired to become not simply equal to men but “new women.” (1989, p. 5; also Spender, 1982, pp. 522-525)<sup>94</sup>

These innovative individuals, such as Gilman and Jane Addams, sought to break free from the restrictive gender roles that conservative society had prescribed for them. If anything, Gilman presented as one of the earliest feminist standpoint theorists, seeing women, and their protestations against tyranny, exploitation and oppression, as fully human, and men, with “their lop-sided values and creations as only partly human” (Spender, 1982, p. 516).

Gilman’s feminist inspiration<sup>95</sup> arose largely because of the contradictions between her personal life and the public life prepared for, or denied to, her. As a forerunner to radical feminism, Gilman saw the link between political reform and personal freedom and constriction. Her personal experiences became transformed into legitimate insights about social problems and the institutions and ideologies that caused them (Lane, 1983, p. 203; Spender, 1982, p. 517).

Charlotte Gilman<sup>96</sup> was an eccentric individual who autonomously tried to emerge from her society as a new and different woman. As a female in the Victorian era, her physical and intellectual activity was limited by the scientific and medical discourses which suggested that the (female) mind and body competed for a limited amount of energy. Gilman, reflecting on conflicts between this discourse and her own experiences and those of her mother, produced a radically different, synergistic conception of the mind-body relationship; one that permitted, and even demanded, far greater freedom for females both in terms of intellectual activity and physical activity (Vertinsky, 1989, p. 6; Spender, 1982, p. 517). She believed that women had been “crippled, stunted, atrophied” by their environment and that women’s minds would be as useful as men’s minds if they used them (Upin, 1993, p. 50).<sup>97</sup> Similarly, Gilman promoted physical fitness as a method of gaining autonomous control over her life, and preventing the crippling of her physical body that was a common practice for women of the time (Vertinsky, 1989, p. 7; Spender, 1982, p. 518).<sup>98</sup> At the age of twenty-one, Gilman persuaded the local gymnasium instructor to open a women’s gymnasium. She advertised its advantages in the following way:

For Ladies' Gymnasium it may be said that the laws of health cover both sexes and that there can be little beauty without harmonious physical development... Special work is given to counteract special deficiencies and it is glorious! To see backs straighten, shoulders fall into place, narrow chests expand and weak muscles grow firm and round (1883, p. 8 cited by Vertinsky, 1989, p. 9)

Gilman views the male role of creativity, strength, independence and worldliness as the model for humanity, and opposes attempts to force women into any less a human role. Gilman's growing strength and independence forced her to reject a conventional future in domesticity. Though she took a husband, and later had a child, she remained active in both physical exercise and women's meetings. Her objective was to strengthen herself, so as to be able to repress any tendencies to become "merely... a woman, or that useful animal, a wife and mother" (Hill, 1980 cited by Vertinsky, 1989, p. 9).<sup>99</sup>

The response to this section of Gilman's life is indicative of the lengths that the medical-scientific-moral fraternity went in order to maintain male power over females. Gilman's husband, hoping to gain normalcy in marriage, enlisted the help of the leading neurophysiologist Dr. Weir Mitchell, to assist his wife recover from her depression. Mitchell, following the dominant medical view of the time, prescribed his famous 'rest cure', as a solution to the abnormal stimulation of exercise and education which Gilman had undertaken. The cure relied on regulating the individual habits of the patient, and restoring balance in the patient's life. This balance was gendered, and represented Mitchell's strongly held prejudice against active women (Spender, 1982, p. 519). For women the rest cure involved long periods of bed rest, interrupted only for brief periods of light activity such as reading. The normative role in the rest cure was to realign active females towards more passive, dependent, natural and subordinate roles. Vertinsky explains:

After building up her health, re-education focused primarily upon teaching the patient how to regain and preserve domination over her emotions... In this way, the patient was gradually taught not to yield to hysterical behaviour but to display order, control and self-restraint. She was to become "less hysterical and more obsessional," and perform her female role in a structured manner with dutiful attention to rules and detail. In short, the rest cure was a behaviour modification treatment designed to make nervous, over-active and dissatisfied women more passive, feminine and healthy, and to help them learn that domesticity was the cure, not the cause, of their problems. (1989, pp. 14, 15)<sup>100</sup>

Yet, the deprivation of activities such as physical training and education to women who viewed these things as important to their autonomy proved to be a punishment that was devastating. Both Gilman and Jane Addams were notable failures for Mitchell. As Gilman stated: “I went home, followed those directions rigidly for months, and came perilously near to losing my mind” (Lane, 1983, p. 207; Spender, 1982, p. 520). Gilman went on to actively protest against the dominant discourse about women’s role and her limited reserves of energy. In her poem *The Yellow Wallpaper* (1892), she presents the nightmarish image of the insane and confined woman “dependent on male doctors who use their professional superiority... to prolong their patients’ sickness and consequently the supremacy of their own sex” (Vertinsky, 1989, p. 18). The insane woman is, for Gilman, the ultimate rebel, as insanity is the only creative and resistant act possible for a person forced to submit to society’s expectations and the actions of a “kind and benevolent *enemy*” (Spender, 1982, p. 522). In a society that was sickened by the economic power that men had over women, the “insane” reaction of the madwoman was indication of a healthy and positive response (Spender, 1982, p. 522).

A major contribution that Gilman made to feminist literature was to see society as something that humans create, rather than discover. Intellectuals of Gilman’s time used Darwin’s biological theory to posit the suggestion that the society that we have is the result of the ‘survival of the fittest’; that evolution is a social, as well as a natural, phenomenon which cannot be interfered with to produce a redescription of society (Lane, 1983, p. 211; Palmeri, 1983, pp. 99-101). Gilman opposed this naturalistic thesis<sup>101</sup>, and suggested that “women, as a collective entity, could, if they so choose, be the moving force in the reorganisation of society” (Lane, 1983, p. 212; Palmeri, 1983, pp. 105-119). For Gilman, society was a human creation and could be altered by the collective force of groups of people (Spender, 1982, p. 521).

Gilman’s [and Ward’s] redescription introduced the notion of power into the social science’s empirical descriptions of society’s evolution. Gilman did not merely describe society, but asked questions about who society is structured for and why it operates in this way (Lane, 1983, p. 212; Spender, 1982, p. 522). She unequivocally believed that the

current relationship between the sexes was an economic one where men had power over women. Men used that power to make economic arrangements in society that maintained or increased their control over women. Women's labour was neither acknowledged nor rewarded by men (Spender, 1982, p. 522). Far from being a process of natural selection, this social order was decidedly a political creation.

In her book, *Women and Economics* (1898), Gilman explains the need for a radical reorganisation of society, so that women become economically and politically independent, and can participate fully in public affairs. The domestic sphere wasted women's energies and virtues on mundane tasks, and made them dependent on men. Her insights include the view that marriage is a partnership between unequal members, where the woman's work is arduous and unrewarded<sup>102</sup>, where the woman's livelihood is determined by the man's benevolence rather than the effect of her labour, and where this exploitation is produced by a male understanding of economics. This control of resources makes men materially necessary for women, and reinforces the practice of compulsory heterosexuality as an economic, and not simply a cultural, force. The woman must pursue and remain married, regardless of her treatment within the relationship (Spender, 1982, pp. 522-524; Palmeri, 1983, p. 110). Women, as produced and explained in their current state were sub-human, their virtues were ignored, and their economic dependency on others (men) was crippling for both women and society (Palmeri, 1983, pp. 106, 107). Women's submission became the defining characteristic of her humanity in the patriarchal society, a characteristic that was not associated with humanness, and that dependence resulted often in exploitation, physical violence and desertion (Vertinsky, 1989, p. 21; Spender, 1982, pp. 521, 522).

Gilman's social intervention begins with a distinction between motherhood, which she claims is a natural role, and house service, which she sees as a cultural development produced by men to establish their power over women. This separation allows Gilman to creatively modify the economic relations between the sexes, which are based on the dependence of women caused by their ties to house duties (Palmeri, 1983, pp. 108, 109). Gilman felt that, as an oppressed group, women were in an ideal situation to collectively create and develop a newer and more liberating economic construction of society. For Gilman, "the peaceful collective action of women replaced Marx's class struggle," whilst

retaining the notion that unalienated labor is a natural human condition which is perverted by any form of slave-labor, including women's housework. This social intervention also replaced the conservatism of social scientists that used the Darwinian notion of laissez-faire natural selection to justify the current economic relations between men and women (Lane, 1983, p. 212; Palmeri, 1983, p. 106). In both *Women and Economics* and *Herland*, Gilman produces a new view of society, stemming from the female's negative experiences of her economic subservience to the male.

Gilman didn't try to overcome the contradictions in her own life. In some ways, she remained a supporter of the old patriarchal order, not unlike Mill and Taylor, although far more positive about the virtues of mothering. She never denigrated the importance of motherhood, and never denied essential and natural differences between men and women. Like Wollstonecraft she emphasised the positive characteristics of womanhood as related to her "mother-love [as] a countervailing force within the androcentric culture" (Vertinsky, 1989, p. 22). Women's virtues and skills became a complementary, and significantly more humane, force to the inherently competitive and aggressive nature of men (Palmeri, 1983, pp. 112-115). For Gilman:

Because women are nurturers of the young and bearers of the cultural; values of love and co-operation, and because women have been excluded from the sources of power... they are in an ideal position to create an alternate social vision. By the early twentieth century, women also had decades of sophisticated collective action and a trained leadership, shaped by a struggle for suffrage and other of their rights (Lane, 1983, p. 213).

Civilisation requires a redescription to include the positive valuation of the qualities of love, co-operation and nurturance that are part of the current female condition in society, and that will produce the androgynous ideal (Lane, 1983, p. 214; Palmeri, 1983, p. 114).

Gilman's utopian novel *Herland* (1915) presented such a redescription of society where females were not physically or mentally restricted. The subjects of this society transcended the traditional patriarchal limitations on female activity. This was Gilman's presentation of a set of female virtues that she considered superior to any that were allowed in patriarchal society (Vertinsky, 1989, p. 24). Gilman's solution to patriarchal society was to socialise the home and family care. Her utopian vision in *Herland* was to create a self-sufficient and satisfying community for women, where all mothers cared for all children

(Lane, 1983, p. 210; Spender, 1982, p. 517), a world where all people assert their authority by leaving their home to work in an unalienated way. In this community, the woman's economic, social and sexual needs, could all be satisfied by other women (Spender, 1982, p. 517). Is it any wonder that the male press and intellectuals of the time condemned Gilman's theories?<sup>103</sup>

What is noticeable in Gilman's work is the important function that both her experiences and her imaginary fiction plays in redescribing oppressive practices. Gilman proposes choices for the oppressed in society; choices which will redescribe practices in less oppressive ways to produce "...the kind of world we could have if we worked at it; the kinds of choices we could make, if we insisted on them; the kinds of relationships we could achieve, if we went ahead and demanded them" (Lane, 1983, p. 215). Like those who went before her, Gilman's fiction was a way of imagining a better world which catered for, and voiced, women's experiences and needs, and resisted the oppressive and exploitative practices of the current society. Gilman created the eccentric models with which future women could possibly live their lives by (Lane, 1983, p. 216). The nightmare of *The Yellow Wallpaper* and *Women and Economics* was to allow another to run your life for you. For Gilman, this represented most women's lives. Her response was to create a woman-centered solution, a feminist standpoint, a *Herland*.

### **Conclusions**

The early history of feminism could be conceived of as not only the forerunner to contemporary liberal feminism, but also to radical feminism, cultural feminism, socialist feminism and feminist standpoint theory. If, as Rorty suggests: "For a woman to say that she finds her moral identity [and not her private identity] in being a woman would have sounded, until relatively recently, as weird as for a slave to say that he or she finds his or her moral identity in being a slave" (1991a, p. 7), then the probable reason is that men have been so successful in suppressing the standpoints of both females and slaves, so that any sense of identity across historical periods, and within historical periods, is also silenced. As Spender suggests:

... only one sex controls information in our society. Totalitarian regimes are in a position to put forward their own version of the facts, and to suppress

alternative- subversive- versions. And patriarchy is a totalitarian regime. It is the dictatorship of the male. It can put forward its version of the facts and erase alternatives: it can even insist that its propaganda is the 'truth'. This is why highly political theories formulated by men which legitimate inequalities of sex, race, and class, can be judged to be *neutral*, while theories put forward by those who are not men can be judged to be political and subversive. (1983a, p. 1).

Some of these early feminists were amongst the many "...whose ideas and experience have disappeared without trace, too insignificant or too threatening to be acknowledged by men in *their* record of 'man's' endeavours (history)" (Sarah, 1983, p. 256). The retrieval of such theories only occurred because of the work of feminist historians of the current era.

According to Spender, men recognise that women are less manageable when they are made aware of the contingency of male domination. But such recognition begins with the 'voice of the mad [wo]man'; that is with the feeling that as no-one appears to have preceded the woman's feeling of oppression, such a feeling must be the result of eccentricity. Such women often doubted their sanity and their ability to understand the reality they constructed from their experience (1983a, p. 2). It is only when the revelations of prior feminists become open to the public, that contemporary feminists understand the historical solidarity of their oppressed position and the need for collective redescription that takes into account historical suppression.

Men have long recognised this. As Michelle Cliff suggests, women's tradition is a cycle of new voices and suppression (1979 cited by Spender, 1983a, p. 3). So each generation of feminists starts anew, often reproducing what came before. But in retrieving each phase of feminism, some things remain constant. Feminists commence with "the politics of exploring, explaining and validating women's experience and ... ending women's oppression" (Spender, 1983b, p. 366). Feminists believe that society needs to be redescrbed so as to value women's accomplishments. Feminists usually suggest that such a redescription of society will shatter many of the conventions and traditions of the current society. And feminists believe that some form of collective action will be necessary to produce this redescription. But such collective ironic experience has been difficult to produce across history because of the suppression of women's knowledge as partial and self-interested.

For Fraser, Rorty's characterisation of feminist political non-identity is a simplification of a radical feminist position which is no longer well supported within feminism. She states:

Rorty accepts the view, held by some radical feminists, that until feminists began creating... an identity, the term "woman" could only name a disability, not a moral identity.... Here [the opposition to the cult of pure womanhood] we have a moral identity in which a superficially flattering characterization of femininity merely adorned a disability. But the story does not end there. On the contrary, the originally disabling notion of women's moral superiority was soon appropriated by some... women and transformed into a springboard and platform for reformist activity in the public sphere... These women in effect redeployed a traditional, confining female moral identity precisely in order to expand their field of action. They thereby turned a disability into an enabling identity... (1991, p. 264)

So we can read the tradition of feminism as one of oppression and resistance to that oppression occurring concurrently. Fraser contends that the retrieval and revaluing of those feminist discourses which have been silenced in patriarchal society will reveal female understandings and experiences of a collective political identity, and these understandings may be different to the ones that Rorty has provided. Such a re-recollection of feminist theories/sentimental utopian stories from the silenced history may both, display some usable traditions of feminist identity (1991, p. 264), and create a counter-history of women's place in society that includes that which has been excluded from normal history. So the suggestion by Rorty that 'woman' could only name a disability, and not a moral identity, is a reflection of an ignorance toward marginalised discourses and traditions of women's power (Fraser, 1991, p. 264).

It is important to notice that, all the early feminists who have been 'retrieved' in this thesis stretched the liberal and socialist traditions to include females in the concepts and categories that had previously been denied them. The next section of this thesis looks at one such category; the practice of sport. Sport, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries presented an interesting problem for feminists in that, at least for males, it was considered a private practice, theoretically separated from the influence of the state. As a private practice, it did not particularly interest liberals, and there was some shelter afforded to female competitors in sport, provided they did not challenge any of the other public

ideologies which existed at the time. But as a private practice, it did not particularly interest feminists either, and therefore sporting achievements in freedom were not particularly celebrated. Finally, as a private practice, it challenged some of those reactionary ideologies by allowing women to move out of the domestic sphere, and permitted an arena in which they could be strong and active. Whilst such strength was legitimated by the necessity for sport as an aid to reproduction, it nevertheless allowed women space within which to act autonomously and collectively; in other words, to make an identity.

Yet this challenge created the need for a public response to female resistance, and so, many of the earliest innovative women in sport, were met with public condemnation, and, like their feminist sisters in academia and politics, were silenced and removed from ‘official’ sporting history. Female sport if successfully and athletically performed, it seems, was a public matter, and very much a concern of the liberal patriarchal state, which had determined ‘appropriate’ desires for women to have, and which produced knowledge to support those discourses (Lenskyj, 1986, p. 11). As Lenskyj explains:

As industry became more mechanized, sex differences in strength became increasingly irrelevant to occupational patterns... When traditional sex differentiation in the workplace was no longer tenable, male physical dominance acted out on the playing field gained greater symbolic importance. Sex differences were reinforced and entrenched by excluding women from the “manly” sports and thus legitimizing, once again, the notion that male physical superiority and male supremacy were inextricably linked. (1986, p. 12; also see Messner, 1988, p. 200)

So many of the obstacles placed in front of the early feminists can also be seen placed in front of female athletes. Medical and scientific pronouncements limited female sporting participation (Lenskyj, 1986; Balsamo, 1996).<sup>104</sup> Cultural commentary impugned the reputations and practices of female athletes. Female athleticism was constrained by dominant understandings of feminine virtue, and appropriate female dress, related to the maintenance of female passivity, dependence and inferiority. But we can also witness resistance on the part of females to these oppressive and disciplining discourses (Lenskyj, 1986, p. 11). The next section of this chapter retrieves parts of this early history of female

participation in sport as a starting point to an analysis of the limited range of subjectivities available to contemporary female athletes.

### **Sport and Early Attempts at Participation- Sexing the Female as Unathletic.**

Jennifer Hargreaves suggests that the late nineteenth century was a period of massive expansion in the opportunities for females in the industrialised society. However, most nineteenth century feminists disregarded sports as sites of empowerment, because they were bodily activities, and therefore, not related to rationality. Yet, Hargreaves suggests that the physical body was seen as a major source of difference between men and women. Recalling that many early feminists including Mill, Taylor and Gilman saw women's physical weakness as the source of their oppression, it is important to recognise that advances in the fields of women's sports and physical education represented new forms of challenge to the traditional positions for women suggested by the dominant male society (1994, p. 42). It will be suggested that the history of this developing freedom in sports is one that should be read as the use of a space provided for females, from the confining structures of society. That is, female freedom in sports always occurred at the whim of the dominant class of males; both dominant in society, and in sport (Lenskyj, 1986, p. 12). Yet, at the same time, the motives of the dominant class did not stop women from experiencing this freedom, and stretching the arguments of their oppressors in ways that were resistant to these oppressions.<sup>105</sup>

Until the beginning of the twentieth century, according to Hargreaves (1994), women of all classes remained tightly confined by the conservative ideologies of the patriarchal society. Even though they experienced some forms of legal freedoms, it is a mistake to suggest that women of the late nineteenth century had suddenly become free and autonomous. They enjoyed some limited forms of freedom, including participation in some sports, but these freedoms were compromised by "prejudices, opposition and setbacks" (1994, p. 42). Feminism did not reach its peak as a political movement until the twentieth century. Before that time, strong, but eccentric, characters espoused the virtues of the free women, against a dominant ideology of restraint and control. Women's position in sport began to grow in the early twentieth century, but sport always remained ostensibly a

male preserve, where female participation was on men's terms (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 42; Cahn, 1993, p. 2).

The impetus for the provision of sport for females had little to do with liberal notions of freedom and equality. It had more to do with the provision of training to be a good mother, and the use of physical work to oppose the natural sexual urges of females, which were suggested as potentially draining for both sexes. Sherrie Forby states:

The dichotomy of women as 'feminine/maternal/weak' and 'masculine/efficient/strong' prevailed during the early part of this [twentieth] century [in Australia]....

The traditional attitudes towards women had not lessened and emphasis was continually put on the 'anatomical, physiological and psychological differences between the sexes'. Competitive sports were still questioned for women, primarily because they were 'alien to the characteristics as well as harmful in relation to the primary task of women's life, maternity' (King, p. 15 cited in Forby, 1989, p. 10)<sup>106</sup>

So sports, when offered to women, were depicted as mechanisms of social control and maternal advancement, with men and women playing in qualitatively different ways according to beliefs about their different individual natures.

Whilst this 'separatist and different' ideology still prevails in modern sport in more subtle ways, it is important to recognise that it may have been less effective in restricting the actual practice of female sport than is usually thought. Feminist historians, such as Parratt (1989), Lenskyj (1982, 1986), Vertinsky (1976, 1989, 1999), and Hargreaves (1994) all suggest that the practice of female sports may have been more free and autonomous than the practice of females in many other areas of private life. The quasi-separation from the rational sphere of culture and from the public sphere, the separation from males, and the 'provisional endorsement' of appropriate sports for females all contributed a shelter from the dominant and restrictive beliefs of society about females. In addition, the period of liberal feminism, and social and educational opportunities for women, had created a strong radical trend amongst some females of the time to push against the barriers imposed on them. This section of the thesis will suggest that there were significant gaps between the 'official' theory of women's participation in sport (and hence, its public history) and the actual practice (as determined by a feminist reading of history).

These gaps allow for the promotion of a set of alternate subjectivities that the contemporary female athlete might enjoy.

### ***1) Sports as Male Preserves: Scientific and Moral Legitimizations for Exclusion***

The Victorians offered biological explanations for differences between men and women. Women were essentially aligned with their roles as mother and housewife. Evidence for this biological role was that women menstruated, reproduced and suckled their young. It was also suggested that women were inherently emotional, cooperative and caring, apparently linked to this fixed and essential biological predisposition to mother. As a result, these biological justifications were used to limit women's participation in all public spheres. They were particularly useful in limiting women's participation in exercise as, although these biological differences only affect women for short and intermittent periods of their life, they were used as the major justification for limiting female participation at all times. Vertinsky labeled this phenomenon 'moral physiology', the idea that there is a link between physical health, moral health, and the natural order of the society (1976, p. 28; Lenskyj, 1986, p. 13). Science provided an apparently objective, but, in effect, conservative endorsement of the current relationship between the sexes, and the passive role for females in society (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 44).

Oppositional ideas to this medical and scientific discourse of women's limited energy and her essential occupation in motherhood, whilst voiced, were difficult to sustain in this period. The reactionary opposition from some sectors of the medical community, buttressed by social and religious commentators, was strong. Vertinsky comments:

Late nineteenth century medicine relied heavily upon systems of gender differentiation, and was important in constructing sexual ideology and in illuminating social perception of "woman as body." Fear of female independence and competition... inclined mostly male doctors to concentrate upon the close supervision of female patients' bodies (and hence minds) and the regulation of all aspects of women's lives. Limited female energy, the doctors proclaimed, was meant for the altruism of home and posterity, not unsanctioned activity of mind, body and other augmentations of individuality which could only lead to ill-health. (1989, pp. 12, 13)

The ideology of natural gender differences is summed up by the chairman of the British Medical Association, who, in 1887 suggested that in the “interests of social progress, national efficiency and the ‘progressive improvement of the human race’, women should be denied education and other activities which would cause constitutional overstrain and inability to produce healthy offspring” (Pfeiffer, 1888 cited in Hargreaves, 1994, p. 45). So, the special moral obligations women had to their families, and their societies, when combined with a view of their unique anatomy and physiology, produced a justification for the medical community’s consideration of, and opposition to, women’s participation in sport (Lenskyj, 1986, p. 18).

The woman’s position in the Victorian family was another strong, conservative force in society. The advance of industrial capitalism consolidated the model of the bourgeois family. This model of the family held that the male was the breadwinner and link to public affairs, and the wife responsible for the home. This belief affected dominant medical and social opinion in such a way that it elevated contingent social structures to the status of scientific ‘facts’, creating a form of institutionalised, but apparently natural, sexism. Hence the patriarchal state and the bourgeois family were both seen as universal truths. This further affected the opportunities for women to participate in any public activities such as sport (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 51).

Reducing the position of females in Victorian society to the level of essential biological and social characteristics was effective in silencing most resistance to the established sporting system which was almost exclusively male. The effectiveness was such that many women accepted this view as commonsensical; most women dressed in severely restrictive clothing, ate little and did no exercise, actively presented themselves as frail and sickly and devoid of energy, and thereby confirmed the medical pronouncements of the ‘delicate’ female at the level of their own bodywork. According to Hargreaves:

The acceptance by women of their own incapacitation gave both a humane and a moral weighting to the established scientific ‘facts’... There were insufficient women who were visibly healthy and energetic, or who participated in sports, to provide a substantially different image (1994, p. 47).

But some women had begun to question this characterisation of their essential natures, and had also begun to take pleasure in participating in a wide variety of physical

practices as early as the middle nineteenth century. Individual feminists like Charlotte Gilman, offered eccentric resistance to the dominant medical-moral view of the nature of females, and its relationship to physical activity.<sup>107</sup> Such resistance was often incorporated by relaxing some of the controls on female participation, whilst maintaining an underlying, strongly conservative, ideology based around women's natural roles as wives and mothers. Lenskyj suggests that:

Physical education was formally established in the school curriculum in Ontario at a time when educators, social reformers and medical professionals were growing increasingly concerned at the effects of rapid social change upon the next generation. Many women, they believed, had abandoned their "proper sphere", thus abdicating the responsibility to teach their daughters appropriate "feminine" behaviour. The formalization of physical education instruction, and the parallel developments in domestic science instruction at the turn of the century, were the two official responses to the perceived problem, signifying the public takeover of aspects of gender-role socialization..., and the entrenchment of a sex-differentiated curriculum (1982, p. 4).<sup>108</sup>

These structural disciplinary techniques allowed for the incorporation of female resistance in sport, whilst maintaining a firm control on feminine socialisation and sexuality, by male doctors, scientists, health experts, teachers and priests. Physical education for women maintained and patrolled the borders between masculinity and femininity through the provision of sex-appropriate activities (Cahn, 1993, p. 2; Verbrugge, 1997, p. 275; Balsamo, 1996, pp. 42, 43; Messner, 1988, p. 200). Hargreaves suggests that any positive view of the relationship between females, physical activity and motherhood arose from the scientific fear that the frail, physically dependent model of feminine beauty and virtue created females who were inadequately prepared for birthing and motherhood (1994, pp. 47, 48). Constitutional overstrain as a medical theory, was modified to allow for some forms of light, recreative, therapeutic and non-competitive exercise. The various systems of gymnastics were justified by the necessity to guard against the illnesses and diseases caused by the enforced passivity of femininity. Extensions of 'sporting' freedom to women occurred at the whim of, and for the good of, *mankind* (Cahn, 1993, pp. 3, 4). At the same time, this liberalisation towards physical activity for women, and the support given by some doctors and scientists, gave the idea of

sexual difference in sporting performance “an aura of scientific objectivity” (Verbrugge, 1997, p. 275).

## ***2) The Seeds of Resistance from Within the Dominant, ‘Scientific’ Discourse.***

Vertinsky suggests that it was the dual contingencies of the Victorian belief in the need to suppress sexual urges, and the inappropriateness of the female frail body for the exertions of motherhood, that produced a gap within the dominant medical discourse in which to resist women’s inactivity (1976, p. 27). Physical exercise had acted as an effective system of social control for young men<sup>109</sup>, and that it was the extension of this public school, religious morality to females that provided the impetus to increased sporting participation for females. She further suggests that individual feminists grasped this opportunity to oppose the patriarchal-medical view of their bodies having a limited supply of energy. According to Vertinsky:

One interesting aspect of nineteenth century efforts to regulate sexual behaviours was the utilization of physical education and sport by moralists, physicians and the Womens’ Rights Movement as a technique for dampening sexual passions, developing self-control and providing robust parents for the future. (1976, p. 27)

Educators and social workers realised that methods used in boy’s schools “as a means of refrigerating the passions and creating spartan habits” among boys would also be of value for the future generation of mothers and wives (Lenskyj, 1982, pp. 4, 5; 1986, p. 20; Cahn, 1993, p. 3).<sup>110</sup>

Deviant behaviour, such as juvenile crime, insanity and sexual promiscuity were all explained in physiological terms. An interrelationship was established between moral and physical health, and social disorder. It was concluded that physical health, and thereby moral health, was dependent on the reduction of all stimulatory agents (Vertinsky, 1976, pp. 28, 29). The inclusion of a wide array of sexual behaviours, including masturbation and sex out of marriage, as legitimate concerns of moral physiology meant that most humans felt susceptible to the condition of increased stimulation. Vertinsky describes the widespread feelings of moral endangerment:

... [A]n important aspect of moral physiology... emphasized the importance of conserving the male semen so that it could be reabsorbed by the blood and

carried to the brain from whence growth and creativity would be stimulated (Tissot, 1776)... a lack of sexual conservation contributed to psychological disorder on the individual level and general disorder on the social level. (1976, p. 30)

Whilst men had suffered this prescription for a period of time, it was suggested that a decent female had no sexual interest or desire outside of marriage, and so no form of social control was necessary. Her natural role as mother and housewife meant that the control of a woman's sexual appetite was unnecessary (Vertinsky, 1976, p. 31).

Yet, several moral physiologists saw women as potentially a sperm absorber; a threat to the vital energy of men (Vertinsky, 1976, p. 32). By the turn of the twentieth century, Americans, worried by the excesses of female participation in public life and activities not suited to their natures, such as sport, sought to re-impose social control and public order through educational organisation (Vertinsky, 1976, pp. 26, 32-38; Lenskyj, 1986, p. 20). This was not a new idea, as it had been practiced informally in boy's schools since midway through the century (Vertinsky, 1976, p. 34). The novelty was that it was now to be used to make girls, as well as boys, more "orderly, moral and tractable" (Katz, 1968, cited by Vertinsky, 1976, p. 26). Lenskyj (1982, p. 6; 1986, p. 20) suggests a similar, though later, turn in public education for girls in Canada<sup>111</sup>, and Hargreaves (1994, p. 60) suggests that the drive towards national efficiency and moral rectitude was a major force in English physical education curriculum for boys and girls during the later part of the nineteenth century. The educational reformers for females were still opposed by the dominant medical-scientific view of constitutional overload for women, and the dominant social view of the femininity of the consumptive woman, and it wasn't until the early twentieth century that the educational reformers got their way (Cahn, 1993, p. 3).

Female reformers grasped their opportunity. Endorsing this new moral physiology of medical discourses, they sought to control the natural, and potentially unbridled, sexual urges of females through physical activity. Not only would women benefit through improved health, but also the health of the nation would benefit by promoting the ideal of continent sex in marriage (Verbrugge, 1997, p. 275). Moral physiology proclaimed the importance of an ascetic life for physical, moral and social health (Cahn, 1993, p. 1). Female reformers saw this as an opportunity to:

...change the image of the fashionable and helpless female, the promotion of simple clothes, plain food and increased opportunities for physical exercise were appealing....

... [T]here was little indication that they wished to radically change women's traditional role in relation to men... [T]hey advocated the development of an ideal female role where the aim was still motherhood, the main arena still the home, and the basis for values still sexual repression. (Vertinsky, 1976, pp. 33, 34)

Hargreaves agrees and suggests that sporting activities of the time served to desensualise women and reduce their sexual desire. In *The Handbook for Girl Guides* (1912), physical activity and sport was seen as a solution to the unnatural urges towards masturbation, excessive heterosexual activity and lesbianism in females, practices that lead into the asylum, and "blindness, paralysis and loss of memory" (cited in Hargreaves, 1994, p. 94). Female reformers accepted this ascetic view of sports uncritically, as, although they were radical in their interventions in sports, they tended to be conservative in their beliefs about sexuality (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 94; Lenskyj, 1986, pp. 20-22; Vertinsky, 1976, p. 33), possibly because female athletes were already a marginalised group in society. And their feminist sisters in the wider society also showed little inclination to challenge for women's sexual freedom, as they were more concerned limiting the free and adulterous sexual activities of married men in brothels (Vertinsky, 1976, pp. 32, 33).

Female reformers also advocated the need for exercise in providing strong mothers for the future (Vertinsky, 1976, p. 34). At the end of the nineteenth century, the reformed moral physiology, supported by conservative moral reformers and feminists alike, called for an increase in the physical activity for women to halt the decline of the American woman/mother. All these reforms were justified by appeals to the health of the individual and the order of the community (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 64), a form of patriarchal liberalism. For, as Lenskyj states, medical constraints on, or justifications for, the participation by women in any practice were shaped by a view of woman's destiny in the service of others (1986, p. 23). Any change to the medical position on the utility of sport to the health of women was made within an ideology of the biological frail, but nurturant, woman (Lenskyj, 1986, p. 53).

It was in physical education that girl's schools were able to approximate boy's schools, possibly because the goal of training in other subjects was markedly different for boys and girls. As Verbrugge suggests about the viewpoints on sex differences held by female physical educators of the time;

Female physical educators both accentuated and minimised women's distinctiveness; they at once disparaged and rehabilitated "female" traits; they attributed sex differences to both nature and nurture, both biology and custom. By balancing every conclusion about sexual dualism with its opposite, women teachers avoided simplistic views and, invariably, found a middle ground on questions about female physicality and character (1997, p. 275).

Such a middle ground was made necessary because of the conflicting forces that required female physical educators to form highly complex, flexible and ambiguous arguments about the extent and nature of sexual difference. The conflicting forces included the professional status of women physical educators which required both adherence to the dominant scientific model of natural sex differences, and the use of this biological model of sex difference to require the special skills and understandings of a female physical educator (Verbrugge, 1997, p. 294). But at the same time, these physical educators could not overstate or essentialise sex differences, as this tactic would permit arguments for the exclusion of women from sport. So it was also necessary for women physical educators to claim a social basis to sex differences that required egalitarian practices that would soften sexual difference. Female physical educators of the time "sought both separatism and equality" (Verbrugge, 1997, p. 297).

Games and gymnastics attracted the moral reformers as training mechanisms in self-discipline and character (Vertinsky, 1976, pp. 36, 37). Ironically, for Hargreaves, these reforms came closest to mirroring the feminist claims to equality of opportunity, as the English girl's schools borrowed heavily from the physical education curriculum of the boy's schools (1994, p. 65).<sup>112</sup> Cold bathing was another particularly supported activity for both health and character reasons, although it should be noted that arrangements had to be made to ensure the decency of the swimming environment (Vertinsky, 1976, pp. 37, 38). Women's bathing was strictly separated from men's (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 96). Swimming was legitimised because it was thought to reduce the propensity towards natural sexual urges in both males and females. Vertinsky describes:

G. Stanley Hall was to strengthen this view by arguing that “nothing so directly or quickly reduces to the lowest point the plethora of sex organs” (1904). Sea bathing came to be medically recommended to women with menstruation pains and as a means to increase fertility (1895). With its educative effects of cultivating the will-power and its predicted possibilities of increased fertility... no sport was nearer the heart of the female moral reformer than swimming (1976, p. 38; also see Lenskyj, 1986, pp. 40-44).

The period up to the First World War can be seen as one of strengthening resistance for women in sports, with some limited support from the male establishment. Whilst the dominant ideology suggested a passive role for females in sport, and this ideology certainly reduced the opportunities, extent and vigor of female participation (Parratt, 1989, p. 155), resistance flourished and collective action began to change things. Also, it seems that the ideology was partially ignored within the actual practice of sports by women. Whilst the motivation behind the wider participation of women in sport may have been as dubious as Mill and Taylor’s call for greater education of females; that is, females would become more like rational men if they could suppress sexual urges, develop their natural competency for motherhood and develop character, it is possible that, in practice the reformer’s motivations had little to do with the benefits gained by female athletes (Parratt, 1989).

Events were also occurring in other areas of society, especially the institutions of education and politics, and the contingent effect of the First World War, which further opened up freedoms for women. Regardless of the dubious, and male-centered, reasons for the promotion of physical activity for women at this time, these ideas allowed women to experience sport in their own terms. Competitive games, which were introduced into girl’s schools in the late nineteenth century as a method of building character and suppressing sexual urges, were enthusiastically endorsed by collegiate women. The active, competitive, strong athlete helped to reshape the image of women, and journals such as *Womanhood* took this new image beyond the fields of play (Parratt, 1989, pp. 155, 156).

It was never a smooth evolution. The end of the World War brought about a retreat in political feminism, as the mass media disseminated images of the happy housewife in the ideal household. The moral physiology of the decades prior to the war remained in a diluted form, and whilst the war gave women a sense of liberation, such freedom, as

experienced in sport, remained within structures of constraint (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 113). At the same time as this conservative reaction to the end of the war occurred, there also developed a new consumerism in Britain and America which, according to Hargreaves, was a period “characterized as one of hedonism” (1994, p. 112).

Stimulated by both the growing political feminist view that women should have equality of opportunity with men as consumers, and their own personal experiences of freedom and strength, the inter-war years saw an expansion of women’s opportunities and achievements in sport. The Womanhood Field Club and the Pinnacle Club (formed in 1921) were two examples of collective unions of women seeking greater autonomy in their sporting practice (Parratt, 1989). The Pinnacle Club had a goal to produce guideless mountaineering for women by training women climbers to assert leadership skills. Again an example of resistant feminist ideals in sport, long before radical feminism became a unified social movement, one member of the club described it as:

the result of a ‘long conspiracy’, prompted by the feeling we many of us shared that a rock-climbing club for women would give us a better chance of climbing independently of men, both as to leadership and general mountaineering (Pillely, 1984 cited by Hargreaves, 1994, p. 119)

The new symbol of freedom for women was their bodies. Women’s bodies were now on public show in pools, on courts and sporting grounds, and in gymnasiums. The previously hidden athletic body drew continuing criticism about the inappropriateness of musculature for females (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 131; Cahn, 1993, p. 4). The controversy of the 1928 Olympic track and field program for women was indicative of much wider opposition to female participation in the sport of athletics. Athletics was said to endanger motherhood and femininity, produce a race of ‘Amazons’ and be corrupting for young girls (Winter, 1979 cited by Hargreaves, 1994, p. 133). But again, females were in a better position because of various contingencies of the time to resist their opponents. Such resistance was also aided by their sporting achievements being so magnificent (Seven World Records in a single meeting at Stamford Bridge in England) that they were celebrated by the press and public (Hargreaves, 1994, pp. 211, 212).<sup>113</sup>

Participation in activities by females was cautiously promoted, as the ‘limited energy reserves’ scientific thesis was refuted. A positively healthy feminine image

replaced the image of the consumptive female (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 82; Verbrugge, 1997, p. 295). However competition for girls was an aspect which united “teachers, doctors, philosophers, and even the pope” in voicing their concern (Lenskyj, 1982, p. 10).<sup>114</sup> The argument in America had been resolved in 1922 when the national athletic union, a male organisation took over sport for women in schools and abolished competition (Cahn, 1993, p. 3).<sup>115</sup> Ontario followed the example of the United States discontinuing all interschool competition between females by the 1930’s (Lenskyj, 1982, p. 10). Fortunately, there existed a wide variety of opportunities for competitive athletics for females in Canada and America that were established and well supported by the crowds and the media, partly developed through the marketing of athletic females as heterosexually attractive. Women’s athletic competitions were linked with men’s competitions, postgame dances, musical entertainment and beauty contests as part of a heterosexually oriented marketing campaign practiced by some promoters (Cahn, 1993, p. 3).

Whilst there seemed to be wider support for female participation in sports, the official ideology remained strictly separatist and dichotomous, and oriented by a belief that the female’s moral responsibilities were directed towards others; men, children and future children. That is, sport for females had to fit with, and complement, the prevailing notions of the subordinate feminine woman. Women played gentle, respectable games for social reasons (Hargreaves, 1994, pp. 53, 88; Lenskyj, 1986, pp. 30, 38). Even upper-class females, insulated from the public social system, were still compelled to show the utilitarian value in their games in terms of their natural roles (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 89). Real sports were unconditionally male and athleticism was a male characteristic. And because male and female sport was strictly separated, male sporting superiority was not challenged (Lenskyj, 1986, p. 35; Verbrugge, 1997, p. 301). As soon as sport finished, it was assumed that women and girls would resume their stereotypical feminine images (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 68). When playing ostensibly male sports like ice hockey and basketball, the ‘feminised’ versions of these sports produced modifications that reduced the vigor of the activity (Lenskyj, 1986, p. 28). When no formal modifications were included, such as in swimming, the restrictive nature of women’s clothing made movement near impossible. A male swimming instructor in 1899 claimed that “a swim of one hundred

yards (in a woman's bathing suit) proved as difficult as a mile in my own suit" (Lenskyj, 1982, p. 8). Even women's physical instructors accepted the necessity of these restrictive clothes and suggested, and published, modifications in coaching tactics to counter these 'natural' obstacles (Lenskyj, 1982; Hargreaves, 1994, p. 97).<sup>116</sup> Men maintained ideological control over women's participation in sport, such that any transformation to the notion of femininity and/or sport was limited by the belief in male superiority (Theberge, 1991b, p. 386).

Cahn (1993, p. 3) goes further by suggesting that whilst most physical education and sport reformers in England produced radical changes to their profession which positively affected the physical activity opportunities of girls, they were also generally conservative in terms of wider social issues. Their reforms to the gendered difference in sport were made within the prevailing episteme of male dominance. They did not envisage, nor want, a wider social transformation. They lived in a socially conservative time. Whilst the motivations for self-control over the female body may be suspect, there is little doubt that such self-control is crucial in the developing autonomy of women as a group. Hargreaves argues that the repression of the women's body in consumptive femininity was symbolic of the repression of women in the family and in society. The expansion of social freedoms was more likely to occur with the development of self-control by females over their bodies at sites including sporting activities (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 85). And further on, she states:

...ideology is not just something which occurs in consciousness as a static set of ideas- it is part of a process of reproduction and of change which is inscribed in social practice. At the same time as women had to accommodate to conservative ideas about their physical capabilities, by their actions in sports they were effecting a change in public opinion about their physical image and the meanings associated with it (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 111)

### ***iii) Consolidation of Resistance: The Space Between Ideology and Practice and the Importance of Contingency***

Jennifer Hargreaves comments on the increasing energy that women devoted to physical activities as greater opportunities for participation were granted to them:

Although they were limited by conventions, they began to play more energetically and to force a shift in the definitions of legitimate female physical activity...[W]omen's sports can be understood as processes of struggles and contradictions, and women were active agents in those processes. In sports, generally... women were *determined* and *determining*. (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 55)<sup>117</sup>

Using an analysis of *Womanhood* magazine, a journal published from 1898 to 1907 in England, Catriona Parratt suggests that the Victorian and Edwardian ideals of femininity existed in ideology more than in practice. These women were more dynamic and active in their participation in athletics, than their contemporary [generally male] writers described. Whilst always under the restrictive and disciplining forces of the Victorian feminine discourse, there were significant challenges to the dominant attitudes and beliefs of the time (1989, p. 141). Parratt explains these challenges as follows:

in the earlier [historical] literature it was suggested that the most important consequence for women of the emergence of an industrial, capitalist society was their consignment to the private, domestic sphere... by the 1930s, the ideal woman of the middle and upper classes was almost completely afunctional and non-productive. The notion of “the ‘perfect lady’... “was certainly a powerful stereotype which pervaded much of the contemporary literature. But more recent scholars argue that this mid-Victorian ideal was probably far removed from the social, economic, and spiritual reality of most women.... The antithesis of the “perfect lady”, the New Woman... challenged the most basic social institutions and beliefs, including marriage... independent women forced the re-conceptualisation of society's view of womanhood. A critical and constitutive element of this emergent model was a newly defined sense of female physicality (1989, pp. 141, 142).

The expansion of women's sporting opportunities took place in the contradictions and spaces between the various medical-moral discourses, the expansion of patriarchal liberalism and women's own sporting experiences. The cult of manliness, developed through physical activity and games, had expanded rapidly in England. And, as McCrone argues, “athleticism and true womanhood were hardly harmonious” (cited by Parratt, 1989, p. 143). In order to enter sports, the Victorian and Edwardian sportswoman projected, at least in public, the image of decorum, moderation and femininity. Hence the sporting experience was both constraining and liberating, disciplining and resistant. In order to participate, the female athlete had to accommodate to the dominant ideals of femininity in

patriarchy, and demonstrate the compatibility between these ideals and their physical activity (Hargreaves, 1994, pp. 89-92).

However, Parratt suggests that women's actual, rather than their officially reported, participation in sport, as evidenced by the columns in *Womanhood*, was far more active and competitive than the ideal allowed. She details a number of sports in which females participated. Interestingly, several of these sports, such as foxhunting, beagling and otter-hunting, seemed at odds with the Victorian ideal of gentle femininity. Whilst legitimated by descriptions which suggested that women in these sports were merely embellishments, descriptions which fitted with the stereotype of English femininity, Parratt argues that actual accounts of hunting, and the denunciations which follow, suggest a more active role for the female participants. She concludes:

... the ideological constraints of high Victorianism may have been neither all-pervasive nor fully accepted, and it certainly allows us to question the notion that women's role in the hunting field was merely that of a refining embellishment. Rather, it is clear that some women were active, enthusiastic, and skillful participants who were drawn to the sport by "the enjoyment, the wholesomeness, even the nerve-bracing dash of danger..." (1989, p. 147)

Whilst passivity and restraint were the 'public' characteristics of female athletes, it seems that, in practice, women participated for more reasons than this. Like men, they competed, excelled and enjoyed the freedom of games, the sensuality of the active body and the mastery of skills. It is further suggested that the early part of the twentieth century was the beginning of moves against the enforced separation of the sexes in activity<sup>118</sup>, and the female sporting body became a public body. As Cahn suggests, "skilled female athletes became symbols of the broader march of womanhood out of the Victorian domestic sphere into once prohibited male realms" (1993, p. 2).

Hargreaves suggests that modifications to women's dress caused by their inclusion into sports liberated the female from constraint, and allowed her to enjoy physical activity. The bicycle produced the need for new forms of dress, which allowed greater physical independence. This sport symbolised two areas of the feminist liberation cause; spatial mobility and bodily freedom (1994, pp. 92, 93). The backlash against this freedom was significant. Hargreaves explains:

Not unexpectedly, sports which symbolized freedom and spontaneity and which could be associated, however spuriously, with sexuality, were opposed on moral as well as scientific grounds. Cycling, for example, was claimed to be an indolent and indecent activity which tended to destroy the sweet simplicity of a girl's nature and which might cause her to fall into the arms of a strange man! The worst fear was that cycling might even transport a girl to prostitution (Hall, 1971 cited by Hargreaves, 1994, p. 93)

Scientific opposition continued this discourse of avoiding the unnatural stimulation of sexual urges, and maintaining the female hymen in place for the future husband (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 97)..

Like Hargreaves, Parratt suggests a continual interplay between the male/public incorporation of female resistance and new strands of that resistance. Incorporation involved the minor modifications to the notions of femininity and the appropriate extent and vigor of female participation. However, some sportswomen continued to stretch these ideas to radical lengths, producing new and freer images and redefinitions of femininity (1989, p. 149). It seemed likely that support for these radical redefinitions came from the secure, but powerful (at least in sports and games), aristocratic and upper middle-classes, which could ignore the more conservative bourgeois notions of femininity (Parratt, 1989, p. 145).<sup>119</sup> Females participated successfully, at times against men, in a number of sports such as croquet and tennis.<sup>120</sup> The dire warnings by medical and scientific professionals did little to deter the active participation of females. The consolidated female resistance to femininity and inactivity was growing. The female athlete became a new model of female heterosexual attractiveness (Cahn, 1993, p. 3).

A further contingency that added to women's opportunities in sport was the Second World War. Females were asked to prepare themselves to meet the enemy of fascism. A new political reason for the support for female athletics grew out of this fear of the enemy. Women were now being encouraged to do physical exercise (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 137), a far cry from the days when women were marginalised out of sport.

According to Weiller and Higgs, the later Second World War years also brought about an increase in the competitive sport activity for females, for reasons that had little to do with feminist issues. Yet this increased participation may have produced feminist results. Although still limited in range of opportunities by the moral physiology of the

time, women did participate professionally in a number of competitive sports in this era (1992, p. 47).<sup>121</sup> The war seemed to relax the boundaries of the gendered public space. Women both played, and earned money from, traditionally male sports, such as baseball. The imposition of the war on professional baseball, producing a game which was without most of its superstars, generated the idea to use women in place of men, and the All American Girl's Professional Baseball League (AAGPBL) commenced in 1943, drawing on the popularity of girl's softball games in America. The authors comment: "As an article in *Business Week* of 1945 pointed out, 'old prejudices against women... were forgotten, at least as long as there were more jobs than men'" (1992, p. 49).

Yet prejudices were never far from the surface. The women were expected to act in a feminine way at all times. Contrary to the high living of the pre-war male baseballers, the women were taught to put on make-up, enunciate properly and maintain correct posture. They were not allowed to swear, spit, and take alcohol or tobacco. They were expected to obey curfews, and act with femininity at all times. Yet, according to most reports of the day, these restrictions did not diminish their level of play or enjoyment (Weiller and Higgs, 1992, pp. 50, 51; Cahn, 1993, p. 7). The female athlete, even when constructed for the viewing pleasure of a male public, demonstrated athleticism that belied the notion of dichotomous gender categories in sport.

So, according to Vertinsky (1999, pp. 1, 2), the early history of female sporting participation can be read as decades of shifting gender boundaries. The fears about the physical inadequacy of women as mothers, the advances in both liberal feminist notions of equality of opportunity and radical feminist notions of controlling one's own body, and the use of sport as a heterosexual suppressant, all combined to produce a re-assessment of gender roles and appropriate sporting activities for the two genders. Sport and physical education were sites where the gendered body was constantly under construction (Verbrugge, 1997, p. 304).

Vertinsky continues by suggesting:

As Thomas Lacquer has pointed out (with reference to events at the end of the eighteenth century), whenever boundaries are threatened, arguments for fundamental sexual differences are shoved into the breach. When it seemed that men might become women, women become men, and gender and country were being put in doubt, the normalizing discourses of patriarchy and medicine

worked to re-encode and enforce border controls around the definitions of gender and the roles that men and women needed to play in maintaining social health and national fitness (1999, p. 3).

A new incorporation was needed, and the patriarchal professionals seized the post-Freudian identification of lesbianism, and the gender conservatism that preceded and followed World War II, to suggest female athleticism as an indicator of a form of social deviance. Participation in competitive or aggressive sport by females was seen as symptomatic of the ‘medical’ condition of lesbianism (Cahn, 1993, p. 4), and medical professionals enforced a stricter regime of gender stereotypes so that sickness and health were broadened to include judgements of appropriate and gendered moral behaviour (Vertinsky, 1999, p. 3). So there existed collusion between patriarchy and medicine and science, such that hierarchical gender-related templates of behaviour were re-affirmed (Vertinsky, 1999, p. 4). According to Parratt:

Supposedly typical characteristics of the sporting New Woman, a lean, muscular frame, athletic ability, a dislike of “feminine” pursuits, were now inextricably linked with “mannish lesbianism.” Boarding schools which nurtured a girl’s passion for athletic games were also believed to foster what had come to be defined as “unnatural” friendships between females (1989, p. 153).

Cahn (1993, pp. 1-4) explains this incorporation as a shift from the use of sport for combating the “unbridled heterosexual desire” of female athletes, to the necessary connotation of a threatening female athleticism with misplaced female sexuality. Such a shift was made necessary by the presence of athletically adept females; females who revealed a continuum, rather than a dichotomy, of performance with men. Cahn suggests: “The figure of the mannish lesbian athlete has acted as a powerful but unarticulated “bogy woman” of sport, forming a silent foil for more positive, corrective images that attempt to rehabilitate the image of women athletes and resolve the cultural contradiction between athletic prowess and femininity” (1993, p. 1). This partly explains Young’s (1988) view that athleticism and femininity remain dichotomous concepts. The lesbian athlete is the wedge that male controllers of the sporting discourse have placed/ still place between athleticism and femininity; there exists no desire to mould these concepts together.<sup>122</sup> In Fairchild’s

terms, women were now included in the cultural discourse, but only as a problem or anomaly for sport (1994, p. 68).

According to Cahn, this new association of athleticism with sexual deviance in women produced an anxious response from the controllers of women's sport and physical education. This is exemplified by one explanation of the goals of a women's physical education curriculum as helping women to "develop an interest in school dances and mixers and a desire to voluntarily attend them" (1993, p. 6).<sup>123</sup> The medical-moral debate over participation by females also continued and intensified with regards to competitive sport into the 1940's. Weiller and Higgs suggest that the moral physiology, codified in the Victorian era, remained in force past both World Wars, even though women were required to take a larger role in physical aspects of labour during the wars. Vigorous competitive athletics remained detrimental to both women's childbearing roles (Weiller and Higgs, 1992, p. 47) and the control of their heterosexuality (Cahn, 1993, p. 3), according to some scientific studies, into the 1940's. The questions that drove this discourse were the same as had always directed it. Were competitive games and physical activity good for women's health, and therefore could be used to help make women better wives and mothers? Did they enhance childbearing skills? Did they endanger reproductive capacities? Did they produce excessive stimulation of the female that could result in unbridled and misplaced sexual urges? At this time in the conservative and threatened patriarchal society, it was inconceivable to ask whether games and physical activity produced autonomous females. As Lenskyj states, "the wife and mother issue was paramount" (1982, p. 12).<sup>124</sup> This abolition of competition was driven by the conservative male patriarchy that preferred to deny that women could enjoy sports for the same reasons as men.

A new resistance met this incorporation as the athletic woman challenged the naturalness of the patriarchal social system that cast them either as normally and naturally passive, subservient and dependent, or as sexually deviant if active in sports. The *Womanhood Field Club* was one example of a sporting club for women that developed out of a feminist consciousness as a means of asserting female autonomy and control over female sporting participation. It sought, not only to expand women's opportunities for sporting participation, but also to use sport as a means of promoting women's independent

position in society. There emerged, within the Club's space, a clear understanding of the inequity in society and sport between men and women, and the need for collective action to redress this inequity (Parratt, 1989, p. 154).<sup>125</sup>

Women's progress in sport was never smooth. There were periods of expansion, sometimes due to strong females and other times due to contingencies over which females had little control, where women gained greater freedom in sports. But there was also periods when the reactionary patriarchal forces recovered ideological ground from the female reformers, even with the consent of female athletes themselves. There were differences between sports, and between nations. There was continuity with past traditions of femininity, but there were also radical changes in dress and body image and privacy, which created new ideals of femininity. There was appropriation of male sports and male ways of playing, but there was also celebration of female sports and female ways of participation. However, throughout all this, it was rare for females to break free of the overriding ideology which saw their natural position as wife and mother first, and athlete a distant second (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 144). Language-change by females in sport, like all forms of language change, relied on a benign and tolerant oppressor, and it was only at certain times that the male sporting and social establishment was benign and tolerant. As Theberge suggests, the question may have changed from "*whether* women should be allowed to compete" to "*how* women should participate", but the idea of male dominance and control remains (1991b, p. 385).

Parratt concludes with a similar suggestion that the relationship between sport and society for females was mutually enhancing, but constrained. She states:

In the broader scheme of things why should it matter that women involved themselves in competitive sport? At the simplest level, it is important because it represented another sphere of action opened up for the potential involvement of all women. In a period in which the overtly political campaign to advance women's cause was in a phase of retrenchment, when the envisioned physical freedom of expression on the New Woman was foundering on the shoals of conservatism, sporting women were, less obviously, advancing the feminist cause. ... [B]y their very behaviour, athletic women were forcing ideological and actual change; what was happening in women's sport at this time did not simply reflect social and cultural change, it was a constitutive element of such change (1989, p. 156).

This conclusion by Parratt suggests that sport, protected as a ‘private-activity-in-practice’, but enjoying considerable patronage and publicity, may have been an important mechanism for removing the ideological restrictions on females in the wider, conservative society. Athletic women displayed independence, autonomy, mastery and freedom in their sphere, at the same time as when Mill and Taylor needed to produce male-oriented arguments for the education of women in order to improve educational opportunities for women. This suggests that sport may have been a leading practice in the pursuits of feminism (Cahn, 1993, p. 2).

### **Conclusion**

This chapter displays the radical edge to the earliest forms of the feminist appropriation of both society and sport. Whilst it would be easy to dismiss the history of feminism as one of women’s incorporation into the dominant patriarchal view of society, such a dismissal does not do justice to the strong-willed individuals and the female collectivities who redescribed and reformed society in such a way as to open up freedoms for women. Also, the radical edge of this tradition can be seen in both the positive value these feminists placed on women’s skills and abilities (a valuation seen in sporting circles later than in other spheres) and the ability to practice their sport in a way which ignored the strongly repressive ideologies and produced new descriptions of autonomy and physical strength for women. Hall (1985, p. 35) and Messner (1988, p. 201) agree that this first wave of athletic feminism commenced a tradition of investigating and challenging how sport contributed to the dominance of men over women in society. Sporting participation by females of this era presented a resistance point to the ideology of male power and female subordination, and its various manifestations in the dichotomies of public and private, culture and nature, master and slave and mind and body (Edwards, 1999, p. 2). As Messner suggests, “In forcing an acknowledgement of women’s physicality, albeit in a limited way, the first wave of female athletes laid the groundwork for more fundamental challenges” (1988, p. 201). So whilst the prevailing episteme of male dominance remained/remains in place, some of the supporting ideas that buttressed that belief were

undermined, with the result that females experienced greater opportunities, if not freedom and authority, in their lives.

The next chapter of this thesis will look at contemporary liberalism and liberal-feminism. It may seem that the leap from the war years to the 1970's when dealing with female participation in sport is a fairly significant one, overlooking a significant growth in women's participation. However, Messner goes on to suggest that "While some cracks had clearly appeared in the patriarchal edifice, it would not be until the 1970s that female athletes would present a more basic challenge to predominant cultural images of women" (1988, p. 201). The point of the present chapter was to show that, while working with the available concepts of equality of opportunity, autonomy, bodily strength, and women's virtues, feminists and sport's reformers were able to create new and radical descriptions of womanhood, sport and society. It will be suggested in Chapter Four that much of the contemporary use of liberal-feminism in sport has lost this radical motivation. As a result of institutional and economic factors, the application of liberal feminism to sport in the current era offers little in the way of redescribing women's subordinate relationship to men in society, or in sport, and hence producing new possibilities for subjective existences for females that were previously denied to them. This reformist agenda may be reversing some of the gains of the women's sport movement. And significantly, reformers of women's sports have a new set of conceptual resources available to them that seem far more useful in developing greater freedom and opportunities for women in sport.

One problem impinges greatly on women's position in sport, and will be dealt with throughout the rest of this thesis. What happens to groups of people who have rarely been given a chance to enter the debate concerning things such as sporting practices, sporting spaces and sporting commentary? How can they gain a voice, so that their views are taken into account in the resolution of these issues? Will they be able to speak after years of silence? The present chapter has endeavoured to demonstrate the genealogy of women's passivity and inferiority in discourses about both political and sporting activity. The history of silence and incorporation produced by the gendering of the female athletic body is an important starting-point and contextualisation when discussing current explanations of female authority in sport and society.

But as Balsamo states about Lenskyj's and Vertinsky's work, but which can also be applied more generally to the feminist historians of sport used in this chapter:

Their body scholarship involves "rereading" the female body as it is inscribed in one discourse from within another textual/sexual system. The textual system they use to read the female body "against the grain" is informed by feminist cultural theory and, as such, it provides a perspective from which to document the process of cultural recoding of the female body- first as a "gendered" body, and secondly, as one in need of special protection from the rigors of physical exertion. In this sense, their analyses provide a way of understanding the process of transcoding, where the "natural" female body is taken up as a cultural emblem of the reproductive body with the consequence that women were often discouraged from participating in athletic activities (1996, p. 43).

This feminist rewriting of the history of women in sport includes what has been ignored in normal history; the resistance to the apparatuses of gender embodied in the active participation by females in sport, and the desperate opposition to that participation by male controllers of public space. Would our contemporary understandings of the relationships between the sexes be modified by the knowledge of this? As Lenskyj suggests:

It is hoped that by understanding women's sporting heritage and by becoming alert to the ways in which sport has been, and continues to be, coopted for the purposes of male control over female sexuality and the female reproductive function, women will be strengthened in the struggle for autonomy in sport. (1986, p. 14)

Messner argues that the widespread inclusion of women in greater numbers in sports, and especially in traditionally male sports, from the beginning of the 1970s, has resulted in "a genuine quest by women for equality, control of their own bodies and self-definition" (1988, p. 197). The next three chapters deal with the mechanisms available to women in sport to be granted epistemic authority over these things in their lives. The next chapter will investigate the possibility that the production of a female voice concerning equality of opportunities in sport is possible using the conceptual resources made available by liberalism. Chapter Five will look at how women's capacity for self-definition is limited by the male control of the sporting discourse and investigate the methods of gaining authority in the sporting discourse via a combination of feminist standpoint theory and pragmatism. The sixth chapter of the thesis will use postmodern and Foucauldian feminist

ideas to explain the opportunities that females may develop for enhanced authority through greater control over their bodies in sport.

**CHAPTER FOUR**  
**EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FEMINISM: AUTHORITY IN PARTICIPATION**  
***“PLAYING THE GAMES THAT MEN PLAY”***

**Introduction**

“Until women have a professional team game we’ll always be second-class in sports”  
(Billy Jean King cited in Deford, 1997, p. 63).

Contemporary liberal feminists reject the early liberal and, commonly, the early feminist belief concerning any essential relationship between women and the private sphere. These feminists accept that the liberal division between the public and the private, acts as both a limit to state intervention in the life of any individual and as also a self-regulated barrier to the public exposure of the experiences of any individual. What they reject is the suggestion that women, as a category of abstract individuals, should be excluded from the public sphere either by law or by tradition (Tapper, 1986, p. 37). Feminists who could be considered liberal have adopted a variety of programs to create changes in society that would facilitate the entry of women into the public sphere. The most popular change has been pressure on the state to adopt equal opportunities or affirmative action legislation. Equality of opportunity has been a founding principle of the political ideology of most liberal societies. As humans, men and women are considered equal regardless of the inequality in the actual situation of their life (Mitchell, 1987, p. 27; Ahmed, 1996, pp. 73, 74).

Liberal feminists suggest that, with the implementation of equal opportunity laws, all humans, whether male or female, will be able to develop their own full and self-governed ‘human potential’ (Hall, 1985, p. 28). For Jagger, “By claiming that gender constitutes an arbitrary and oppressive constraint on the freedom both of women and men, liberal feminists argue simultaneously that gender is unjust and that its abolition is in the general human interest” (Jagger, 1988, p. 39). Facts of gender become the same as facts of religion or physical physique; contingent characteristics which should not bear on the social freedom, nor the authority, of the person (Tapper, 1986, p. 37; Moller-Okin, 1989, p.

91). Perceived differences between people because of the effects of gender that have been used historically to discriminate against women are redescribed as either fictitious appearances or as socially produced biases, and the effects of the emphasis on such differences are regarded as changeable (Tapper, 1986, p. 37).

According to Catherine MacKinnon (1987), the foundational impulse of this branch of contemporary liberal feminism is 'we're as good as you'. If given the spectrum of opportunities that men enjoy, women will achieve just as much as men. This impulse has been an important political extension of rights to women. It has given females access to education and employment, opened up the military and sport to females and allowed them to participate in public pursuits such as politics. More generally, "It has moved to change the dead ends that were all we were seen as good for and has altered what passed for women's lack of physical training, which was really serious training in passivity and enforced weakness" (MacKinnon, 1987, p. 35; also see Tapper, 1986, p. 40). Calls for human equality remain an important ideal for oppressed groups in a modern society where traditional forms of inequality in practice remain, regardless of the effects of legislation. The long history of inequality between women and men has been strongly resilient when faced with the effects of equal opportunities legislation (Brook, 1999, p. 25). In the nineteenth century women had few legal rights. In modern times, they have legal rights, but inequality remains in work, education, sport and the law, as women continue to be treated as men's inferiors. Mitchell concludes: "Equal rights are an important tip of an iceberg that goes far deeper. That they are only the tip is both a reflection of the limitation of the concept of equality and an indication of how profound and fundamental is the problem of the oppression of women" (1987, p. 26).<sup>126</sup>

The purpose of this chapter is to suggest that equal opportunities legislation remains an important part of the mechanisms available to females to obtain authority, both in sport and in society. The idea is explained well by Catherine MacKinnon when she states that although she thinks "the real feminist issue is not whether biological males or biological females hold positions of power," she also contends that it is utterly essential that women are in these positions of power in order to promote the 'real feminist issue' (1987, p. 77). Some feminists have tended to ignore equal opportunities legislation as

merely the incorporation of females into social practices that are controlled and defined by males (Brook, 1999, p. 25; Scraton, Fasting, Pfister and Bunuel, 1999, p. 99). In contrast, MacKinnon also emphasises the prior pragmatic point that it is essential for females to have access to power in order to resist the maleness of control and definition of social practices, and access to power in some practices may begin with access to participation. This may especially be relevant in many contemporary sports, where women have not yet won the battle for access to participation in all sports, so equal access to some sports remains an important ideal to be achieved.

This chapter will suggest that in these popular sports of Western society, the lack of participation by females allows for the belief that men possess attributes and skills which make them more suited to certain powerful positions in these sports, sport generally and the wider society. Conversely, the ‘attributes and skills’ women possess, as reflected in their limited participation in these sports, makes them suitable for other subordinate roles in society. As Bennett *et. al.* (1987, p. 370) suggest, sport is one practice where the vast majority of women are denied the equal opportunity to develop movement skills, and this denial is partially responsible for patriarchy gaining control over women’s bodies and subjectivities. In other words, the exclusion of women from certain sports, which Bryson describes as “flag carriers” of masculinity (1990, cited by Theberge, 1997, p. 70), makes plain the relationship between the two genders. It is these sports, as much as the sports in which women and men both compete, that make seemingly apparent the concept of two separate and distinct genders. Hence, it is these sports which also provide apparent justification for the hierarchy of gendered social assignments and positions in the contemporary sporting and social world. For this reason, English’s (1988, p. 332) call to expand the repertoire of possible sports for women by creating new sports, will not be enough to resist the hierarchy of authority in sport. In Theberge’s terms, such an expansion will “implicitly leave intact the construction of some sports as male and others as female” and hence, do little to break down the notion of two separate and hierarchical categories of gender (1998, p. 2).

In Chapter Two of this thesis the idea of participation in ‘sport as a language-without-words practice’ was explained. As a means of communication, sporting

participation conveys strong ideas about the natures of men and women, and the relationship between the two genders. The languages of sports, which are played exclusively by men, contribute symbolic support to the general oppression of women in sport and society. Conversely, participation in sport by women may challenge some of the discourses that reproduce the wider oppressions that women feel. Equal opportunities legislation may be a starting point for women to obtain authority in structures where it has been previously denied to them. As Kane explains, participation by women in male sports will provide “empirical evidence that many women can outperform many men... and also that they can possess physical attributes such as strength and speed in greater capacities than do many men” (1995, p. 197). In so doing, the binary constructions of gender are undermined and replaced by a continuum of performances. Whilst this need not necessarily result in integrated participation, it will justify allowing women to take part in a variety of sports that have been denied to them for spurious biological or social reasons (Theberge, 1998, p. 10).

The purpose of this chapter is to expand the utility of equal opportunities legislation for females in sport in two significant ways. The first way is by undermining the long history of gender stereotypes that currently limit its effects. It will be suggested in the early section of this chapter that the current usage of equal opportunities legislation has been limited by historically enshrined beliefs about essential differences between men and women in terms of interest in overall sport participation and interest in participation in sports that have been gender-typed as masculine.

Due to the maintenance of these beliefs, the usage of equal opportunities legislation has been limited to expanding the resources and protection given to females participating in those sports that confirm the so-called athletic ‘limitations’ of their gender. It will be suggested that much of the adoption of these laws has done little to change the authoritative position of men in sport and the silence of, or intolerance toward, female speakers in sport, and feminist sporting reformers. The suggested reason for this lack of impact has been that equal opportunities legislation has not been effectively used to challenge the symbolism associated with exclusively male sports such as football<sup>127</sup>, ice hockey and boxing. Its limitation to issues of resources has meant that the focus of equal

opportunities legislation has not been as radically political as it possibly could be. By accepting the more limited reforms, contemporary equal opportunity feminists have lost the radical edge that many of their predecessors had, and consequently equality of female participation has been able to be incorporated into the prevailing symbolic episteme of male dominance in sport.

In contrast, the latter part of this chapter will redefine the foundation of equal opportunity legislation in sport as a second way of expanding its utility to challenge this prevailing episteme. It will shift the purpose of this legislation from equality of opportunity to equity of respect; from counting numbers of female participants to the equitable respect given to any female participant as the author of her own story. Such story-telling may take place in a variety of sports, but in order to challenge the prevailing episteme of male dominance, it must take place within the previously exclusively male sports. So equal opportunities legislation will be suggested as useful in protecting women, and their stories, in sports such as boxing, football and ice-hockey,<sup>128</sup> where previously it had been used/corrupted to ‘protect’ women out of these sports.<sup>129</sup> In so doing, the exclusivity of these male sports will be undermined, and the maleness of important concepts such as ‘physicality’, ‘athleticism’, ‘strength’, ‘courage’ and ‘violence’ will be challenged.

### **Liberal Feminist Formulations of Equal Opportunity Paradigms in Sport**

According to Boxill, all sports are what John Rawls would call social unions (1993-94, p. 24). They each possess a shared, though changing, tradition of what constitutes ‘virtues’, ‘ends’, ‘standards of excellence’ and ‘appropriate practices’. Any sport involves a community of like-minded people, pursuing shared ends and activities, enjoying each other’s individual excellences and idiosyncratic performances as they participate in the activity, and granting authority to those exemplars of the practice. And, in an ideal world, all these things are not gender specific; that is, they are “not exclusively male” (Boxill, 1993-94, p. 24). Hence, reformist strands of contemporary liberal feminism suggest that any exclusion of females from participation in the social union of sports is a distorting and reversible discrimination, and should be dealt with by legislation. And any inclusion of females in the sporting community grants them the equal opportunity to become authoritative exemplars within that community.

The response in many Western societies, pressured by liberal feminists, has been the implementation of laws, programs and economic interventions by the state, to try to redress any past inequality in terms of opportunities between females and males (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 175). In Britain, the UK Sex Discrimination Act was passed in 1975. It made discrimination on the basis of gender illegal in the context of employment and education. However, the practical implementation of the Act is made difficult in sport by its construction which both, makes it hard to impose changes when people resist those changes, and allows the practice of sport some opportunities to escape from the legislation, often under the guise of dubious biological justifications. Many disadvantages that women suffer in the sporting field are justifiable under the Act on the grounds that women are 'equal but different' to men. Also several conditions and amendments to the Act have further watered down its practical effectiveness in dealing with inequality in the sporting field. The original terms of the Act did not apply to single-sex educational facilities, and this has resulted in the Act having limited effect on the traditions of single-sex PE teacher-training colleges, and classes in schools. In addition, single-sex private clubs may continue to function in traditional ways that oppress women, without fear of retribution. The campaign to force snooker, golf, cricket and tennis clubs to grant full membership rights to female members, rather than the associative members status which gives females no political power in these clubs, has never received parliamentary time for discussion (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 176). Finally, there is an exemption clause, section 44 of the Act, that allows for unequal treatment where 'strength, speed and physique' would make mixed competition disadvantageous for either sex. This clause designed to limit adult male participation when their bodies are considered too big or strong to fairly compete with females, has been used to limit even pre-pubertal participation by girls in sports such as soccer (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 176). In all, the Act reinforces the historically produced discourse of the physical superiority of men and the inferiority of women. Section 44 of the Act itself confirmed a prevailing episteme of gender difference that, when coupled with the long history of male dominance in sport, reinforced a hierarchical and dichotomous view of gender participation in, at the very least, adult sport.<sup>130</sup> As McArdle (1999, p. 44)

explains, “sports bodies were arguing... that the law allowed them to adopt discriminatory practices that would be unacceptable in virtually every other area of employment.”

In the United States, the equal opportunity legislation pertaining to education at least includes sections that deal with sport and PE. Title IX of the Education Amendments (to the Civil Rights Act of 1964) was passed in 1972 to remove any system of preferential treatment on the basis of sex in education (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 179). In writing about the period shortly before Title IX, the author James Michener reported: “...one day I saw the budget of ... a state institution (a university) supported by tax funds, with a student body divided fifty-fifty between men and women. The athletic department had \$3,900,000 to spend, and of this, women received exactly \$31,000, a little less than eight-tenths of one percent” (1976, p. 120 cited in Simon, 1993-94, p. 6). Since the introduction of Title IX legislation, the situation for female athletes in schools has improved markedly. Messner, Duncan and Jensen report that: “In 1971, only 294,015 girls participated in high school sports, compared with 3,666,917 boys. By the 1989-90 academic year, there were 1,858,659 girls participating in high school sports, compared with 3,398,192 boys” (1993, p. 122 cited by Hargreaves, 1994, p. 179).<sup>131</sup> There was a similar change in the proportions of men and women participating in college sports. In addition, there was an immediate increase in funding and facilities for female athletes after the implementation of Title IX (Gaccione, 1991 cited by Hargreaves, 1994, p. 179).

The history of the implementation of Title IX appears to be one of increasing opportunities for women in college sport in the United States. Yet, whilst the number of active female athletes has increased, there has been a substantial reduction in the number of female coaches<sup>132</sup> and administrators. Since its implementation, Title IX has seen the reduction of women’s programs headed by women from over 90% in 1972 to 15.9% in 1986 (Shaw, 1995, p. 8).<sup>133</sup> For Sabo: “The net professional result for women can be described as increased perspiration without political representation” (1994, p. 204), even within the pool of sports that women have traditionally played. In other words, increased participation in sports with a history of female participation has resulted in reduced opportunities for females to speak about their participation in these sports, as a coach or administrator.

As Edwards suggests about black female athletes<sup>134</sup>, but which applies to a lesser degree with white female athletes, their captivity involves a “special kind of invisibility, that is, at the same time seen and unseen” (1999, p. 2), or perhaps more appropriately seen but not listened to. Female athletic performance produces both idolisation and exploitation such that the athlete is confined to a small number of entertaining roles, all of which confirm her stereotypical representation as nonauthoritative. The history of silence, explained in the previous chapter, will not be erased simply by inclusion in a symbolic order that is determined by a narrow range of possible subjectivities for females, all of which undermine her authority as an athlete (Edwards, 1999, p. 3). So, a limited access to participation in a world oriented by male standards of appropriate female behaviour does not seem, by itself, to be particularly empowering in the production of female athletic voices.

### **Patriarchal Responses to Equal Opportunities Legislation**

What is revealing about the history of the equal opportunities legislation, is the extent to which males treated this egalitarian legislation as a threat to inegalitarian ways of life that supporters of male sports had considered beyond the question of equality. The traditional distribution of resources in college sports was thought ‘natural’ and worthy of being defended using legal principles that conflicted with the very foundations of liberalism. The increased opportunity of females to play sports was viewed as an unwarranted attack on the position of males in sport (Lovett and Lowry, 1995a, p. 245).<sup>135</sup> The structures and discourses of sport were considered by supporters of ‘male’ sport to be worthy of special protection under the law, and these supporters called for the exemption of sport from consideration under equal opportunities laws. Such a call was obviously illiberal, but still obtained support from many sections of society, and avoided the ‘bad odour’ that normally accompanies feminist calls for special consideration.<sup>136</sup>

The passage of Title IX in 1972 marked the first time that access to sport for women was treated as a public agenda item in the United States (Boutilier and San Giovanni, 1994, p. 101). It wasn’t until 1979 that the legislation received the punitive strength necessary to enforce its requirements through the loss of federal funds for those

colleges that failed to comply with its legislation (Boutilier and San Giovanni, 1994, p. 101). However according to Boutilier and San Giovanni:

... the real battle was yet to be fought, for in 1980 a self-proclaimed conservative, Ronald Reagan, was elected to the White House. Reagan came to office with a conservative ideological agenda that included the task of rolling back the initial successes and sweeping interpretations of Title IX.... (1994, p. 102)

The opposition to Title IX has continued to the present day even despite the restoration of Title IX's legislative influence over athletic departments through the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1988.<sup>137</sup> The Supreme Court then ruled soon after that plaintiffs who took action against schools under Title IX lawsuits could seek compensatory and punitive damages (Staurowsky, 1995, p. 29; Shaw, 1995, p. 1). This effectively gave Title IX greater punitive strength, and it could have been predicted that females position in sport would rapidly improve. Yet such a suggestion ignores the long history of male domination in sport, and the strong resistance to any reduction in that dominance. Male forces of resistance sought both to defer or deter any changes to the current system of sport in colleges in America (Staurowsky, 1995, p. 28), and to produce more subtle methods of reproducing the dominance that was once produced by men's exclusive participation in sport.

The next section of the thesis will look at the problems and opportunities that are produced by equal opportunities legislation in sport using some feminist criticisms of patriarchal readings of equal opportunities legislation in the wider society. Firstly, it will demonstrate how equality of access ideology poses some problems for the foundational underpinnings of liberalism (Tapper, 1986, p. 41). It will then demonstrate some of the limitations of equality of access programs in a world that has been historically structured by/toward male privilege and authority. Finally, it will suggest that equality of access programs have been reduced in effectiveness because of an acceptance of a belief in an underlying and essential difference between men and women that has limited the breadth of intervention of these programs in the sporting world. The dismantling of this belief will be suggested as an important prerequisite to the production of spaces for authoritative

female commentary as participants in this chapter, in the media in the following chapter, and about the sporting body in Chapter Six.

### ***1) The Maleness of Abstract Individualism:***

The idea of abstract individualism poses a problem for the liberal feminist interventions of equal opportunities and affirmative action legislation. The concept of abstract individualism suggests that persons have access to their situation and that autonomous desires are available to them; that introspective choice is a neutral process of discovery. Each individual has an opportunity for the production of autonomous desires (Rawls, 1985, p. 241; Kymlicka, 1988, pp. 185, 187). Liberals cannot argue for the creation of desires through social/cultural/educative structures because interests, in autonomous humans, are said to be formed individually (Fraser, 1991, p. 261). It is this idea of individual self-determination that is the basis for the legal and social checks on the interference with another person's freedom, in liberal society (Rawls, 1985, p. 231; Paul and Miller, 1990, p. 805).

Liberal feminism is forced by its own ideas to challenge this notion of abstract individualism. If, as liberal feminists suggested, women are as capable of men of being fully rational individuals, then the proof they sought to display this revealed that any cognitive or emotional differences which have been revealed between the sexes can be attributed to the different life experiences of females and males (Tapper, 1986, p. 40). Feminists suggest a need to investigate how the desires of the *gendered* self are constructed in society. They suggest that socialisation, education, and gendered stereotypes all play a part in controlling and limiting desires. The self is constantly in construction, but such a construction occurs in a world organised by gender differences (Ahmed, 1996, p. 75). This must present a definitional challenge to abstract individualism, because it demonstrates how the individual's desires are formed, at least partly, by social forces (Jagger, 1988, p. 42; Ahmed, 1996, p. 74). This challenge to the notion of abstract individualism undercuts the notion of liberal freedom as non-interference, because without what liberals call 'interference' there would be no desires at all. In rejecting abstract individualism, feminists are left with the proposition that individuals desire what society trains them to desire. For

Jagger, "...a rejection of abstract individualism is a rejection of the whole a prioristic liberal approach to both human nature and political theory" (1988, p. 44).<sup>138</sup>

The liberal insistence on the formal equality of abstract individuals makes it simpler for patriarchal organisations to explain away, or ignore, how the 'neutral' legislation that the state enacts may produce the desires and lives of different genders differently. In this manner, the varying needs of different people are ignored, and the satisfaction of these varying needs might be suggested as a form of discrimination. Jagger cites the example of the case of *Gilbert v General Electric Company*, where the females of the company charged that it was discriminatory to exclude pregnancy-related disabilities from their employer's disability plan. The ruling by the Supreme Court was that this was not a gender-based discrimination, but merely the allowable exclusion of a physical condition from coverage. Of course, it is unusual to find many men who are affected by these 'disabilities' (1988, p. 47). What the case makes plain is that sex does have an effect on the practical consequences of supposedly neutral state legislation, and that liberal feminists demands for equality before the law may require an acknowledgement of gender of which liberalism is incapable (Tapper, 1986, pp. 41, 42).<sup>139</sup>

The problems caused by the application of the liberal foundation of abstract individualism in sport are manifested in the patriarchal counter-arguments that suggest that equal opportunities legislation is misplaced in sport because women don't possess the interest in sport that men do. Opponents of equal opportunity legislation in sport suggest that because women exhibit less interest, experience, talent and desire to participate in the current structure of sport, any legislation should take these conditions into account when determining a formula for the allocation of resources. It is unfair to discriminate against men by suggesting there should be an equal distribution of resources.<sup>140</sup> It is argued that the historical differences between men's and women's sports has produced unequal interest in participation between men and women, which should, if possible, be changed over centuries and not immediately (Stoll and Beller, 1994, p. 77). Proportionality is not necessitated by equality, and this viewpoint fits with the liberal requirement not to try to 'produce' perfection in others. If women don't have the same interest in sport, then it is improper for the state to try and produce that interest.

But this argument contradicts the principle that underpins non-interference, the liberal idea of abstract individualism. It recognises that desires and interests are historically and socially produced as different for the two sexes. From the point of view of the liberal feminist, as Francis (1993-94, pp. 39-42) suggests, if the historical underrepresentation of females in sport is the result of past and present biases in the educational system, then affirmative action legislation to encourage female participation can be justified on three moral grounds. Those grounds are to compensate victims of past injustice or bias, to correct ongoing and traditional injustice, and to improve overall distributive justice between men and women in sport, and in society.

According to Shaw (1995, pp. 3-5) subsequent appeals by Colorado State University, Brown University and Indiana University all met with rulings that women's sports could not be cut where the percentage of female intercollegiate athletes did not approach the percentage of female undergraduate students. In all cases, the judges ignored the claim made by the universities that female interest did not approach male interest in sport. This was significant, because the court actively resisted the temptation to rule in a way, which would institutionalise the belief that women are less interested in sport than men. The courts have also ruled in ways that use Title IX affirmatively to reverse the effects of the argument of women's inherent or produced lack of interest in sports. Colgate University was ordered to elevate its women's hockey team to varsity status so as to redress some of the imbalances between female athletic and undergraduate representation (Shaw, 1995, p. 6).

Such affirmative action is one possible response to past injustice, but it is a response that produces questions about the notion of abstract individualism. To solve this dilemma, the state must see itself as capable of judging between desires that are worthy of being produced, and those that are not worthy of state support for production. But the solutions offered by liberal feminism, as with those offered by patriarchal sport, make the state the arbiter of private desire.

## ***2) The Maleness of Sporting Reason:***

According to MacKinnon, demands for equality by feminists call for the same treatment in situations where gender is not important, and different, but equal, treatment in situations where gender does have an effect, such as in sport (1987, p. 39). The problem is that in wanting to be brought up to the level of treatment that men receive, the liberal feminist endorses the way that men have ‘been’, and continue to ‘be’, in society (MacKinnon, 1987, p. 48; Tapper, 1986, pp. 41, 45; Code, 1986, p. 48). There is a perceived ‘reality’ of difference between men and women. This difference affects who should fill which roles in society and what rewards should be given to each role. According to MacKinnon:

There is a politics to this. Concealed is the substantive way in which man has become the measure of all things... Gender neutrality is... simply the male standard, and the special protection rule is simply the female standard, but do not be deceived: masculinity, or maleness, is the referent for both... A male body is the human body; all those extra things which women have are studied in ob/gyn (1987, p. 34; also see Tapper, 1986, p. 41).

MacKinnon goes further to suggest that this understanding of the difference between men and women as historically contingent ignores that “men’s differences from women are equal to women’s differences from men” (1987, p. 37). Yet women are socially subordinate, in almost every sphere of activity, to men; the hierarchy of authority produces differences, which are inequalities, between men and women.<sup>141</sup> She explains the problem as:

... virtually every quality that distinguishes men from women is already affirmatively compensated in this society. Men’s physiology defines most sports, their needs define auto and health insurance coverage, their socially designed biographies define workplace expectations and successful career patterns, their perspectives and concerns define quality in scholarship, their experiences and obsessions define merit, their objectification of life defines art, their military service defines citizenship, their presence defines family... their image defines god, and their genitals define sex. (MacKinnon, 1987, p. 36).

Even when they perform the same tasks, society places a higher valuation on men’s doings in terms of rationality. Margaret Mead explains:

In every known human society, the male’s need for achievement can be recognised. Men may cook or weave or dress dolls or hunt humming birds, but

if such activities are appropriate occupations of men, then the whole society, men and women alike, vote them as important. When the same occupations are performed by women, they are regarded as less important (Mead: 1962, p. 157, cited by Thornton, 1986, p. 77)<sup>142</sup>

Judith Lorber (2000, p. 80) explains this as the desegregation of gendered occupations resulting in women working in occupations that were previously designated as male with a glass ceiling in place, whilst men who work in occupations that were gender-typed as female experience a glass escalator.

There are token positions for women in this doctrine of equality, if they can approach the male standard of performance. Positions may even be created for women under the guise of reverse discrimination to compensate for past structural inequity. Yet the problem for feminism, is that the success of these women in achieving those positions of relative power [as compared to other women and some men], and in succeeding in these positions, is based on them being able to function in ways that approximate the male standard of behaviour (Tapper, 1986, pp. 41, 45). They may be successfully competitive in business, or successfully hard in politics. De Beauvoir's warning that the British society did not seem to become any more liberal under Margaret Thatcher seems to accord with this description (Code, 1986, p. 62 n. 27).<sup>143</sup>

Because sport has a long tradition of being male-defined, the inclusion of females into some existing sport programs may silence and further stigmatise women as the inferior sex. In Wigmore's terms:

So long as sport remains a male preserve, the contribution of sport to the construction of gender identities and gender relations will remain straightforward. Sport is what boys and men naturally do, and what girls and women either do not do, or do at the peril of their own gendered identities. The trivialization of women's sport ranges from prohibition of women coaching men<sup>144</sup> to treatment as sex objects and mothers emphasizing that a woman's place is in a subordinate relationship to men (1996, p. 56).

The maleness of the participatory discourse may be an important factor in any discussion of the effectiveness of the liberal model of legislation to ensure equality of opportunity for females in sport. But in addition, the maleness of the organisational discourse also undermines the effectiveness of liberal feminist interventions in sport. According to

Staurowsky (1996), Title IX is based on the male system of college sport as professional, revenue producing activities, where the seriousness of the sport, and the value accorded to the sport, is related to this production of revenue.<sup>145</sup> The professionalisation of college sports, and the ideological link between value or importance and revenue making, has created the idea that men's sport acts as a breadwinner, and women's sport is dependent on these revenue earners. As controllers of the industry, male sport remains the standard by which lesser sports are judged, and the unquestioned standard is an economic one.

Reformist liberal feminism accepts this system of sport provided for females by males (Lovett and Lowry, 1995b, p. 264).<sup>146</sup> Any larger program of improving/modifying the male model of college sport was never considered after the enactment of Title IX. Title IX called for female accommodation to the existing sporting structure, and not for a critical engagement which transformed the structure's policies, practices and methods of evaluating the success of a program. There was no space in the practice of this legislation for females to be heard as oppositional voices. The acceptance of this standard has meant that any oppositional voice is silenced. The male-dominated NCAA subsumed the potentially resistant AIAW, and its different indicators of success within its educational philosophy. And claims that the different standards of success within female sports are equally as valid indicators of success as the male economic model of success are silenced by this economic paradigm which translates non-profitable difference into inferiority (Knoppers, 1988, p. 75).<sup>147</sup>

The effect of this economic model of success for sports has been a displacement of women from positions of authority. Wilkerson notes that Title IX has resulted in increasing numbers of male coaches controlling female teams in American College sport (1996, p. 415). Title IX has made female sport a public concern in America worthy of generous financial allocation. Coaching and administering female sporting teams has become a highly paid professional enterprise. The professionalisation of women's college sports, and its inclusion in the male sporting program, created the situation where decisions about who would coach the female team fell to the athletic director, who was normally male. The current preponderance of male coaches of female teams is a consequence of homologous reproduction; that is, these directors tended to select coaches who would "reproduce

themselves [the directors] based on social and/or physical characteristics” (Stangl and Kane, 1991 cited by Wilkerson, 1996, p. 415). So, women coaches needed extraordinary skills to offset their physical appearances; being equal to the man was to be dismissed as less qualified for the position (Wilkerson, 1996, p. 415; Knoppers, 1988, pp. 72-73).<sup>148</sup> Wilkerson suggests that this preservation of male authority in sport is made easier when: “Subjective, preferential judgments - effectively veiled as legitimate criteria - can and do enter the decision-making process, shaping its outcome regardless of candidate credentials or manifest job criteria” (1996, p. 413; Theberge, 1988, p. 120).

Women who entered coaching threatened the tradition of leadership which men had produced. But this tradition is difficult to pin down. What constitutes coaching ability? For Wilkerson, “(c)oaches are imagined as having special qualities of character, with an aura about them that is difficult to define and impossible to quantify” (Wilkerson, 1996, p. 415). Within this uncertain specification of coaching skill, athletic directors allowed subjectivity to enter the selection formula. Such nonquantifiable ‘intangibles’ were often stereotypical gender markings that further disqualified females as appropriate coaches. And moreso, women who attempted to become coaches already threatened the dominant (read ‘male’) style of leadership, and if they did approximate male styles then they became suspect as females (Knoppers, 1988, pp. 74, 76).<sup>149</sup> As Wilkerson concludes: “Relying on intangible criteria and lofty goals, and leaving vague or failing to give credence to measurable variables, provides great latitude for those involved in the process of selecting a coach” (1996, p. 423). And those doing the selection rely heavily on stereotypic notions of maleness, femaleness and coaching, which together act to reinforce the idea that coaching is a male domain (Wilkerson, 1996, p. 424; Hall, 1996, p. 13). In this case, the maleness of knowledge is produced by the difference suggested between sporting stereotypes of excellence and social stereotypes of femininity.

Unfortunately, it seems that women are socialised to collude with the belief that men know more about sports. Parents continue to seek out male coaches for their daughters because of the belief in the superiority of male knowledge.<sup>150</sup> Further, from the time that the exclusively female programs were integrated into men’s departments, there has been a consolidation of the old-boy network of coaches (Boxill, 1993-94, p. 28). For Lovett and

Lowry, "... as long as the NCAA is an instrument of domination by tradition, and that tradition is one of male domination, then the prospect for equality within the NCAA is dubious" (1995b, p. 271). It is dubious because there is the space for women to speak with authority and autonomy is being narrowed and patrolled so that occupants are only reasonably allowed to use the words men use. As Wigmore argues: "Women's entry into competitive sports has taken place in the name of formal equality. Women may now take part on equal terms, but still they cannot define the premises for their own participation, and the value of sport is not just about achieving a goal, it is about determining what that goal should be" (1996, p. 55). Within this economically driven model of success, and the long tradition of male control over the business and the practice of sports, it is difficult to foresee a space existing/being made available for females to speak with authority *and autonomy* about women's participation in sport.

### ***3) The Maleness of Sporting Space***

The associations of women, nature and the body, and of men, culture and rationality, have reinforced a division of labour in society. Men have dominated the public 'intellectual' fields of science, politics, education, economics and religion. Women have been assigned their more 'natural' roles in the nurturing of children, and the care of the household; mundane jobs that do not require abstract thinking, but do require a continual allocation of labour-time. In theory it may be conceivable to think of the female as a rational being and a producer of knowledge. In practice the division of public and private has had different effects on the capacity for the production of knowledge by women and men (Tapper, 1986, p.39).

Contemporary liberal feminists suggest that women are capable of rationality, and should not be excluded from the public sphere. With access, women will be successful because the sexual neutrality of the principles that govern the public sphere will not be biased against them. But Tapper (1986, p. 42) remarks that these principles already presuppose sexual differences, and remark those differences in ways that privilege men. For example, the public sphere is organised around the idea that someone else can be responsible for caring for children. Whether it is the mother in the man's case, or the

crèche for women who work, the relation between mother and child is relegated to the private sphere. To become a more valuable public member of society, the female must adopt the male standard of relationship to both the society and to the child (Tapper, 1986, p. 42).

So liberal feminism as an ideal offers women equality of opportunity (and autonomy, authority and self-determination) in public, whilst not questioning why so few women are able to, or want to, take it up. This is confusing, because liberalism claims entry into the public sphere as the highest display of human rationality, and therefore humanity. Male occupations in the public sphere are the standards of rational work. The decisions made by the female at home are devalued as natural or instinctual. Yet so many females continue to make those decisions, and so many men unassumingly rely on women to make those decisions.

In terms of the analysis of sport, access to female sports may be limited by male control over the wives, daughters and girlfriends who wish to play sport. Access to private transport, to leisure time to play, to equipment and money may all be at the whim of the controlling male. This limitation is imposed on females, and is mediated by male attitudes to appropriate female activities and priorities (Hargreaves, 1994, pp. 187, 188; Thompson, 1999).<sup>151</sup> As an example of these different demands on the female athlete, Fairchild cites a response by Gwen Torrence, the Olympic 200 metre champion, to a question about what she was thinking of as she stood on the dais to receive her medal. Her response was that she was thinking of her son and how she had to leave him in the care of others whilst she trained. She was also thinking of how her husband had taken care of things at home whilst she concentrated on running. In Fairchild's terms, "Torrence reminds us that female athletes are situated very differently from male athletes" (1994, pp. 69, 70).

Equal opportunities legislation also ignores how the public sporting space is an embodied male space that may be threatening for females who wish to occupy it. Deem argues:

Gender and class... (as opposed to employment status) are overarching constraints operating on all women...gender constraints are such that few women, of whatever social class or employment status, would find themselves at ease on the rugby field, in a pub otherwise full of men, or jogging late at night on dark streets; nor are many likely to return from Sunday morning sport

to find their lunch waiting on the table, and an offer from their partner to wash their sports gear (1984 cited by Hargreaves, 1994, p. 185)

Women's access to sport is limited by this gendered public space. Access to sporting facilities may be limited for women by, either being part of a private club dominated by men (structural limitation), or by being part of a mixed club where males monopolise the equipment (cultural limitation related to men's activity being considered more serious than women's). Women may be further intimidated by the fierce and aggressive masculinity apparent in public sport's venues. These venues; the bar, the change-rooms, the business golf-days, wield symbolic power by confirming the commonsensical belief that women should be excluded from the hard, aggressive, powerful worlds of sport and business. Women are considered not tough enough to survive in these worlds (McKay, 1997, pp. 53-55).

Laura Robinson explains how the gendered public space may even affect the apparently neutral space required for outdoor cycling. She explains the problem of being part of a training group that rode across sections of Ontario where a number of young females had disappeared. The activity became transformed by these disappearances; what was once an empowering activity became a threatening one. She explains:

I know from first-hand experience in sports that men deeply deny the reality of women's lives. In 1992, the Ontario cycling team was training in the very area where young women disappeared. Safety precautions were not taken on their behalf. They were often left to ride on their own. A training camp for girls was held in the same area and they had to stay in a motel... while those in charge went home for the night (1997a, p.144)

The liberal response that men also have to endure these threats ignores the gendered experience of the threat of violence by men that many women are trained to feel throughout their lives. The mere provision of opportunities in spaces, which are perceived as threatening by female athletes, will be likely to be ineffective in promoting female access, let alone authority, in sport.

Finally, access to sports may be denied because of the way gendered embodiments impose on public space. Tapper comments on the bodily occupation of public space, which is also presupposed on the standard of the male body. She says:

For example, men can go about in skimpy sporting attire without being remarked upon, but a woman who dresses lightly is regarded as being provocative. The details of one's body are supposed not to be of concern in the public but in fact it is men's bodies which occupy the place of the normal. If the liberal feminist ignores this, or accepts it as natural, she requires of women a curious double denial- firstly of their womanhood in the way that men purportedly deny their manhood as members of the public, and secondly, by adopting the values and lifestyles associated with men they reject whatever was valuable in women's lives and characteristics (1986, p. 42).<sup>152</sup>

### **Conclusions about the Limit to Applications of Equal Opportunities Feminism**

According to Jagger, feminism (and females) owes a lot to this strand of liberal feminism. It has provided access to a wide range of employment, educational and social practices that were previously closed off to women. In providing these opportunities, it has allowed women to oppose the traditional views about women's inadequacies, which had been used to support the idea that women were unsuitable for these public positions. And, given that inequality still exists, given that women still normally raise children and care for the household, given that women are considered less rational and less skillful in many of the characteristics that are publicly defined as virtues, and given that women are still excluded from some opportunities in life because of fears for their safety, it is important that claims for equal treatment remain a part of feminist protest (1988, p. 47; also see Tapper, 1986, p. 40; Code, 1986, p. 48).

But the use of liberalism in this way may limit the attention given by females to inequalities in power and authority between men and women that remain beyond the scope of legislative intervention. Thornton summarises in the following way:

There is a fundamental asymmetry of social power between the sexes which has been the starting point for any feminist programme for the advancement of women. In this context the reference point for sex equality has always been how women measure up when taking on men's doings-...An end to women's disqualification from men's doings is a minimal requirement for women's advancement.... The question is rather whether this rationale of advancement does full justice to women's potential or whether, on the contrary, gender-specific women's programmes (sic) as well would go further towards optimising women's advancement.

There is sometimes felt to be inconsistency here. A separate women's movement and separate structures exclude men and that's not equality is it? This way of looking at the matter neglects the asymmetry of power as between

the sexes, in favour of an abstract individualism that does not engage with the real world. (1986, pp. 96, 97).

Liberal equality implicitly endorses the way men are, validates what men do and think and ignores the threats imposed by the maleness of public space. Liberal feminism responds that females merely want equality in terms of autonomy and freedom, and what they choose to do with these opportunities will be their own valid and respected thoughts, actions and beings. Such an individualistic response does not confront the way that sporting space is a threatening space for many individual females to occupy. As Hall argues more generally, “The problem with most liberal approaches is that they call for solutions focusing on individuals rather than on issues of systemic power and privilege” (1996, p. 79).

This section of the chapter has argued that society does not practice with the view of individuals or spaces as ungendered (or of neutral race, or age, and so on). Women and men experience and understand themselves, and others, as differently gendered (Tapper, 1986, pp. 44, 46, 47). Society, through its patterns of social and political relations, cultural values, traditions and language, structures differently the ideas, images, fantasies, desires and expectations that men and women have. And these differences will not simply be explained away as women enter the public spaces and practices that were previously exclusively male. It is because these differential structuring characteristics already exist that feminists must take a more active view of the gendered character of social space. The public is not a space where abstract individuals reside. It is structured according to relations between the genders, and feminists should not ignore sexual differences (Tapper, 1986, p. 44). As Tapper concludes:

The problem is not that they [our thoughts, ideas, fantasies, beliefs and values] are structured, but that historically the conditions which structure them systematically reproduce the idea and the experience of sexual difference as female inferiority.... we need to understand the way the conditions of liberal societies reproduce the ideal of female inferiority and to change those conditions- and this will mean changing the conception of and division between the public and the private, and the conception of the individual based on it.

A feminism that adopts liberalism has the following consequences. By insisting on the non-difference between the sexes it deprives women of the

very basis from which they could speak effectively in the public world. What is required is a recognition of the different social position and different experience from which women speak, and development of a political language which takes account of this (1986, p. 46).

Feminists cannot simply change the language of society by entering public space, for the boundaries of what it is possible to safely and coherently say in a liberal society, are already structured by the conditions in which people think. These conditions have a long history of valuing male thought and action over female thought and action, and hiding such differences behind the screens of abstract individualism and the separation of the public and the private spheres. As previously discussed in Chapter Two of this dissertation, the language of any community can be symbolically conceived as a centreless web, where each strand of the web supports and reinforces other strands. Therefore, the destruction of any particular strand of the web may also result in the breakdown of other beliefs that the community holds dear.

Equal opportunity legislation in sport seeks to give women opportunities in practices where the male performance remains a standard of excellent performance, and any difference to this standard exhibited by females is considered a 'deficit' (Lenskyj, 1994, p. 7 cited by Hall, 1996, p. 79). As a result, this standard is rarely questioned as appropriate for females, or for males. The standard produces limitations on curriculum models and diversity in schools (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 190; Fernandez-Balbao, 1993; Bain, 1993; McKay, Gore and Kirk, 1990; Smeal, Carpenter and Tait, 1994), employment opportunities for female coaches (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 202; Theberge, 1988, p. 120; Knoppers, 1988, p. 76), reporters (Bruce, 1998; Cook and Jennings 1995; Disch and Kane 1996; McKay, 1997) and administrators (McKay 1997), authoritative role-models for female athletes provided by the media and the acceptance of the qualities of female athletes as different to, but not necessarily poorer than, men's sport. Many of these issues will be discussed in the following chapters of the thesis. For now it is important to emphasise that reformist challenges to the gendered practice of sport via legislation which is liberal leaves in place the discourses and ideologies which made the practice and the space male in the first place. And taking positions in that male public space would appear to be only the starting point to the challenge of creating space for women to speak about their experiences

with authority and autonomy, and with the incoherence that may dismantle a web of language and belief that currently oppresses them.

### **Difference Feminists Regendering Liberalism.**

As previously stated, liberal feminism necessarily produces some internal contradictions that limit the usefulness of the application of liberalism for oppressed groups such as women. MacKinnon explains that the two questions that underpin the liberal issue of equality between the sexes are “What is a gender question a question of? What is an inequality question a question of?” (1987, p. 32) These two questions are seldom asked, nor answered, within liberal feminism, because they create problems for the foundations of liberalism. That is, liberalism suggests that the lowest significant grouping that should affect the extension of rights to a being is that of human. In determining the extension of rights and privileges in the public sphere, the human is ungendered. For MacKinnon, what follows is not particularly useful for females. She says:

The mainstream doctrine of the law of sex discrimination that results is, in my view, largely responsible for the fact that sex equality law has been so utterly ineffective at getting women what we need and are socially prevented from having on the basis of a condition of birth: a chance at productive lives of reasonable physical security, self-expression, individuation, and minimal respect and dignity...

According to the approach to sex equality that has dominated politics, law, and social perception, equality is an equivalence, not a distinction, and sex is a distinction... A built-in tension exists between this concept of equality, which presupposes sameness, and this concept of sex, which presupposes difference. Sex equality thus becomes a contradiction in terms, something of an oxymoron... (1987, pp. 32, 33)

What exists for women within this confused concept of equality is a choice of two paths. The most frequently suggested path in public life, and the one that is commonly followed in sport, is to be the same as men. The problems with this path, as discussed in the earlier section of this chapter, are that both the starting points in life, and the way that practices are judged, are male. Hence, females begin, and perform, in practices that are male-defined.

The second path is to be different from men. Yet this path causes problems for traditional liberalism, which remains the dominant political force, and paradigm for exploring charges of oppression, in the Western World. As MacKinnon explains:

To women who want equality yet find that you are different, the doctrine provides an alternate route: be different from men. This equal recognition of difference is termed the special benefit rule or special protections rule legally, the double standard philosophically. It is in rather bad odor. Like pregnancy, which always calls it up, it is something of a doctrinal embarrassment... (1987, p. 33)<sup>153</sup>

Whilst this path theoretically allows women the space to describe and perform their practices in the ways that they wish to, under the protection of liberal tolerance, it introduces the concept of gender as a special consideration in the application of rights and privileges. And this introduction of gender as a special consideration seems to conflict with the liberal belief of equality of opportunity for all people regardless of gender. So, liberal feminists are left with a dilemma; either they may embrace liberalism and try to gain status and rewards in a system which has been historically biased against them, or they may embrace gender difference and create threatening questions for our mainstream understanding of liberalism, questions which often invoke reactionary backlash against feminists.

Many contemporary feminists (Grosz, 1988, 1989, 1990a, 1990b; Lloyd, 1984; Code, 1986, 1988; MacKinnon 1987, 1989) have chosen the latter path because they see the structure and practices of liberal societies as some of the major consolidating forces in maintaining male power and authority in society. They suggest that the foundations of liberalism produce social and political structures in society, which maintain historically produced sexual differences. For example, the split between the public and the private in liberal theory is aligned with the division between men and women partly because of the continuing tradition of women's domestic labour. Women continue to do the majority of their work in the private sphere. Men continue to be the public link between the family and society, and hence, carry greater public authority (Tapper, 1986, pp. 39, 40). As Carole Pateman explains:

... the profound ambiguity of the liberal conception of the private and public obscures and mystifies the social reality it helps constitute. Feminists argue

that liberalism is structured by patriarchal as well as class relations, and that the dichotomy between the private and the public obscures the subjection of women to men within an apparently universal, egalitarian and individualist order... They[ liberals] do not recognize that 'liberalism' is patriarchal liberalism and that the separation and opposition of the public and private spheres is an unequal opposition between women and men (1987, pp. 104, 105).

This relationship between the female and the private sphere, and the dominance of the male production of knowledge in most sectors of the public sphere is not challenged simply by equality of opportunity legislation. This legislation endorses the idea that for women to successfully achieve authority in most public practices, such as sport, they must adjust to the current positions and discourses that have been laid out in advance by the 'neutral' liberal tradition which men have had a long history of control over.

Equality served as an important prerequisite to claims of autonomy for females. Women's opportunity to experience her economic, political and intellectual self-determination required first that they believe that their 'humanity' was equal to men. But that equality was only a prerequisite should not be forgotten. In a world structured by the male production of knowledge, simple equality of opportunity could only reinforce this dominance (Code, 1986, pp. 48, 49; Thornton, 1986, p. 98). For Gross:

Equality is the equivalence of two or more terms, one of which takes the role of norm or model in unquestionable ways. Autonomy, by contrast, implies the right to accept or reject such norms or standards according to their appropriateness to one's self-definition.... Struggles for autonomy... imply the right to reject... standards and create new ones (1986, p. 193).

As Young explains, "redistributive remedies for economic injustice... do not change the conditions that produce this injustice and, in some ways, tend to reinforce those conditions" (1997, p. 152), by providing economic security for subordinated and silenced groups. But, the political paradigm of redistribution simply cannot deal with areas of injustice, which appear to have no material or economic base. Rape, violence against women, workplace harassment and incest are injustices without distributive remedies (Phillips, 1997, p. 145). They are injustices that require a consideration of the gendered nature of public space and practices.

Similarly in sport, the discrepancy in interest between the genders, exploitation and harassment of female athletes, and the trivialisation of female athletic performance do not lend themselves easily to redistributive remedies. Yet they all make obvious the apparent difference between the genders, which translates into a difference in access to authoritative speaking positions in sport. Even discriminations which appear a matter of redistribution such as the relative prizemoney of male and female athletes, the economic dominance of male sports, the media dominance of male sports, and the need to have played male sports to get a position in the media or a sporting organisation, can all be explained away by defenders of male sport as issues of neutral market preferences which should not be the focus of redistributive responses (McKay, 1997, p. 123).<sup>154</sup>

According to Susan Schwager (1997, p. 142; also see Thornton, 1986, pp. 96- 98), it is important for feminist thinkers to distinguish between two terms, 'equality' and 'equity', which have often been treated synonymously. In her view, equality refers to the same access to certain practices between two or more groups. In contrast, equity involves judgements about the extent to which two or more groups are treated justly, and with respect, in a certain situation. In sport, equality of access does not necessarily produce equity of treatment between the two sexes, when the standards of judgement are weighted to see male speakers as more authoritative, and the structures of judgement are overwhelmingly filled by male bodies. So for Scraton *et. al.* (1999, p. 99), the move that must accompany liberal feminist analyses of sport is one from equality to diversity.

These two types of interventions, redistribution and recognition, are often viewed as separable. Cultural politics and economic politics are said to be opposed. And, according to Phillips (1997, p. 143), there has been a noticeable and severe displacement from issues of inequality to issues of difference since the beginning of the second wave of feminists. The question has become "how can we maintain the recognition of difference whilst still achieving equality", rather than a consideration and elimination of inequality (Verbrugge, 1997, p. 298). Why should women have to become like men to achieve equality is a question often asked in radical and postmodern feminism?

Contemporary radical feminists have protected and celebrated difference. Some have deconstructed the so-called neutrality of terms such as reason, justice, morality and

science, by arguing that the impartial observer is a figment of patriarchal imagination (Lloyd, 1984; Code, 1988; Harding, 1989). By ignoring differences between people, as redistributive liberalism tries to do, the legitimacy of knowledge produced by dominant groups (dominant in terms of authority, and not numbers) is reinforced (Tapper, 1986, p. 46). Others have celebrated the diverse knowledges that are produced by oppressed groups as significantly better than the adherence to singular knowledge produced in patriarchal systems of thought (Phillips, 1997, p. 143; Hall, 1985, p. 32). The emphasis is on differences being tolerated and embraced, rather than trying to produce equality with the male standard. Authoritative equality for females will only be achieved with the prior affirmation of difference and inclusion (Griffiths, 1995, p. 145).

But, for Iris Young, feminists need to consider the interrelationship between the two goals which oppressed people hope to achieve: recognition and economic security. Those who are oppressed desire both cultural recognition and economic independence. They hope that a politics of recognising difference, for example, the different experiences and desires of females, will produce/be produced by a politics of economic security and opportunity. Here, the two types of liberal feminist causes run together: affirmation of difference and redistribution of wealth are joined (1997, p. 149). It is important that cultural and economic politics be thought of as compatible, whilst recognising the potential for conflict between them. According to Fraser:

Even the most material economic institutions have a constitutive, irreducible cultural dimension; they are shot through with significations and norms. Conversely, even the most discursive cultural practices have a constitutive, irreducible political-economic dimension; they are underpinned by material supports (Fraser, 1995, p. 72)<sup>155</sup>.

For this reason, it is impossible to separate the desire for recognition from the need for economic equality.

Nancy Fraser has argued that feminist justice requires “*both* redistribution *and* recognition” (1995, p. 69).<sup>156</sup> The problem is that the current understanding of the philosophical paradigms that support arguments for redistribution and arguments for recognition makes these two forms of feminist intervention appear to be incompatible. The redistributive paradigm calls for the silencing of gender differences, so females can enjoy

the opportunities and rewards available to humans/males in patriarchal society. The recognition paradigm celebrates feminine difference as the motor to develop new configurations of society, which are less oppressive than current configurations. In one paradigm, gender is ignored, in the other it is emphasised (Fraser, 1997, p. 127). How do groups who require both recognition and redistribution combat the apparent contradiction between these claims?

Fraser proposes the need to introduce a perspective and philosophical paradigm that unites the two forms of liberatory goals. She exemplifies this by contrasting affirmative political interventions such as liberalism with transformative political interventions such as socialism. Affirmative interventions redress oppressive patterns of distribution and recognition, without altering the underlying frameworks of knowledge and authority. Transformative interventions endeavour to explain away the underlying framework that produces oppression; in the terms of this thesis, gender categories and roles that produce a propensity in women to accept economic exploitation and cultural silencing. Fraser makes the connection between transformative economic practices such as socialism, and transformative cultural practices such as deconstruction and feminist standpoints (Fraser, 1997, p. 129), which both undermine existing patriarchal structures. For example, responses to the oppression of homosexuals have suggested that such oppression involve the inability of homosexuals to describe their experiences in the words that they choose; that homosexuals have been culturally silenced. The response to that oppression is to produce conditions where homosexuals can affirm their differences and voice their identities (Fraser, 1995, p. 77). But this response denies the real economic and material injustice that homosexuals suffer. Homosexuals suffer the constant risk of violence, abuse and humiliation, which restrict their movements and desires, as well as having limited access to resources and opportunities (Young, 1997, p. 156). There are legal and social dictums, which reinforce the cultural acceptance of compulsory heterosexuality institutionalised in marriage, that reproduce economic and material deprivations for homosexuals. The response must include the need to oppose these heterosexist economic and material biases; to oppose discrimination in employment, health care, housing, relationship contracts and to gain equal treatment by the law courts, the police, the military

and the education system. And with greater economic security, the opportunities to affirm homosexual difference may improve. According to Young, Fraser suggests that this struggle:

... is simultaneously a struggle against cultural and economic domination, because the cultural styles of subordinated groups are devalued and silenced, and the political economy of the bourgeois public sphere ensures that subordinated groups lack equal access to the material means of production (1997, p. 156)

The transformative remedy called for by Fraser is to explain away all sexual identities in a field of ever-shifting differences so that the homosexual identity is no longer contrasted negatively with the heterosexual identity. 'Queer theory' endeavours to produce this de-reification of sexual identity (Fraser, 1995, p. 83).

For females, there is an intertwining between economic and cultural oppressions. Women working in the public sphere are paid less than men, and in the family are not paid at all, because this work is not equally valued within male systems of economic knowledge concerning profit. Gender structures both the division of labour between paid and unpaid work, and the rewards available to males and females within the labour market (Fraser, 1995, p.78). If this was the extent of female oppression, then liberation could be achieved by producing discourses, such as equal pay rates, affirmative action and welfare for child support, which endeavour to explain gender away by changing past inequalities.

But females also suffer from cultural oppressions that impinge on their capacities to fill powerful positions in society. The phallocentrism of patriarchal society, where the man is made synonymous with the human, creates a positive valuation of male knowledges, practices and traits (Tapper, 1986, p. 45). Sexism also exists in society in the forms of stereotypical devaluation of the female and the feminine, nonrecognition and misrecognition of female desires and knowledges, marginalisation from spaces which produce authority and the various forms of male physical dominance of females (Fraser, 1995, p. 79). These forms of oppression require the remedy of expressing female difference in such a way that it is not subsumed under the logic of impartiality and identity in male systems of thought. It involves, according to Fraser, revaluing a "despised gender" (1995, p. 79; also see Code, 1986, p. 51). The two forms of oppression intertwine and

underpin each other, so that both economic structures and cultural discourses require change to produce female liberation. The response set up by Fraser is to blur the categories of gender by both economic socialism and deconstruction (1995, p. 87).

In the terms of this thesis, women athletes need the economic support to practice their sports, in the form of the provision of child-care centers, safe environments for play and public forums that support their play. But they also need a shattering of the male language of sport that defines appropriately feminine behaviour for female athletes, standards of excellence in sport and undermines the seriousness of female sports and the authority of female athletes. The rest of this chapter will move on to describe what has been missing from this couplet: a politics of recognition for females in sport produced by a broader reading of the purpose of equal opportunities legislation. This politics of recognition is simultaneously a means to cultural equality and economic independence and justice. The recognition of female knowledge concerning what constitutes productive sporting work may mean greater economic justice for females. Whilst recognition is crucial to the feminist cause, it is also important to keep in mind issues of economic and material injustice. For Young this is achieved by “reconnecting issues of symbols and discourse to their consequences in the material organization” (1997, p. 160) of society, and thereby reduce any theoretically produced dichotomy between culture and economics. The oppression of women is best conceived of as a plurality of interrelated oppressive sites that interact with each other (1997, p. 160), and which will require some combination of liberal/socialist and radical analyses.<sup>157</sup>

Redistributive liberal interventions address the politics of economic inequality, if they are allowed to be practiced in their ideal form. But, where the standard of a successful program is limited by the professional model of college sports, what is produced by such liberalism is an apparent reliance on the economic profitability of male sports; that is, the failure of women’s sports to take care of themselves. This results in reproducing conditions of cultural silence, domination or incorporation, where the male is the standard for the human, and the female, to receive her welfare, must not rock the boat. This maleness of knowledge is retained and the potentially oppositional voice of women is silenced.

The conflict is exemplified by a consideration of Jane English's (1988) strategies as outlined in the introduction of this thesis. The redistribution of rewards to women's sport was suggested as potentially damaging to the development of new sports that favour female characteristics. Yet if the redistribution of rewards was tied, not to female self-esteem as a group, but to the development of socialism with the necessary inclusion of females as participants and consumers of sport (because of changes to family, work and leisure structures), then an authoritative female voice may be developed which deconstructs the maleness of understandings of success and opportunity in sport. Such a voice can be provided within an expanded version of equal opportunities interventions for female athletes, as will be provided in the last half of this chapter.

### **Pragmatic Playfulness with Equity: Redistribution with Recognition**

Jennifer Hargreaves details the success, in terms of participation rates for women, of a number of legislative reforms to sport in Canada, Australia and America that promote equal opportunity for women in sports (1994, pp. 184, 185). Further, it can be suggested with Sabo that the breakdown of sex segregation after the passage of Title IX has resulted in the production of athletic skills in females that have "chipped away at timeworn stereotypes of femininity and masculinity" (1994, p. 204). And so, the mere participation of women in sport, and other areas of public life, will challenge the relationship between the genders in these practices, which act as buttresses to men's continuing power and authority over women. Eisenstein contends that: "As the liberal feminist strategy uncovers structural constraints involved in providing equal opportunities, the demand for equality becomes more radical" (1984 cited by Lovett and Lowery, 1995b, pp. 264, 265).

Sharon Stoll describes her personal experiences of the male tradition in sport: "...when I was in high school, we were told that, "If you run too hard your female parts will fall out". "Exercise will cause sterility."... What was truly ridiculous is: We believed it!" (1994, p. 77). Men, who controlled sporting discourses and structures, were socialised into sports, and women, socialised out of them. It wasn't merely formal exclusion that prevented women from participation in sport. Title IX has produced a necessary, although at times incomplete,<sup>158</sup> opposition to such exclusion. It was an exclusion from the historical

narratives, contemporary discourses and formal structures of the sporting practices that also created a desire in women to not be included. It is this cultural exclusion from the discourse of sport that must also be overcome by women, and such liberation will only occur when women gain control of the discourse that describes their particular gendered experiences within sport.

Richard Rorty explains the type of language change, which will need to precede the newfound legislative freedoms, so that cultural inclusion in practices such as sports would occur for females. He states:

Feminists are trying to get people to feel indifference or satisfaction where they once recoiled, and revulsion and rage where they once felt indifference and resignation.

One way to change instinctive emotional reactions is to provide new language which will facilitate new reactions. By 'new language' I mean not just new words but creative misuses of language... Something traditionally regarded as a moral abomination can become an object of general satisfaction, or conversely, as a result of the increased popularity of an alternative description of what is happening. Such popularity extends logical space by making descriptions of situations which used to seem crazy seem sane (1991a, p.3).

Participation in sport gives women a cultural space in which to produce new languages, and submit these languages for acceptance by the communities in which they aspire to be authoritative. Whilst the effects of these radical critiques of the male language of sport may require the endorsement of the 'sound judgment of men' in powerful positions, the inclusion of women as participants in sport may give such radical critiques greater credence and opportunity to be listened to. The goal of the 'recognition remedy' is to provide females with the resources with which to speak with autonomy and authority in any public space, regardless of the long tradition of male control of the space. In some sports, simple participation is a resource that females have not always enjoyed.

### **Male Sports and the Annihilation of Abominable Female Players**

Lois Bryson refers to a set of sports, including football, cricket, and boxing, which she calls "flag carriers" of masculinity (1990 cited in Theberge, 1997, p. 70).<sup>159</sup> A number of authors discuss the importance of these sports in celebrating the physical 'superiority' of

the male body (Schacht, 1996, pp. 550-551; Hargreaves, 1994, pp. 145, 149; Daddario, 1995, p. 277; Bryson, 1983, p. 413; Bryson, 1987, p. 357; Yeates, 1995, p. 35). The male athletic body is held up as an exemplar of physicality, strength, power, athleticism, and superiority, with a monopoly on the practices of violence and aggression (Disch and Kane, 1996, pp. 284-285; Messner, 1994, p. 200; Bryson, 1983, p. 413). The female, by comparison is considered incapable of playing these sports because of the insufficiencies of her body. And the effects of these gendered capabilities are not confined to sport. Sport is one public practice which “crucially privileges males and inferiorizes females” (Bryson, 1987, p. 350), a message that effects the positioning of men and women in other public practices such as business and politics.

What this means, according to Watson (1993, p. 510) is that, despite the prominence of the ideal of egalitarianism and despite Title IX, there will not be equality in sport in the United States, whilst certain sports remain exclusively male. Inequality persists because of the ineffectiveness of Title IX in the way that it addresses traditional and cultural segregations in sport. But further for Watson, even if Title IX was completely effective, it would still not produce equality because the supposedly neutral terms of commendation in sport are not gender neutral. The male-supported professional model of sport equates business excellence with revenue production and performance excellence as measured in objective categories of power, aggression and violence. The tradition of reporting about American college sports has reproduced male sports as the breadwinners and male athletes as the most ‘excellent’ athletes. Watson argues:

There is not a balance between sports in which men have an advantage and those in which women have an advantage. Sports that favor men predominate.... In the most prominent sports... women are at a physical disadvantage in relation to men. This supports the conclusion of the argument that the pursuit of excellence in sport discriminates against women (Watson, 1993, p. 517).

As a result, it would be questionable whether even the ideological principle of egalitarianism is considered appropriate in the realm of sport, as guided by the male notions of competitiveness, profitability and hierarchy.<sup>160</sup> It is doubtful whether the conceptual resources offered by this limited reading of liberalism are useful because of the

history of a relationship between liberal individualism, market capitalism and male definitions of excellence and entertainment in judging sporting performances (Messner, 1994, p. 201). As Theberge suggests, “sport is understood as a democracy of ability, where success and rewards come to those who are deserving” (1991b, p. 390). When tied with a prevailing episteme of male dominance, this democracy justifies male privilege.

In such an environment, the female athlete has a long and continuing history of being presented as an abomination in sport.<sup>161</sup> Whilst the early history of female athleticism, as depicted in the previous chapter, carried that aesthetic charge generally, the more recent history still maintains the contrast between male and female athleticism, and hence authority, in more subtle, but as strong, ways. Wigmore argues:

Prevailing societal attitudes still see women’s place predominantly in the private sphere of the home and men’s place in the public sphere of work. Such attitudes spill over into the masculine arena of sport and impose constraints on women’s participation in sport, both in recreational activity and in competition... Boxill (1995) wrote, “men tend to see sports as their territory and the mere presence of women in the arena as a violation” (p.23 cited by Wigmore, 1996, p. 54).

Mike Messner goes further by suggesting that the cultural concepts of feminine and femininity legitimise unequal power relations between the sexes. To be feminine, and all that that entails in terms of passivity and physical restrictions, makes it difficult to view oneself, much less be viewed by others, as an equal of men, or as entertaining as men (Messner, 1994, pp. 200, 201; Wearing, 1998, p. 76). As Hall explains, feminists need to focus “on how female sexuality and physicality have come to be defined in patriarchal culture so as to necessitate women’s exclusion from [sport]” (Hall, 1985, p. 37).<sup>162</sup>

### **Abominable Women Playing Men’s Sports**

For MacKinnon, the problem has been that equal opportunities law:

... has mostly gotten men the benefit of those few things women have historically had- for all the good they did us. Almost every sex discrimination case that has been won at Supreme Court level has been brought by a man.... In effect, they get preferred because society advantages them before they get into court, and law is prohibited from taking this preference into account because

that would mean taking gender into account... So the fact that women will live their lives, as individuals, as members of the group women, with women's chances in a sex-discriminatory society, may not count, or else it is sex discrimination (1987, p. 35).

Numerous cases involving the use of equal opportunities legislation in sport exist which confirm, rather than challenge, the prevailing episteme of male dominance in sport. Jennifer Hargreaves describes one case:

The best-known example occurred in 1978, when a 12-year-old girl, Theresa Bennett, was banned by the Football Association (FA) from playing football with boys in a local league. In a court case, 'Theresa Bennett versus the Football Association', the FA's decision was initially overturned on the grounds that it had failed to provide her with recreational facilities, but then the FA won an appeal under section 44 [banning of mixed competitions on physical grounds]. Although Theresa's defense argued that since she was pre-pubertal she was not disadvantaged physically by the greater strength of her male peers, nevertheless the judgment hinged on outmoded biological beliefs that 'Women have many other qualities superior to those of men but they have not got the strength and stamina to run, kick, to tackle and so forth' (ILEA 1984:23). The result became case law and for another decade was used to prevent other young girls from playing in mixed football teams (1994, pp. 176, 177).

According to McArdle, whilst the tribunal sympathised with Theresa Bennett, accepting that she was at least as good a player as the boys she wished to participate against, the wording of Section 44 of the Act meant that the Football Association could legitimately use the Act to ban Theresa from playing. Whilst the intent of the Sex Discrimination Act was to avoid sexist attitudes based on stereotypes about the different capabilities of the two genders, Section 44 forces the tribunal to take into account stereotypes in the form of average physiological and anatomical capabilities. The eccentric female is offered no protection by the Act; Bennett's individual capabilities could not be the basis for inclusion into male sports (1999, pp. 46-49).

In Australia recently, another case concerning the rights of a female to play a traditionally male sport, exemplifies how, even when the player is granted the right to play, the legislation remains gendered. In 1998, a fifteen year-old ice-hockey player, Brooke Robertson, was banned from playing the sport by the controlling bodies; the Australian Ice

Hockey Federation and the Victorian Ice Hockey Association. Both bodies implemented a rule that bans females from playing in mixed ice-hockey competition after the age of twelve, on the basis that full contact ice-hockey was considered too dangerous for girls.<sup>163</sup> Brooke appealed to the Anti-Discrimination Tribunal, on the grounds that she had been playing full-contact ice-hockey for the last two years, and that her local competition in Bendigo offered no alternative competition for her. The controlling bodies applied to have the appeal struck out on the grounds, as explained by the Federation's sports medicine director, Peter Gwozdecky, that allowing girl's to play full contact ice-hockey was dangerous. His position was that the average women's body composition meant she had less strength and endurance than the average man, and that injury is more likely to occur where mismatches in physicality are apparent. Such mismatches occur "particularly in mixed competitions" (Sikora, 1998, p. 13). A case put to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission (Australia) in July, 1999 involving the rights of a junior female steer rider, Ayshea Clement, to participate in steer riding events resulted in a similar argument put by the organisation that had banned Ayshea, the National Rodeo Association, that all women should be banned from the sport on the basis that the average women would be more susceptible to serious injury (Watt, 1999a; 1999b).<sup>164</sup>

Brooke Robertson's appeal was not struck out, and the Anti-Discrimination Tribunal ruled that she should be allowed to play. Was this a strike against the episteme of male sport? Not at all. The Tribunal allowed Brooke to play, only if she played in the position of goalkeeper, a position that is non-contact. In ruling in this way, the Tribunal permits identification with the particular oppression faced by Brooke, but does nothing to break down the structural oppression faced by all females because of the prescriptions of femininity.<sup>165</sup> The explanation, as offered by the sports medicine director, ignores the eccentricities of both large females and small males in deciding that mismatches are gender based. The ruling permits small men the opportunity to be physically mismatched, and in danger of injury, on the basis of gender characteristics. The vast majority of athletes may fall into the categories of male and female as they are currently understood (external genitalia, genetic tests), but on most anatomical and physiological characteristics which affect sporting performance, there are overlapping continuums of males and females rather

than dichotomous categories (Sharpe, 1997, p. 40). Whilst the best elite male may be stronger than, have a higher VO<sub>2</sub> than, and have a different anatomical structure and hormonal make-up than the best elite female, this type of comparison neglects the degree of overlap between males and females. Such a comparison also presents the current situation as seemingly unchangeable.<sup>166</sup>

As MacKinnon states (1987, p. 35), equal opportunities legislation has been successful in getting men what they want. In both these cases, one successful and one unsuccessful, what has been revealed in the judgements is that the legislation has enshrined the idea that men and women are two categories of humans separated in terms of power, strength and sporting abilities. The impulse behind this legislation is to protect the sporting opportunities for most women in most sports. But the legislation has been used to protect the exclusivity of male sports from ‘eccentric’ females who could reveal the overlap between the sexes in these sporting characteristics.<sup>167</sup> As Kane explains:

It is also important to note that these assumptions [of the necessity for separate competitions to protect women players]<sup>168</sup> are protected most ferociously when talking about those sports, skills, and physical attributes that really count- those that belong to (have been appropriated by) men. The assumption that there is no overlap can only be maintained, however, if we are never allowed to see women outperform men in the real sports or are never allowed to witness women possessing physical attributes and skills that have been traditionally associated with men....

A closer inspection ... reveals that it is men who are protected by segregating sports. If females are naturally inferior athletes, then given the opportunity to compete against men, they would surely fail. This would provide men with the very evidence they need to buttress their claims.... But if this were the case, why is there such overwhelming resistance and hostility when women attempt to integrate sport? (1995, pp. 202, 204)

In the last section of this chapter, I will argue that any revolutionary change to the maleness of reason in sport and society will involve the inclusion of women as participants in what have traditionally been defined as male activities. There have been a number of insightful papers concerning this phenomenon, (Yeates, 1995; Schacht, 1996; Theberge 1997, 1998; Birrell and Richter, 1987; Lenskyj, 1990; Bryson, 1987; Scraton, Fasting, Pfister and Bunuel, 1999).<sup>169</sup> I will look at how the inclusion of females in activities, which have an association with (male) violence, can possibly be used as one mechanism to

produce greater social power for women generally, and for individual women specifically. As Bryson explains, “In those events, to which the public is massively exposed, maleness is repeatedly linked with skill, strength, aggression, and often violence.... Sport needs to be analyzed along with rape, pornography, and domestic violence as one of the means through which men monopolize physical force” (1987, p. 357). Violent and physical sports allow men to embody their dominance over women, glorifying their body as a weapon of violence. Such sports exemplify both the ‘superiority’ of, and the threat posed by, the male body, and exemplify it at a supposedly natural, biological level (Bryson, 1987, p. 350; Kane and Disch, 1993, pp. 335, 336).

The inclusion of women in gender-segregated sports may have a diminishing effect on the centrality of sport to the oppression of women. If, as Lever (1976 cited by Messner and Sabo, 1990, p. 4) suggests, sport can prepare males for an authoritative participation in public life, then it may have similar benefits for females. At the very least, sport participation has placed females in the public view as physically capable people, and people capable of resisting and using violence.<sup>170</sup>

### **Challenging Patriarchal Definitions of Physicality**

It is common in sports to define physicality in narrowly patriarchal ways. Physicality has been tied to notions of physical power and force, which in turn are related to notions of the male body and masculinity. According to Merryman, because this notion of physicality is tied to power, its “possession has been forbidden to women” (1994, p. 305). This exclusion of women from the narrow notion of physicality has accomplished a contrast between men and women in two ways. Firstly, women athletes who engage in physical/masculine sports have their femininity and heterosexuality brought into question through the mechanisms of sex-testing, drug testing, stereotyping, and disrespectful media portrayal. Conversely, women who participate in female sports are viewed as appropriate female role models (McDermott, 1996, p. 15). So this narrow notion of physicality has limited the choices that females can make to participate, even in the world of equal opportunities. The choices that females can legitimately make are between participation in

a variety of sports, all of which maintain the differences between the genders in terms of physicality.

Within this patriarchal view of physicality, the way to understand female sporting physicality is to view it in terms of men's ideas and desires about women. Physicality on this notion is clearly tied to female heterosexual attractiveness, through sexualisation, objectification and commodification. These strategies produce a particular and limited way of looking female, of playing women's sport, and of appropriate sports for women to play (McDermott, 1996, p. 18). Women are not allowed to manifest physical power in the forms of outwardly directed violence or aggression. Women are trained to hold in their anger, energy or violence until they are overcome or become manifested in self-damaging behaviours. And so, any public expression of female anger or violence is ignored, trivialised or held up as comic in the media (Merryman, 1994, p. 307).

McCaughey (1998; also see Marcus, 1992, p. 389) argues that the identification of violence, both in and out of sport, with patriarchy by second wave feminists has itself been a successful patriarchal method of oppressing women. In other words, the maleness of reason about violence has successfully duped women into being non-violent in all situations. It has convinced women that any use of violence, even as a defense against attack from another, is a manifestation of a corrupt masculine practice. According to McCaughey:

Our society is a rape culture because sexual violence (including all gender-motivated assaults such as incest, rape, battery, and murder) and the fear of violence are subtly accepted as the norm and because the prevailing cultural models of sexuality and gender perpetuate men's violence and women's fear. Rape culture accepts men's aggression against women as normal, sexy, and/or inevitable and often regards women's refusal of it as pathological, unnatural, and "aggressive" (1998, p. 2)

The radical feminist critique of the patriarchal rape culture was intellectual; concerned with revealing the damage done by a media representation of women's bodies and lives, of men's objectification, appropriation and violence towards women's bodies, and of the vulnerability of women to men's threats. In all this deconstructive treatment the women's lived body was denied the possibility of acting as a resistant body, because to resist was to be an accomplice in the culture of violence. Patriarchy was successful because

it had disembodied women's resistance, and thereby created an obvious and apparently natural difference between the sexes. Men violate and women are violated. And, as Bryson suggests, this annexation of physical violence and strength is not on the basis of size alone. Small men often learn aggression whilst larger women rarely do. The difference is in terms of the gender category one belongs to (1987, p. 357).

The training of women by both normal society, and by some second wave feminists, has included the idea that men are naturally aggressive and that men's bodies are constructed for violence, whilst women's bodies make them particularly vulnerable to violence. Brownmiller's contention that women's rapeability makes them the second sex is an example of this thinking (Marcus, 1992, p. 387). As Marcus (1992, p. 387) suggests, this view "takes violence as a self-explanatory first cause and endows it with an invulnerable and terrifying facticity which stymies our ability to challenge and demystify rape" at either a theoretical, or an embodied, level. This perceived vulnerability is translated into a need/desire to be protected by good men; a protection which is bought by passiveness, obedience and 'romantic' sex, or alternatively, by a desire to exclude oneself from the society in which violence takes place (Marcus, 1992, p. 390).

Following from Young's (1990) conceptualisation of the passive embodiment that goes with living a life as a woman, Marcus (1992), McCaughey (1998) and Merryman (1994, p. 307) all suggest that the 'theoretical' rape culture produces an embodiment which is hesitant and incompetent. Compulsory heterosexuality and male domination, produced by the threat of male violence, is enacted at the material level of how the female body is lived. The female body enacts her dependence on male protection. Not all women need be dependent, as the established ideal of passive femininity is something to be measured against. Gender is understood as a lived, material ideology that is transformed into a set of bodily practices through a rigorous education and socialisation concerning the relationship between the genders (McCaughey, 1998, p. 3).

### **Women Playing Violent Sports**

McDermott (1996) and MacKinnon (1987, p. 121) both use the participation of women in sports to expand the understanding of physicality so that it resists any reification

as masculine. They look to broaden the notion of physicality to include the various ways that an individual can experience his/her body. This expanded notion allows the female to recognise both the strong social constraints and structural domination over a female's experience, but also to see the woman as an active agent within the system of constraint (McDermott, 1996, p. 16). Femininity and physicality are not viewed as dichotomous opposites. The athlete acts as an active agent within constraints laid out by society; they may choose to accept all, some or none of those constraints and incur the costs and benefits of that decision. Inclusion in male sports may provide the female athlete with the opportunity to be an agent of transformative change via the use of her physicality (Messner and Sabo, 1990, pp. 4, 5). Her athletic physicality may produce new meanings of femininity in the wider society.

A resistant version of physicality can be built up from the lived body experiences of athletes. Miller and Penz (1991) have shown that women bodybuilders tie their identities to the idea of self-mastery rather than sexual identity. So their physicality is related to female ideas and desires. This allows for recognition that physicality has broader and more plural lived meanings than those limited in male cultures by notions of attractive heterosexual femininity. Merryman describes the motivation of Bev Francis, a world champion female powerlifter, on her entry into the sport of bodybuilding as “expressly to challenge the beauty standards held in that contest” (1994, p. 306). Francis’ goal was to revolutionise and transform the sport of female bodybuilding by demonstrating female power and muscularity whilst resisting patriarchal objectification (Merryman, 1994, p. 306).<sup>171</sup> Similarly, Theberge (1997) has suggested that women ice-hockey players experience themselves as actively producing a new female physicality within the constraints laid out by the dominance of male ice-hockey.

The important change here is that physicality can be understood at the personal level of transformative agency within a particular historical and social context (McDermott, 1996, p. 20). Potentially, sport performance offers a space where females learn to actively transform and resist (or accommodate) the social constraints on physicality that are imposed on them. From a feminist perspective, this transformative physicality allows women to embody empowerment or feminist consciousness (Kane,

1995, p. 194; Lenskyj, 1994, p. 361; Merryman, 1994, p. 307).<sup>172</sup> The importance of sexed embodiment and participation in (simulated) violent sports to the authority and assertiveness of women is presented both by McCaughey (1998)<sup>173</sup> and Halbert (1996).

McCaughey finds that the engagement of women in self-defense allows women to celebrate their potential for violence, which causes a re-thinking by these women about the female body, the male body and relations between the genders (1998, pp. 10-15). As Bennett *et al* explain, it is partly “through denying the opportunity to develop movement skill, [that] patriarchy gains control of women’s bodies” (1987, p. 370).<sup>174</sup> Participation in self-defense classes teaches women movement skills to resist male violence, but also teaches them that it is a fallacy produced by rape culture to suggest that women’s bodies are naturally vulnerable and men’s bodies are suited to violent attacks (MacKinnon, 1987, p. 122). It also permits them to see violence as an appropriate response for females in certain situations (Merryman, 194, p. 311).

Self-defense classes allow women to ‘unlearn’ femininity and the ‘rape script’ produced by both rapists and the belief that women need protection from bad men by good men (Marcus, 1992, p. 391; McCaughey, 1998, pp. 1, 2). It disrupts the ideology of the rape culture, and this disruption results in a newly learned set of authoritative bodily practices. Feminist liberation is enacted at the bodily level of practice; the deconstruction and transformation of women’s consciousness about rape produced by second-wave feminists is reproduced as a set of bodily knowledges. Anti-sexism becomes embodied and lived, so that the control of the ‘rape script’ is incomplete. Within this gap, the actress rewrites and performs a new script (Marcus, 1992, p. 392; McCaughey, 1998, p. 4).

Women in self-defense classes learn an assertive and powerful body comportment. The body becomes a site of resistance against patriarchy. Women become conscious about the social training that had previously affected their bodily comportment (i.e. femininity) and they use aggression to consciously produce a new comportment. In McCaughey’s terms, women “develop a new self-image, a new understanding of what a female body can do, and thus break out of the expectations under which they have acted- expectations that have cemented themselves at the level of the body” (1998, p. 4). Femininity is overcome so that women become aggressive and assertive.

Such training involves learning a new script about the relationship between the genders. Rape culture has effectively produced lessons about women's vulnerability. Television, film and newspaper reports all explain the dangers of resisting male violence (Merryman, 1994, p. 307). Self-defense classes teach a new script. But it is script which is 'written into' women's bodies (McCaughey, 1998, pp. 6-8); a language-without-words game. The woman practices assertiveness, violent confrontation, confidence, authority and bodily sovereignty in a set of controlled, simulated drills, and with the endorsement of classmates and instructors. But through these drills and endorsements, she unlearns femininity and learns aggression. For McCaughey, "the fighting gestures become as automatic as the feminine gestures had been" (1998, p. 10).

This bodily script affects all aspects of the women's lives.<sup>175</sup> The fighting spirit produces new ideas and feelings about women, men and the relations between them. Women doing self-defense classes learn a new code with which they live their lives. But unlike femininity, it is a code that gives women control over their lives. Their bodies is reconceived as active, capable ones. This new disposition and set of values is enacted in everyday situations where men assert their dominance in non-violent and non-threatening ways. Some of McCaughey's subjects reported about the effects of their new demeanor in work environments and family settings. One instructor remarked:

[The transformation] is very swift and it's very exciting but I know that it continues. They move on, they end unhealthy relationships, they quit their jobs, they go back to school. They jump out of planes! They climb mountains, they start new businesses (McCaughey, 1998, p. 12).

The bodily script produces a physical feminism where the body becomes part of the feminist consciousness. Rape culture is a violence done, not just to actual bodies, but to the imaginary bodies that Gatens (1996 cited by McCaughey, 1998, p. 14) insists upon. All women feel threatened by the imagination of what can be done to their bodies by men and how 'impossible' it would be to fight back. But self-defense allows for the imagination of a new body that defies rape culture (McCaughey, 1998, p. 14).

The script is challenging for feminism and some of the dichotomies of patriarchal society that it also takes up and re-describes. Feminism presents violence as patriarchal and bad. The opposite pole of this dichotomy is that it is good and feminist to engage in non-

violence. But this dichotomy teaches women that only men are capable of violence and agency. And so women will be unable to disrupt rape culture via this redescription (McCaughey, 1998, p. 14). The challenge is to see that feminism has incorporated the very dichotomies that rape culture uses, and so the dichotomy must be broken. Self-defense classes push women to celebrate their potential for violence and agency, and to reject the feminist/patriarchal dichotomies that have constrained women's bodies and their actions (McCaughey, 1998, pp. 14, 15).

Males are socially constructed as the possessors of physical power, and females as the objects of male power. Women in patriarchal society are trained to view themselves as incapable of possessing physical power (Marcus, 1992, p. 395). Sport is an important feminist project in allowing women to have active *bodies*. Much feminist work has been limited to the social and political factors that impinge on women's freedom. Empowerment has been viewed as creating opportunities for women to take intellectual control of their lives. The body, as understood by many feminists, is the site of oppression by acts of male power (physical power, or the power to control and direct female agency). But the lived sporting body offers an opportunity for females to experience agency and physicality in a way that makes feminist empowerment personal. So descriptions of aerobics, bodybuilding or boxing as feminine bodywork in the pursuit of a male ideal of the female body ignore the way that the female may experience these sports as sites of her agency, and as sites of her resistant physicality.<sup>176</sup>

Liberal feminism, by itself, does not produce this change in authority. But equal opportunities legislation, taken to its limit of ignoring prescriptive gender roles and characteristics, may open up a space for the socialisation of females as authoritative figures through sporting participation. Because self-defense classes remain a low profile aspect of society, such shifts in the relations between the genders are likely to be experienced as private, in a way similar to the acts of gender transgression that occurred in the first wave of athletic participation by females discussed in the previous chapter. More public challenges to the relations between the genders in sport are likely to occur when women enter sports that are exclusively or predominantly male. And it is here that the entrance of

females will probably produce more subtle mechanisms of describing the differences between the sexes.

### **Containing Feminist Challenges**

Halbert (1997), in a series of interviews with twelve female professional boxers, found that female boxers must negotiate a number of paradoxes in their boxing if they are to be economically successful, and publicly recognised, as boxers. The most obvious is that boxing is considered a male sport. Success in most male sports involves strength, aggression, competitiveness and ambition. The female athlete who demonstrates these qualities is questionable as a woman, as she challenges the “boundaries of femininity” (Blinde and Taub, 1992a cited by Halbert, 1997, p. 11), and such a transgression may result in ‘failure’ as a professional. The transgressive female boxer may be excluded from opportunities to box professionally by a boxing management that is predominantly male. So the feminist challenge offered by the bodywork of the female boxer is tenuously balanced with the incorporation of that resistance offered by the professional requirements of women boxers, and their need for publicity and promotion by a male media and a male management.

As Nancy Theberge explains, negative sanctions are reactions to “the increasing involvement and improving performance of women athletes [that] pose a threat to the advantages men have historically gained from their near exclusive access to and control of the world of sport” (1993 cited by Halbert, 1997, p. 11). Such sanctions include illiberal ‘scientific’ exclusions, physical harassment, stereotyping and discrimination, homophobia and violence. But such sanctions will become more desperate as the number of exclusively male sports, used to maintain a gender hierarchy, is reduced. As the bastions of male superiority, the military, the upper echelons of business and government, and the exclusive male sports such as football and ice-hockey, are increasingly invaded by female participants, new mechanisms of supporting a gender hierarchy may be devised.

McArdle (1999, p.51) describes the arguments made by the British Boxing Board of Control in its use of section 44 of the UK Sex Discrimination Act to legitimate the refusal of a professional licence to a female boxer in order to box against other females in

Britain. The Secretary General of the Board, John Morris, explained to the tribunal that the Board was against female boxing because of the particular dangers it posed to women's health. It claimed that there was medical evidence which suggested that monthly hormonal changes producing weight gain in women would cause difficulties for weight categories and safe and legal weight reduction, that pre-menstrual tension makes women more prone to accidents, that painful periods which are commonly treated with painkillers could not be so treated in professional boxing, and that contraceptive pills taken for social reasons by females would not be permitted in professional boxing.<sup>177</sup> Fortunately, the Board ignored these arguments, agreeing that neither chivalry nor paternalism is a legitimisation for sex discrimination. But what was established by these arguments was the difference between male and female boxers. These arguments suggested that it was more dangerous for females to box than it was for males. Whilst such a claim was rightly dismissed by the Board, the presentation of the defense by the Board curtailed much of the threat posed by women boxers. If women were to box, they had better ensure that nothing bad happened. Death and danger were not part of the game for women boxers.<sup>178</sup> But more subtle forms of sanction include the trivialisation, objectification and sexualisation of females who practice violence, aggression and power in the sports that they now access. As Lenskyj explains:

... strong, active women pose a challenge to White, middle-class notions of female frailty. However, there are limits to the success of this kind of resistance because female athletes remain vulnerable to unwanted sexualization and sexual attention by male spectators, journalists, coaches, and other athletes. (1994, p. 357)

Faced with these sanctions the female boxer must manage the impressions that others (promoters, male boxers, and fans) have of her, in order to be economically successful, and often the impression is managed by colluding with the male sexualisation/inferiorisation of the athlete.<sup>179</sup> Female athletes have traditionally managed these impressions by a variety of techniques including: emphasising femininity through the use of jewelry, make-up and costume, de-emphasising the importance of female athletic achievement, placing the achievement in sport in the context of family life or motherhood, withdrawal from the setting, moving to a sport setting which is less stigmatised (Halbert,

1997, p. 12). Women professional boxers also engage in some of these responses in order to remain marketable enough to make a living. So they emphasise femininity through costume choice, make-up, long hair and hiding any lesbian or feminist affiliation. Emphasised femininity becomes a way to dispel stereotypes, and profit from their practice (Halbert, 1997, p. 28; Young, 1997, pp. 300, 301). One boxer explained that as well as wearing small boxing shorts and a sports bra, she would also tan to “look decent out there” (Halbert, 1997, p. 28). As Scraton *et. al.* (1999, p. 100) suggest, merely participating in a male sport is not an act of transgression for females, as several female participants comply with norms of femininity. Individual female athletes may actively diffuse the tension that is apparent between physicality and femininity.<sup>180</sup>

But, from a political/feminist viewpoint, the boxer is also trying to become authoritative in a setting where femininity is viewed as out of place, and sexualisation is a method of silencing. One female boxer recalled how her presence in the gym was questioned by a trainer who said, “I was distracting the guys.... I shouldn’t be in there” (Halbert, 1997, p. 19). So the female boxer’s impression management must counteract seemingly opposing, but actually supportive, forces; she is asked to walk a tightrope between two types of sexualisation. Burroughs, Ashburn and Seebohm comment:

Many women’s sports have gone to considerable trouble to construct an appearance of emphasized “heterosexual femininity” to destroy persistent rumours that women’s sport is a haven for “freaks” or “man-hating lesbians.”.... women’s basketball, one of the fastest growing women’s sports, recognized the need to conform to standard heterosexual attractiveness and recently changed its uniform to demonstrate that women not only play well but look good too. (1995, p. 267)

The female athlete who participates in sports that are firmly inscribed with masculinist values understands that any transformation in the meaning of these sports involves a protracted struggle where each step forward is negotiated through the patriarchal constraints of their respective sports (Young, 1997, p. 299; Scraton *et. al.*, 1999, p. 107).

### **Equitable Respect for Women in Boxing**

Joyce Carol Oates (p. 73 cited by Halbert, 1997, p. 12) explains:

Raw aggression is thought to be the peculiar province of men, as nurturing is the peculiar province of women. The female boxer violates this stereotype and cannot be taken seriously- she is parody, she is cartoon, she is monstrous.

Female boxers have made some strides toward equal opportunities, but these strides have not been as long as those made in other sports. Men use violent sports such as boxing as a testing ground, where even injury is a mark of the superiority of masculinity. Within this world it is unsurprising that women's rights are viewed suspiciously and as a threat. The violence toward women fighters is particularly noteworthy when these fighters spar with male opponents. Some female boxers explain that the respect that exists between male fighters who spar is lost when these fighters must spar with women. The male boxer sees the fight as a threat to masculinity (Halbert, 1997, p. 13).

The backlash against women's boxing may be related to a fear that women will make the sport an issue for feminism. As a result women boxers do not publicise their sport as a feminist issue of empowerment. They simply view it as a liberal issue of opportunity and private desire. Because women's boxing is in its infancy, the boxing community can control any form of feminist resistance to the positioning of women in boxing. So women boxers do not challenge gender norms; women boxers unwittingly maintain the stereotypes that prevent their empowered and authoritative participation in boxing. This is an effect that liberal interventions must always be wary of. The *individualism* of sporting participation, the control of the media and sport by males, and the necessity/opportunity to make money from 'feminine' sporting practice all create forces which act against feminist empowerment in individuals or in groups (Hall, 1996, p. vi). But it goes even further; the performance of female boxers may be trivialised, and hence made non-authoritative, by being sexualised by a predominantly male controlling body. Tony Batten, from the New South Wales boxing association in Australia, remarked that "mud wrestling and jelly wrestling have sex acts. All forms of female fighting are sex acts" (Holding, 1997, p. 19).<sup>181</sup> This included female boxing, and was used as the justification for the association to ban boxing between females.

But liberal opportunities at the very least allow for the potential for the female athlete to be empowered through her lived body experiences as an athlete. As Messner and Sabo suggest:

female athleticism (and increased participation by women in other areas of public life) might become a means of women's challenging the gendered public/domestic split that is an important basis of men's continued power and privilege over women. In short, it is conceivable that, to paraphrase Zillah Eisenstein (1981), there is a "radical future to liberal feminism". (1990, p. 5)

Scruton and her colleagues who interviewed female soccer players in Europe found that these women understood the ways that they were dependent on a male sporting structure and the support of individual men, in their participation in the sport. Yet, at the same time, "[t]he female players found active physicality to be both positive and pleasurable" (1999, p. 107), such that several of the values they associated with the game included feminist values of connectedness, support and sharing. In addition, the bodily performances of these soccer players resisted the normal performance of gender that females are trained to engage in. So at both a physical and ideological level, women soccer players demonstrated resistance to the maleness of soccer.<sup>182</sup>

### **Gaining Authority through Participation**

Whilst allowing for all these obstacles, the possibility of the authority of a newly created language about female athleticism in certain sports may still be achieved by participation by females in these sports, even when they contain an existing male bias. Tolich (1996) describes the feminisation of the New Zealand jockey profession as the result of a decrease in prizemoney that makes the profession unattractive for male jockeys. So the liberalisation of the profession occurs because its rewards no longer warrant the serious participation of the best male athletes. Hence, the success of female jockeys in New Zealand is not related to egalitarianism, but to economic depression and the traditional preponderance of women in lower paid and deskilled jobs, what Tolich refers to as a dual labour market (1996). Resistance to this intrusion still occurred in many ways; male jockeys actively tried to dismount females in races, racing clubs failed to provide adequate facilities for females to change, and the male training fraternity maintained stereotypical notions of female jockeys which precluded their success.

However it is important to recognise the effect that has occurred in New Zealand horseracing, an effect that might be indicative of the changes that are made possible by

broader liberal interventions. The effect has been that females now dominate the jockey's premiership in New Zealand, and that these female jockeys have produced a new style of riding. The female jockey is less likely to use the whip, using balance to ride out their horses. This 'quietness' or 'passivity' on the horse is now positively valued as it permits the horse to maintain its galloping rhythm (Tolich, 1996, p. 53). This newly valued riding style is one example of a female sporting/language becoming authoritative through participation.

In a similar way, Theberge (1998, pp. 2, 3) suggests that the inclusion of women in ice-hockey has produced some challenges to the male game of ice-hockey as the standard. Ice hockey participation is a gendered activity; where the rules of women's ice-hockey are different to the rules of the men's game. Women's ice-hockey does not include intentional body checking. Yet the binary explained by this difference is undermined by the increasing concern about injuries and violence in the men's game. So many junior and recreational leagues in Canada have taken up the 'women's rules' for their games. Whilst Theberge (1998) acknowledges that the men's game remains the standard, so that questions over body-checking in boy's leagues are about when, and not if, body-checking should be introduced, the cross-gendered play of these junior and recreational leagues undermines the binary categorisation supposed by ice-hockey.<sup>183</sup> In addition, the inclusion of females in these leagues further presents gender as a continuum of performance.

Even with both these examples, the possibility for male incorporation is obvious. Lenskyj remarks that "The illusion of effortlessness in female aesthetic activities is central to their entertainment quotient..." (1994, p. 360). This illusion maintains the perspective that females do not challenge themselves in sport as fully as males. A quiet riding style can easily be translated by supporters of male dominance to a passive and reluctant riding style. A free-flowing game of ice-hockey can easily be redescribed as less intense and less serious than 'normal' ice-hockey.

### **Empowering Women Speakers**

Lorraine Code suggests the possible 'equal' autonomy of women will need to be supplemented by a radical redescription of practices within society such that ideals of

androgyny and authority that will suit women better than the current dominant and masculine understandings of these terms will be incorporated. Androgyny, for Code, is understood as a mode of being which transcends the currently constraining and stereotypical images of the terms 'femininity' and 'masculinity'. It does not combine these ways of being whilst maintaining that ways of being are 'masculine' or 'feminine'. It endeavors to live these categories out of existence, "render them inapplicable" (1986, pp. 50, 51). So the possibility of female violence in the face of attack is viewed, not as the taking up of patriarchal characteristics, but as the breaking down of a stereotype of femininity that has permitted these attacks, and the development of an identity that is less likely to be controlled by the violence of others.

Code (1986, p. 51), and Pateman (1987, p. 122), warn that a genuine androgyny will not mean that men and women are alike. Androgyny recognises the biological difference between men and women, but does not treat them as unequal and separate creatures. What it hopes for is that the normative connotations that the terms 'masculine' and 'feminine' currently carry will be stripped away. So the androgynous process becomes one of living the old concepts and valuations out of existence, rather than merely pasting them together.

What remains is a discussion of authority, and how some broader notion of equal opportunities can help to produce it for women in sport. Lack of authority for women cannot simply be the result of a lack of opportunities to participate in public life, as women also lack authority in the domestic realm (Code, 1986, p. 61). What would an authoritative female look like in contemporary society? Code argues, "... it takes great imaginative effort to see what is involved in being a woman of authority. It is difficult to avoid the pernicious 'honorary man' connotations..." (1986, p. 62).

The feminist image of authority in the androgynous society will imagine some figure that goes beyond the traditional, authoritarian 'male' one. Paul Fairfield suggests that authority indicates the ability to be respected as author of one's own life story. He acknowledges that there are a number of agents which partly fashion the story that an individual is able to tell about himself or herself. These agents include past traditions, authoritative others, family, education, and cultural practices. Yet, ideally the liberal

individual is still capable of refashioning their own story in the way that they want it to be told, and this is the understanding of autonomy for the individual, for which the state must create space and tolerance (1996, pp. 342, 343). This is the authority that Code hopes that females are capable of; the authority of self-authorship. But it is difficult for females to appropriate these positions of authority because of the long history of excluding females from the model of the authoritative being.<sup>184</sup>

How can this historical gap of authoritative female role models be closed, and what are females to do in the time being? It may be necessary for women to appropriate authoritative models who are men, and use these models for their female purposes. There have been examples of creative, innovative and 'intellectual' sporting achievements by men, such as the development of a novel high jumping technique by Dick Fosbury, which feminists can admire without forgetting their feminist cause. The idea is to appropriate the model for its worth, rather than its gender.

But this appropriation is only possible for women who are androgynous, autonomous and aspire to be authoritative. Androgyny allows the women to select what is humanly best in the model they select, and not be swayed by stereotypical notions of appropriateness. Autonomy forces the women to make the model her own and elaborate on it, rather than merely being apprentices to an authoritative male. And authority motivates the women to stand as a woman, a model for future authoritative women, and not shy from the public gaze of achievement (Code, 1986, p. 64). What is required, according to MacKinnon (1987), is for the female to redescribe her authority so that she acts as model for all females to gain the power of self-description in those actions which they describe as authoritatively their own, of which sport is undoubtedly an important one. That is, the female must act with imagination and creativity to adopt the models she appropriates as her own. Anything short of this adoption will merely be tokenism and maintain the restrictions currently in place on any woman speaking her own language (Hall, 1988, p. 332). In such 'male' environments, changes to public policy, such as preferential hiring of female coaches or equal opportunities to play ice-hockey, will not be progressive social reforms for the production of this type of authoritative female participation in sport.

An androgynous sporting environment will not mean that women will play games only like men. It will mean that the normative connotations associated with stereotypical femininity and masculinity will be stripped away, so that opportunities to play sport in various ways will be opened for both men and women. In such an environment, the choice to play in a certain way, for example, a female playing co-operatively, is understood as an autonomous choice, because the forces which have traditionally valued these prescriptive roles in females have been redescribed out of existence. But equally, the choice of females to play aggressively or violently, whilst ethically dubious in terms of the requirements of care for other humans, is not additionally questioned because of prescriptions of femininity. This allows all athletes to speak with authority about their experiences in sport, to be the 'author' of their own roles and stories.

What feminists of sport must carefully negotiate is the necessity not to be as equally prescriptive as their male opponents about female sporting participation. There is a tendency, explained by MacKinnon (1987) and Brook (1999), among early feminist standpoint positions, to evaluate the female traits that were developed in the oppressed condition as more real, true or virtuous, than male traits. It was suggested that the occupation of the oppressed condition allowed for a greater clarity of experience and thought. As MacKinnon argues (1987, p. 39), this will perpetuate male dominance because anything, which produces such virtues in females, cannot be too bad for females to endure. So the inequalities in society are ignored because such inequalities are said to produce values for both the sexes. Males may dominate most cultural practices, but females develop traits that are useful in their position of subordination.

Similarly in sport, there may be a tendency to validate the sporting experiences of females because they come from the oppressed position. Such validation occurs, not because the inclusion of the female sporting experience offers the androgynous sporting society a wider range of choices about how to play sport, but because the female sporting experience is considered a *better* way of playing sport. The danger is twofold. Firstly, it has the potential to make the thoughts and experiences of a particular group of feminist athletes (generally white, middle-class) the ideal to approximate for all humans. But more disabling for women, it endorses and eulogises the ways of playing that men have allowed

women in a patriarchal sporting society.<sup>185</sup> Following the call to create an androgynous society by living the categories of femininity and masculinity out of existence (Code, 1986, pp. 50, 51; Nash, 1994, p. 67), it may be more useful to offer the female oppressed experience in sport as one of a number which each athlete may wish to emulate. So calls by some feminists to produce a new conception of sport based on an ethics of care or a “feminine force” (Oglesby, 1990 cited by Hall, 1996, p. 51; Theberge, 1997, p. 85) are justified if such a conception is offered as one amongst many from which female athletes may choose. But if such calls demonise the female athlete who chooses to play aggressive and violent sports, on the basis that such play is a crime against female ethics, then this is as oppressive as patriarchal claims of appropriate femininity (Nash, 1994, p. 69).<sup>186</sup>

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has attempted to produce a more sympathetic and expanded reading of liberal feminism and sport than is currently in fashion amongst sport’s feminists, so that equal opportunities legislation can be used to produce authoritative speaking positions for women in the sports in which they wish to participate. It has been argued in the previous chapter that the earliest feminist reformers of sport stretched the existing liberal concepts to produce arguments that created support in their society for the inclusion of women into the practices of sport. Whilst some of the justifications for these arguments were dubiously gendered, the practical results were that females gained opportunities and freedoms which were previously denied to them. Further, by participating in sports, females were able to challenge some of the restrictive discourses, stereotypes and practices that had limited their access to other parts of society. So liberal feminism in general, and liberal feminism in sport in particular, acted at the radical edge of liberalism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

In contrast, the current practice of redistributive liberal feminism in sport, whilst increasing the number of female participants, has, by itself, done little to challenge or radicalise the sporting, or the wider, community. Exclusively male sport remains an area for the demonstration of male authority. This maleness of knowledge may occur in a number of ways, but two are particularly important when dealing with the oppression of females in sport. Firstly, the production of knowledge occurs by male speakers only.

Females are considered incapable of contributing to the knowledge of sport, and are thereby excluded from these discussions. Secondly, and probably as a result of the first separation, knowledge or value in these sports is defined as the contrast to the feminine.<sup>187</sup> This acceptance of the maleness of notions of excellence in sport, and excellent sports, has resulted in the loss of opportunities for female coaches to produce different methods of play, for female-run administrative bodies to produce different philosophies of sport and create new sports which are more suitable to the female physique, and for female players to speak with authority about their experiences in supposedly male sports such as boxing and football. The standard that applies to all these groups is the male standard.

What is disappointing about this as a reform agenda in female sports is that it comes from the conservative edge of both liberalism and liberal feminism. Both traditions of theory have produced conceptual tools that are useful in challenging the authoritarian discourse of male sport. The maleness of knowledge and the gendered division of public and private space must both be challenged through the presentation of alternative structures and ways of thinking about sport and society. Only then, will feminism recapture its revolutionary edge.

In order to retrieve this radical edge to liberalism, it has been deemed necessary to shift the foundation of equal opportunity legislation away from questions of the numbers of female participants, and towards the idea of equitable respect for all participants of sport, regardless of their gender and the sport in which they choose to participate. In contrast to the reformist liberal-feminist claim that sport is an ungendered social union, MacKinnon (1987, p. 241) would suggest that sport, as practiced currently, is a social union which is exclusively male, except for the inclusion of token females, or where female control does not threaten men (i.e., in female-only sports). The practice community in most sports is sharply divided between those who have an authoritative voice, and those who do not. And, in most sports, females, because of their gender and not simply their performance, occupy the latter category. MacKinnon offers as indicative of this:

A particularly pungent example [which] comes from a case in which the plaintiff sought to compete in boxing matches with men, since there were no matches sponsored by the defendant among women. A major reason that prevented the woman from competing was found not to violate her equality rights was that the “safety rules and precautions [were] developed, designed,

and tested in the context of all-male competition.” Lafler v. Athletic Board of Control, 536F. Supp. 104, 107 (W.D. Mich. 1982) As the court put it: “In this case, the real differences between the male and female anatomy are relevant in considering whether men and women may be treated differently with regard to their participation in boxing. The plaintiff *admits* that she wears a protective covering for her breasts while boxing. Such a protective covering... would violate Rule Six, Article 9 of the ... rules currently in effect. The same rule *requires* contestants to wear a protective cup, a rule obviously designed for the unique anatomical characteristics of men.” Id. At 106 (author’s emphasis). The rule is based on the male anatomy, therefore not a justification for the discrimination but an example of it. This is not considered in the opinion, nor does the judge discuss whether women might benefit from genital protection, and men from chest guards, as in some other sports (1987, p. 241 n. 17)

It could be suggested that, as MacKinnon’s example comes from an obviously male-sport such as boxing, that it is not indicative of a general maleness of communities in sport. Hargreaves suggests examples of similar litigation in the mostly male sports of soccer and rugby (1994, pp. 176, 177).

The counterargument presented in this chapter is that boxing, soccer and rugby are not necessarily male, but are made so because of the tradition of male dominance in terms of both participation and authority. For women to challenge such ‘authoritative’ and ‘liberal’ judgements from the practice community, it will be necessary for them to enter the debates concerning those sports with an understanding of the contingency of the community’s structure, rules, language and practices. But to enter the debate as authoritative, it may also be necessary for women to have lived body experiences in these sports. And in entering the practice communities of these exclusively male sports as participants, women may break down some of the beliefs about femininity that have proscribed their participation in practices other than sport. So a link is established between liberal feminism and corporeal feminism (Grosz, 1994; Balsamo, 1996, p. 40) such that the participation in male sports allows women to embody one aspect of power that has been traditionally denied to them.<sup>188</sup>

Alternatively, in the terms used earlier in this chapter, a link is made between economic redistribution that allows females the opportunity to play sports that have been traditionally denied to them, and cultural recognition of their participation as ‘different’ athletes. Equal access will potentially solve only part of the problem that female athletes

face in becoming authoritative members of the sporting community. It is also important that females participating in sports do not have their participation privatised by a male media and organisational structure that is unwilling to report on them, or support them, because of apparently 'neutral' market criteria that see the aggressive, violent, physical or large female athlete as an unattractive type. Recalling the conclusions made about pragmatic feminism in Chapter Two, it is important that females work out ways to defend the female athlete's story as a public story, and not allow it to be silenced by privatising it. Fairchild's (1994, p. 71) hope to listen to the stories of athletes who work and play in the foothills, rather than on the mountain peaks, is a desire to listen to the stories of athletes who have a history of being silenced.

But in order to be listened to, these stories must have a public forum, and pragmatic tools, as explained in Chapter Two of this thesis, may offer some methods for gaining such a forum for female athletes. Chapter Five explains the feminist critique of the patriarchal nature of society, and will be used to reveal facets of this patriarchal bias in sport, especially in terms of sport's reporting. The deconstruction of the maleness of sporting journalism is an important preliminary step in granting a public forum for the revelation of female athletic stories. The dearth of media coverage about female athletes, and the trivialisation of those athlete's stories when they are covered, are revealed as mechanisms of control by the male media, rather than examples of a 'neutral' economic market imposing constraints on the media.

Yet this revelation only goes so far, as the production and sustenance of new methods of speaking about sport, which are not patriarchal, are needed before the old languages of sport will even be considered replaceable. The following chapter also deals with the development of authoritative ways of speaking for females, by females through feminist standpoint theory. This theory uses anti-foundational paradigms to display the authority of women speaking as women, about issues such as sport. The challenge to the dominant patriarchal traditions occurs in the gap between what is said about (and for) women athletes and spectators by male journalists, and what is experienced by women athletes and spectators. Pragmatic tools may be useful in revealing these gaps and silences in ways that may be consumed by the patriarchal society.

The final chapter returns to the importance, as explained in the present chapter, of women participating in a variety of sports. Postmodern and Foucauldian analyses will be used in the final chapter to reveal the techniques of power that exist within the patriarchal discourse of various sports towards the female's body and subjectivities, and the opportunities for individuals to oppose those techniques. That is, the final chapter will investigate sport as a site for performing gender, and resisting gender performance. It deals with methods of revealing how personal, authoritative, embodied and resistant performances of gendered bodies and subjectivities are contained in sporting practice that opposes such resistance in a variety of subtle and not so subtle ways. Using the drug debate as a paradigm case, it will suggest that the use of drugs by female athletes has been contained by a set of aesthetic judgements that disempower muscular women generally, and female drug takers specifically. But such judgements remove from female athletes one mechanism available to them that might permit authoritative female sporting performance. The final chapter will investigate the possibilities for translating such political action against the dominating paradigms of knowledge into new ways of understanding women, women athletes and sport. And so, in the end, the thesis returns to the contemporary 'liberalism' that was discussed in Chapters Two, Three and Four. But during the intervening chapters, much of the disabling baggage of a purely redistributive and degendered liberalism will be discarded.<sup>189</sup>

**CHAPTER FIVE**  
**FEMINIST STANDPOINT THEORY: AUTHORITY IN COMMENTARY.**

***“RESEXING THE ATHLETIC DISCOURSE”***

**Introduction**

Catherine MacKinnon uses an alternative conception of society to that offered by liberals and liberal feminists. This alternate conception requires the production and use of a different set of mechanisms for changing society. She states:

In this approach, an equality question is a question of the distribution of power. Gender is also a question of power, specifically of male supremacy and female subordination... Here, on the first day that matters, dominance was achieved, probably by force. By the second day, division along the same lines had to be relatively firmly in place. On the third day, if not sooner, differences were demarcated, together with social systems to exaggerate them in perception and in fact, *because* the systematically differential delivery of benefits and deprivations required making no mistake about who was who... I call this the dominance approach... The goal of this dissident approach is not to make legal categories trace and trap the way things are. It is not to make rules that fit reality. It is critical of reality... It proposes to expose that which women have had little choice but to be confined to, in order to change it (1987, p. 40).

In the practical application of this dissident approach, MacKinnon (1987, 1989) deals with issues concerning the poverty of women, the extent of violence against women, the extent of violence in the nuclear family, of rape, of prostitution, of pornography, the subordinate status of women's material position and the dominance of men in sports, the military and the workplace. This is the information that is silenced out of equal opportunities feminism and liberalism generally, because it deals with problems suffered almost exclusively by women. These problems, when explained using the notion of abstract *human* individualism which is often considered foundational in liberal theories, are treated as legitimate or illegitimate sex differences<sup>190</sup>, and not as parts of a systemic political problem involving the subordination of women by men generally. The liberal state often may choose, out of benevolence, to intervene in some of these problems, but the piecemeal approach to reform

in liberalism hides how women are systemically oppressed as members of a sub-category of people. The token inclusion of women in 'male' positions of power further shrouds this issue as a political one concerning the subordination of certain members of society because of their sex, by elevating certain individuals from the subordinate sex class to positions with some authority, relative to other members of their sex class (McKay, 1997, p. 86).

These tokens are then required to reproduce and perpetuate a system of ideas from which they, as members of a subordinate sex class, should be trying to escape (Bradiotti, 1986, p. 46; Code, 1986, p. 57; Bordo, 1988, p. 628; Grosz, 1988, p. 102; Thompson, 1994, p. 187).

By reversing the relationship between dominance and difference, 'facts', which supposedly legitimate the unequal treatment of women and men, are now read as the result of and not the justification for, such treatment. Differences between the sexes enunciated in biological, psychological and social discourses are read as the socially produced propaganda that persuades both sexes to accept the existence of, and inequalities and contrasts between, men and women (Kessler and McKenna, 1978 cited by Hall, 1985, p. 26). As Hall (1985, p. 26) argues:

... our seeing two genders leads to the "discovery" of these sex differences. The implication... is a paradigm shift away from the results of seeing someone as female or male (specifically sex-difference research) to seeing gender attribution, or the process by which we classify someone as male or female, as primary and gender itself as the practical accomplishment.

Radical feminists began to critique such facts concerning the differences between the sexes, as a counterpoint to the reformist positions on oppression held by liberal feminists. According to the school of radical feminism, women had been trained to internalise the traits that resulted in the acceptance of their own oppression. This oppression was experienced as a self-regulated exclusion from positions which held authority in society, and the radical feminist position attempted to expose and oppose this training (Pargetter and Prior, 1986; MacKinnon, 1987; Bartky, 1990). When sex is viewed as a socially produced, relevant and inscribed differentiation of people, their bodies, and their knowledges that maintains inequality, then these oppressions that are suffered almost exclusively by women, become issues which reproduce the dominance by men over women in substantive systems (MacKinnon, 1987, pp. 164, 165; Hall, 1985, pp. 26, 27).

That is, these issues are part of the sex/gender system created and perpetuated by male society to enforce the silenced and obedient incorporation of women into the community. For MacKinnon (1987), the dominance approach challenges and changes the reality of women's oppression and silence, by making women conscious of who oppresses them and how this oppression is effected by the 'reality' and 'truth' claims made in their society. Sex differences and discrimination cease being questions answerable using universal ideas of morality and justification, and are seen as questions of gender politics and power. In this shift, equality questions are no longer seen as questions of good and evil, but become questions of power and powerlessness, which cannot be answered, or even brought up for consideration, in any manner which tries to exclude the sex of the people speaking as a consideration of the authority and justice that is granted to them (Ahmed, 1996, p. 75). As Iris Young explains:

Rights are not fruitfully conceived as possessions. Rights are relationships not things; they are institutionally defined rules specifying what people can do in relation to one another. Rights refer to doing rather than having, to social relationships that enable or constrain action (1990, p. 23 cited by Ahmed, 1996, p. 74).

Women are members of a sex-class who are, in many practices, silenced because of their sex (Lumby, 1997, p. xxii; Frye, 1996, p. 993). Such silence is not normally considered unjust; it is thought the result of the 'objective' criteria of expertise which exist in these practices. But the criteria of expertise in most practices in society are not impartial. Practices normally have either a long history of male definition, or a recent history of male appropriation. Whilst in abstraction, equality of freedom and respect for self-determining practices may be applied to members of divergent, and differently powerful, sexes, in practice, it cannot provide a workable principle in a world structured according to male power and male ideas. What feminist standpoint positions have decided to do in response is to value and develop women-specific voices, experiences, potentials and characteristics, whilst suggesting that liberation and equity, rather than equality, should be the founding principle of feminism (Thornton, 1986, pp. 95, 96). As MacKinnon concludes:

I say, give women equal power in social life. Let what we say matter then we will discourse on questions of morality. Take your foot off our necks, then we will hear in what tongue women speak... We would settle for that equal

protection of the laws under which one would be born, live, and die, in a country where protection is not a dirty word and equality is not a special privilege (1987, p. 45).<sup>191</sup>

This chapter will investigate the utility of feminist standpoint positions and Rortian pragmatism in producing an epistemological method that provides a public voice for females to speak with authority about their experiences as females in sport. As Hall suggests, "... when social knowledge and self-knowledge become mutually informing, there is at least the possibility of imagining one's freedom" (1985, p. 34). The protection offered to women who speak powerfully and freely about their involvement in sport is one of the areas discussed by MacKinnon in her attempts to undermine the learned subordination experienced by women. MacKinnon (1987, pp. 117-124) is one of the very few mainstream feminists who have written about women's involvement in sport as a mechanism of their oppression in society. She argues that much of the early radical feminist research on women in sport dealt with undermining the distorted and irrational stereotypes and roles which society has generated from real biological differences. But implicit in these views is the belief in real underlying biological differences between the sexes that would require legislative reforms that take these differences into account. Sexism is the exaggeration of these differences in both males and females; liberal humanism is the correct allocation of concern to these differences. Regardless, differences between the sexes are taken as an essential starting point in discussions about the relationship between gender and sporting participation and authority.

In contrast, MacKinnon and others (Hall, 1985, p. 27; Lenskyj, 1990, p. 236; Shogan, 1988; Messner, 1988; Kane, 1995) argue that when we view sport as a site for the maintenance of gender hierarchy, biological dichotomisation is viewed as one strategy amongst many for that maintenance. Hall applies this notion of 'dominance preceding difference' to gender relations in sport. She suggests that feminist theories of sport must move beyond asking what barriers stand in the way of equality for women, to an examination of the way that sport reproduces relations of male dominance and power over women (1985, p. 27; see also Balsamo, 1996; Lenskyj, 1990, 1994; Kane, 1995). As suggested in the previous chapter, equal opportunities and affirmative action legislation in

sport may reproduce such relations. Sexism is the problem of male dominance and female subordination, and it is produced by the hierarchical construction of the male athlete and male sport as the standard of excellence, and supported by the belief that biological differences between the genders make a difference. Disch and Kane argue:

[In sport] male performance will serve, like the phallus, as the definitive standard against which all else is compared and fails to measure up. For example, sports that require muscle mass, strength, and speed are more prestigious than those that emphasize beauty and flexibility....In sum, sport is the most important public arena for the performance of gender as an asymmetrical, oppositional relation based on natural sexual differences; as such, it helps to reaffirm the belief that a gender order that accords primacy to males is not a mere social construction but a reflection of men's natural physical superiority. (1996, p. 294)

The hierarchical biological relations between the genders are made manifest in a number of ways in the sporting world. Sports typing as masculine-appropriate or feminine-appropriate suggests an essential and naturally occurring difference between the sexes concerning their desires for participation, and the media/market dominance of masculine sports suggests that males do more important sports. Women's athletic achievements in sport are sex marked, so that it is made obvious that they are only the best female athletes in their sport, even when the races they compete in are mixed. For example, the women's marathon winner may be depicted as inferior in performance to the male winner, rather than superior in performance to the many men that finish behind her (Disch and Kane, 1996, p. 297). Where excellent female performance, by the male standard, does occur, the female is regendered as 'performing like a man'. Again, "This device both reinforces the equation of superior athleticism with maleness and suppresses evidence of a continuum" (Disch and Kane, 1996, p. 296).

For MacKinnon, the radical critique of gender hierarchy goes beyond the liberal one by recognising the importance of these hierarchical sporting relations between the genders as one of the various strategies that maintain male dominance. This critique:

Is developing a theory that objectification is the dynamic of the subordination of women. Objectification is different from stereotyping, which acts as though it's all in the head.... It's just that the problem goes a great deal deeper than illusion or delusion. Masks become personas become people, socially, especially when they are enforced. The history of women's athletics should

prove that, if nothing else does. The notion that women cannot do certain things, cannot break certain records, cannot engage in certain physical pursuits has been part of preventing women from doing those things (1987, pp. 118-119).

Stereotypes of femininity become embodied in practices such that this enforced embodiment produces structural and social limitations on women as a group (Lenskyj, 1986, p. 13). In Iris Young's terms, "... sport exhibits the essential body-subject. Masculinist culture defines women... as the essential body-object... Thus... sport and women are mutually exclusive concepts. This suggests that the sense of incompatibility between women and sport which still dominates in our society is not a social accident, but a conceptual and symbolic necessity" (1988, p. 336). Being a woman and being an athlete cannot be combined as easily as liberal principles would hold (Fairchild, 1994, p. 67; Kolnes, 1995, p. 65; Lenskyj, 1986, p. 13).

Both Young (1988, p. 340) and MacKinnon (1987, pp. 121-123) claim that women participating in more sports, and especially those which were once exclusively male sports, challenge this reinforced objectification of the female body. MacKinnon explains:

For women, when we have engaged in sport, when we have been physical, it has meant claiming and possessing a physicality that is our own. We have had something to fight and therefore something to gain here, and that is a different relation to our bodies than women are allowed to have in this society. We have had to gain a relation to our bodies *as if they are our own*.... Athletics can give us our bodies as a form of being rather than as a form of appearance... (1987, p. 121).

As described in the previous chapter, from an individual woman's perspective, participation in sport helps them to 'unlearn' what male society and sport has taught them; that they are 'weak', 'inferior', 'incapable', 'passive', 'violable', 'naturally different to men' and 'unworthy of speech'. Hall suggests that these standpoints of women that begin with women's oppressive or liberating sporting experiences as they describe them can be presented as alternatives to the dominant male episteme of sport that maintains female subordination and male dominance (1985, pp. 33-39).

The systematic exclusion of women from sports generally may have been transcended in some ways, but the symbolic exclusion of women remains apparent in male

sports such as football and boxing. Paraphrasing Fairchild, women and football are “functionally opposite [sic.] concepts” (1994, p. 67).<sup>192</sup> In the previous chapter, it was suggested that, for the educative message to become publicly available and not simply privately experienced, women will need to participate in those sports which are the ‘flag carriers’ of masculinity. Otherwise the dominance of men gets re-asserted via these masculine sports. Women may partake in many more sports than they historically have, they may approach or surpass the performance of men in many sports, but the dominance of men is always made evident in the very public sports that are almost exclusively played by males.

However, the inclusion of women as participants in these ‘flag carriers’ only goes part of the way in producing space for authoritative speech by females in/about sport. Messner (1988) argues that the inclusion of females in more sports, and male sports, may be experienced as personally liberating for the women involved, and confronting and transforming for the men who witness them. But the extent that these personal transformations produce social changes in the role that sport plays in the relations between the genders is related to the control of the various media which commentate on sport. And such control is decidedly in male hands.<sup>193</sup> According to Messner, “women’s sport has been ideologically contained by the sport media. The ‘men’ have been separated from the ‘girls’ “ (Messner, 1988, p. 165; also see Birrell and Cole, 1994, p. 232; McGregor, 1997, p. 292).

This chapter will commence with a feminist critique of the modern epistemological method. This method purports to describe reality objectively; that is, ‘reality’ is “equally knowable to all who follow a proper, presumably scientific, method” (Messner, 1990, p. 137; also see Hall, 1985, pp. 33-36; Harding, 1989, p. 190; Nash, 1994, p. 65; Grosz, 1988, p. 98; Hawkesworth, 1989, p. 550; Seller, 1988, p. 170; Griffiths, 1995, p. 55). Feminists have revealed that these so-called objective descriptions have been crucial to the maintenance of patriarchal practices, such as philosophy, law and science, in society, and hence the modern epistemological method has been seen as a tool for the maintenance of a patriarchal society (Bradiotti, 1986, p. 47). As Hall explains:

... antifoundationalism rejects all attempts to find an absolute grounding for knowledge; rejects the rationalist model as the only model of knowledge;

asserts that there is not one but many models for knowledge, and hence truths; and rejects the dichotomies upon which Enlightenment epistemology rests (subject/object, reason/emotion, nature/culture etc.). Feminists have contributed... by identifying Enlightenment rationalism as a distinctly male mode of thought by showing that its dualisms are rooted in the male/female dichotomy that is central to patriarchal thought and society (Hekman, 1987 cited in Hall, 1996, p. 71).<sup>194</sup>

In a similar way, the 'objectivity' of the male sports media has been important to the sustenance of male power in sport. This chapter will also describe the important deconstructive work on the maleness of the sports media produced by a number of feminist-inspired sociologists. Female athletes and their performances have been ignored, trivialised, objectified, sexualised and depoliticised by this media (Edwards, 1999, p. 2). Such 'objective' presentations have made it simpler to consider female sport as not as important as male sport. Because they engage in a relatively trivial practice, female athletes have been embodied as non-authoritative.

Whilst such deconstructive work is an important ground-clearing exercise, the chapter will use some elements of feminist standpoint theory and Rortian pragmatism to suggest some ways for women to gain authority in the sports media. Both these positions suggest that the categories of 'truth' and 'knowledge' are complex, ambiguous, and saturated with a politics of male dominance (Griffiths, 1995, pp. 56, 57). Within feminist standpoints, the truth within the male epistemological method that claims to be unbiased, is simply the unacknowledged subjectivity of male knowledge and reality claims that support male dominance in society (Gatens, 1986, p. 25; Bradiotti, 1986, p. 48), and in sport (Messner, 1990, p. 138; Hall, 1985, pp. 26, 33-37). In contrast, feminist standpoint positions acknowledge the necessary subjectivity of any knowledge or reality claim. Feminist standpoints refuse any separation between personal experience, political needs and knowledge claims. The 'truthfulness' of feminist standpoints is not said to be related to their commensurability with an objective reality, but to the way that such positions are usefully taken up by certain members of the community within certain contexts (Nash, 1994, pp. 65, 69).

But deconstruction of the modern epistemological method is only a partial solution to phallogocentric reality in society and in sport. Rorty explains that, "...the most efficient

way to expose or demystify an existing practice would seem to be by suggesting an alternative practice, rather than criticizing the current one” (1993b, p. 96). Deconstruction tries to reveal the tensions and distortions both within the various discourses that support the current practice, and between the discourses of the current practice and the discourses of other practices in the community. It makes the community more open to the possibility of hearing alternate discourses that may further different relations of power. However, “anomalies within old paradigms can pile up indefinitely without providing much basis for criticism until a new option is offered” (1993b, p. 96). The analysis of old practices does not provide new practices. It is the provision of an attractive alternative discourse that might do that. For Bradiotti, the feminist standpoint can lead to the production of “non-hegemonic types of theoretical discourse” that are neither patriarchal nor phallogentric (1986, p. 44).

According to Janack (1997, p. 125), the important project for feminist standpoint positions is to undermine the link between epistemic privilege and epistemic authority that is central to the maleness of the modern epistemological method. From a feminist deconstructive viewpoint, epistemic authority is conferred on knowledge, not because of the particular epistemological method that is used in the production of ideas, but because of a series of political and social practices and institutions that support the authority of the male as a knowledge producer.<sup>195</sup> Feminists need to produce strategies that will aid their inclusion in processes of theory making (Nash, 1994, p. 73; Grosz, 1988, p. 103; MacKinnon, 1987, p. 164).

Rortian pragmatism may offer some ways for the feminist-inspired subjective accounts of reality and knowledge to be accepted for comparison with the patriarchal-inspired accounts of reality that dominate the current sporting media. Following from Maguire and Mansfield (1998, p. 116), this chapter will develop novel ways for female athletes to publicly express their private and subjective sporting voices in a media dominated by the private and subjective voices of male athletes and male journalists. It would be easy to read this idea as a suggestion that only female journalists will grant a forum for females to speak about sport. But this is not the intention of this section. As with Messner’s account of sport sociology (1990, pp. 136-153), a feminist-informed sports

media will allow for the presentation of standpoints on sport that are sympathetic to the women's position in sport by male and female journalists. But an obstacle to the feminist-informed sports media is the phallogocentric view of sport publicly maintained by a male-dominated sports media. And so, the inclusion of autonomous and authoritative female sport journalists with some mechanisms for having their potentially different standpoints on sport given a respectful public audience is a starting point for breaking down the phallogocentric reality of sport. Bryson notes that a comparison of surveys of sport coverage in Australia in 1980 and 1984 demonstrated a reduction of the trivialisation of women athletes, and this "seemed to be directly related to the increased number of women involved in the reporting" (1987, p. 353).<sup>196</sup>

### **Feminist Explanations of the Male Epistemological Method**<sup>197</sup>

Elizabeth Grosz argues that philosophy has been oppressive for women at a number of interrelated levels. Grosz explains three types of oppression in the practice of philosophy, each reinforcing the effects of the others; sexism, patriarchy and phallogocentrism. Sexism is understood as "the *unwarranted* differential treatment of the two sexes, to the benefit of one at the expense of the other" (Grosz, 1988, p. 93; Grosz, 1990a, p. 149; Gross, 1986, p. 189). Sexism refers to explicit empirical acts, which exclude women from practicing philosophy, or any other form of knowledge production, through openly hostile remarks or practices toward them, or which consign women to practice philosophy in the same way as men (Grosz, 1988, p. 93; Thompson, 1994, p. 182).<sup>198</sup>

For Lloyd, the history of philosophy is a history of male ideas that support male dominance.<sup>199</sup> Philosophy is a socially constructed body of thought from a certain (male-sexed) perspective. Males, at any time in history, have had greater access to the positions from which discourse in philosophy is produced, and, as a result, philosophy "reflects the characteristic preoccupations and self-perceptions" of men (Lloyd, 1984, p. 108; Thompson, 1994, pp. 174, 175, 182). Male philosophers have taken delight in making remarks about, or on behalf of, women and their roles, functions and relations to men (Grosz, 1990a, pp. 151, 152). Discourse in philosophy has often contained openly and

powerfully misogynist statements about women from leading philosophical figures (Grosz, 1990a, p. 152).

But moreso, even the excision of such misogyny in contemporary philosophy does not leave a sex-neutral body of thought (Lloyd, 1984, p. 103; Gross, 1986, p. 190; Gatens, 1986, p. 15; Bradiotti, 1986, pp. 46, 47).<sup>200</sup> As Lloyd suggests "... women cannot easily be accommodated into a cultural ideal which has defined itself in opposition to the feminine" (Lloyd, 1984, p. 104).<sup>201</sup> Discourse in philosophy includes ideas and ideals of maleness and femaleness which have been formed "within structures of dominance- of superiority and inferiority, 'norms' and 'difference', 'positive' and 'negative', the 'essential' and the 'complimentary'," (Lloyd, 1984, p. 104) such that what is most valued is equated with male thought and consciousness. Philosophy has produced a sharp dichotomy between knowledge and the feminine, such that being a woman can be assessed as a handicap to being authoritative (Bradiotti, 1986, p. 47). In Code's terms:

Lloyd shows that ideals of Reason, throughout their shifting and evolving history, designate what it is to be a good knower, determine what counts as knowledge and as a proper object of knowledge- and prescribe the "proper relations between our status as knowers and the rest of our lives." In short, these ideals have had a tacit yet constitutive effect on the shape of western metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics: an effect that has filtered through into popular conceptions of what knowledge is, who knowers are, and whose knowledge claims are authoritative (Code, 1991, p. 119).

Such sexist practices could be, and have been, eradicated without interrupting the underlying structures of oppression (Grosz, 1988, p. 94; Bradiotti, 1986, p. 48). The position of early feminists was to question, and often remove, the sexist components of patriarchal discourse. Yet it became increasingly obvious that the inclusion of female experiences as the additive or corrective to male discourses left questions about the basic framework and assumptions of such discourses unasked. The exclusion of women/femininity was a structuring principle for these patriarchal discourses. These structures of discourse could not survive women's inclusion, and so marginalised attempts at such inclusion as subjective (Gross, 1986, p. 191; Grosz, 1988, p. 95; Bradiotti, 1986, p. 48). The affirmation of the feminine will not shake the symbolism which maintains the dominance of males, because "it will occur in a space already prepared for it by the

intellectual tradition it seeks to reject” (Lloyd, 1984, p. 105). Or, in Tapper’s terms, “we cannot simply change the value accorded to women; we cannot just change the way and what we think, for these are based on and reflect the structure of the conditions in which we think” (1986, p. 46). Sexism is not simply reversible because of the other two levels of oppression, which support differential meanings of women and men at the discursive level, and allow for sexist discourses to be stated as authoritative and neutral knowledge (Grosz, 1990a, p. 149; Bordo, 1988, p. 619).

This paradigm of authoritative knowledge production in this epistemology takes the form of the subject/object model such that ‘s’ knows that ‘p’ (Code, 1991, p. 1). Most forms of knowledge are modeled on this paradigm. The effect of the precedence of this paradigm has been that authorities have limited their work to finding the “necessary and sufficient conditions for the possibility and justification of knowledge claims” by any knower (Code, 1991, p. 1). ‘Who the knower is’ is considered an illegitimate question in this paradigm (Code, 1991, p. 2; Harding, 1989, p. 190; Grosz, 1988, p. 98). Knowledge becomes grounded in a permanent, ahistorical, decontextual set of standards. The discourses produced are totalising; establishing normality and deviance, suppressing other ways of thinking, and producing acceptance of the existing relations between methodology and knowledge as the only relations that are possible to produce truth.

The patriarchal structure of knowledge supports the oppression of women by systematically evaluating their actions and knowledges in negative ways and men’s actions and knowledges in positive ways. It provides “the context and meaning(s) for sexist inequalities,” such that it systematically regulates, organises and supports the dominance of men (Grosz, 1988, p. 94; Grosz, 1990a, p. 150). Patriarchy is a hierarchical system that places men’s actions, knowledges and values as superior to women’s. The elevation of certain terms which are implicitly linked with masculinity (objectivity, reason, mind) to the exclusion of other terms linked to femininity (subjectivity, emotion, body) serves to ground the overt forms of sexism in philosophy.<sup>202</sup> Furthermore, it grants men greater access to authority, self-determination and autonomy in philosophy (Grosz, 1988, p. 94; Bartky, 1990, p. 6).

These dichotomies have operated in society as mechanisms of social control and domination (Hawkesworth, 1989, p. 541; Bradiotti, 1986, p. 47).<sup>203</sup> As Bradiotti explains, the dichotomy between rationality and femininity in philosophy:

... cannot be dissociated from the question of power, and its corollary-domination and exclusion. I would argue consequently that it is not because they are rational that men are the masters, but rather that, being the masters, they have appropriated rationality as their own prerogative. The denigration and exclusion of the feminine in philosophy, in other words, is just a pretext for the general textual continuity of masculine self-glorification: the mysterious absent entity which grants full grounds for existence to the masculine knowing subject (1986, p. 47)

and, by association, produces feminine knowledge as the inferior and pejorative other. Philosophy is patriarchal in terms of what it excludes from judgements about knowledge. “Women and femininity are ignored, treated metaphorically, and severed from their connections to women’s lived experiences” (Grosz, 1990a, p. 152).

Phallographic discursive systems<sup>204</sup> operate to collapse the two sexes and their characteristics into a single, universal subject. But in doing so the subject is made “congruent only with the masculine” (Grosz, 1988, p. 94; Grosz, 1990a, p. 150; Rowland and Klein, 1990, pp. 278-279; Bartky, 1990, p. 6; Thompson, 1994, p. 174). The phallus symbolically represents certainty, unity, stability and self-mastery, as compared with the “maternally-linked” values of spontaneity, multiplicity, and loss of self (Bordo, 1988, pp. 621, 624). As Marilyn Frye explains:

The word ‘woman’ was supposed to mean *female of the species*, but the name of the species is ‘Man’. The term ‘female man’ has a tension of logical impossibility about it that is absent from parallel terms like ‘female cat’ and ‘female terrier’. It makes one suspect that the concept of the species which is operative here is one according to which there are no females of the species.... The phallographic scheme does not admit women as authors of perception, as seers.... Man is understood to author names.... Insofar as the phallographic scheme permits the understanding that women perceive at all, it features women’s perceptions as passive, repetitive of men’s perception, nonauthoritative. Aristotle said it outright: Women are rational, but do not have authority (Frye, 1983, p. 165)<sup>205</sup>.

The maleness of the human symbol goes largely unrecognised. As a result, there is no conceptual space within phallographic thought for the woman to develop an autonomous

set of values or strategies for opposing sexism and patriarchy from her subjective set of experiences. Each possibility for the woman confirms the primacy of the male standard; she may become the same as, the opposite of, or the complement to the male (Grosz, 1988, p. 95; Grosz, 1990a, p. 150).<sup>206</sup> All three responses imply a standard to be approached, and that standard is the male. The female is only granted a position relative to the male; she is “the unacknowledged support of philosophy, its repressed other, a limit beyond which it dares not transgress or even represent” (Grosz, 1990a, p. 152).<sup>207</sup> The present epistemological terrain is compliant in and responsible for the domination of women in society. Code states:

My claim... is that institutionalized disciplines that produce knowledge about women, and position women in societies according to the knowledge they produce, are informed by versions of and variations on the methods and objectives that received epistemologies authorize. These disciplines... have found women inferior in countless ways, have been unable to accord them a place as historical agents, and have presumed to interpret women’s experiences for them, in versions often unrecognizable to the women themselves. In the folklore of most western societies women are represented... as incapable of having knowledge of the best and most rational kind. Hence places in the social structure are reserved for them which assume their epistemic inferiority and block their access to authoritative intellectual and social-political status (Code, 1991, pp. ix-x)

Because the achievement of truth-status in philosophy forms the paradigm for decision-making in a number of other areas of social life, women in a number of practices experience this oppression caused by the maleness of ‘truth’. For Grosz (1990a, p. 154), “the advent of philosophy coincides with the exclusion of women (Le Doeuff 1977) and in its developments and refinements constitute increasingly sophisticated modes of control over women’s right to self-definition” in a variety of areas in their life.<sup>208</sup> Philosophy is an important force in producing the ideology that women are not authoritative producers of their own stories in any aspect of their lives, a force which has been used to keep women in their relegated material place (Bordo, 1988, p. 627). This force has been enacted through a number of practices that undermine the female’s epistemic credibility.

For Young, the critique of the phallogocentric paradigm of knowledge production begins with the recognition that it is incapable of sustaining itself. The ideal of impartiality

“expresses a logic of identity that seeks to reduce difference to unity” (1990a, p. 97; also see Flax, 1993, p. 109 cited by Griffiths, 1995, p. 78). Its goals, whether in scientific, moral or philosophical theory, are to generate a dichotomy between universal ideas and the particular and idiosyncratic passions of individual. To do so, the impartial observer must abstract from the particularities of each situation. But the particularities remain and operate in the practice of theory formation and action. The ideal of impartiality cannot be achieved because the particularities of situation simply cannot be abstracted (Young, 1990a, p. 97; Hawkesworth, 1989, p. 541).

The irony of the logic of identity is that it achieves universalisation only by expelling that which it cannot include. As a result it “turns the merely different into the absolutely other” (Young, 1990a, p. 99). This creates a hierarchy of values. That which is expelled cannot be left as a lie to the logic of identity. It must be treated as the deviant, bad, irrational, sentimental, unmethodical, accidental ‘other’ to the impartial and universal claim. The history of Western thought is littered with such mutually exclusive oppositions between the universal and the expelled, with the expelled as that which is “chaotic, unformed, transforming” and threatening to the universal (Young, 1990a, p. 99; Hawkesworth, 1989, p. 542; Griffiths, 1995, p. 78).

What makes it a particularly dangerous fiction for oppressed people’s situation is that the ideal of impartiality serves three important ideological functions that contribute to the maintenance of their oppression. Firstly, it is the basis for the suggestion that the State and its institutions and practices are neutral. Secondly, it maintains hierarchical decision-making structures in science, morality and philosophy, and in the institutions of law, family and education, which defuse calls for the democratisation of decision-making procedures. Finally, it reifies the judgements of privileged groups (Young, 1990a, p. 112; Bradiotti, 1986, p. 48). If the oppressed group’s judgements are not the same as the ‘universal’ then the difference is constructed as individual deviance and inferiority (Young, 1990a, p. 116), rather than as the result of oppressive structures and discourses in patriarchal society. As Harding suggests;

... empiricism has no conceptual space for recognizing that humans are fundamentally constituted by their positions in the relational networks of social life. For empiricism, humans appear as socially isolated individuals who are

here and there contingently collected into social bundles we call cultures. Feminist empiricism challenges this metaphysics, epistemology, and politics by asserting that individuals are fundamentally women or men, feminists or (intentional or unintentional) sexists, as well as members of class, racial, and cultural groups.... The experience against which scientific hypotheses are tested is always historically specific social experience. (1989, p. 192)

The response of feminist standpoint theorists (Gatens, 1986, pp. 19-22; Bordo, 1988, p. 619; Code, 1991; Young, 1990a; Lloyd, 1984) has been to recognise that male systems of thought offer no space within which women can be included as an equal. So they have tried to produce feminist alternatives to philosophy, which are committed to the primacy of women's experiences of oppression and a willingness to use these accounts of oppression to question the underlying structures of philosophy which contribute to that oppression (Bradiotti, 1986, p. 49). As Code explains, the feminist critique of epistemology is both an internal critique of its pivotal ideals, autonomy, neutrality and objectivity, and an external critique which examines the male power involved in dominant epistemologies that legitimates and denigrates different knowledge claims. This external critique reveals the opportunities for, and limitations on, women in claiming authority in philosophy (1991, p. xi).

The purpose of this section of the chapter has been to explain the ways that the female voice is silenced in philosophy. Through a number of supporting mechanisms, including the numerical control of the discipline by males, the presentation of knowledge and femininity as dichotomous concepts, and the symbolic maleness of the human in philosophy, philosophy is demonstrated as a system of knowledge that 'ignores' the gender of the speaker. The position of Code (1991, pp. ix-x) is that the production of knowledge in philosophy is paradigmatic of the production of knowledge in the various institutionalised disciplines that produce knowledge about, and control over, women. One of those areas of social life that accords a female less opportunity to be authoritative is the sporting media. Whilst it is recognised that the sporting media is only one strand of the web that produces this non-authoritative position of females in sport, the next section of this chapter will demonstrate how many of the insights produced by feminists about the maleness of philosophy, also reveal the maleness of the sports media.

### **Male Epistemology and the Sports Media**

Ordman and Zillman (1994, pp. 66-75) explain that, from the early 1970s in America, it has been noticeable that women have entered the profession of media commentator in sport.<sup>209</sup> Whilst females are still not present in large numbers, they are becoming more represented in the sports media. But the authors ask the following questions about this entry; “How do audiences perceive these women? Are they considered credible sources of information? Or are they viewed as token female reporters, without much sports expertise?” (1994, p. 67) In a study which investigated the perceived competence of male and female sports reporters, the authors concluded that female sports reporters are considered less competent, less informed about sports generally and specifically, and less persuasive in their reports. This occurred regardless of whether the report was written or verbal, whether the athletes were male or female and whether the respondent was male or female (1994, p. 73). Stated more generally, the authors concluded “gender is an asset for a man seeking acceptance as an expert sports reporter but a liability for a women” (1994, p. 74).<sup>210</sup> The female begins her position in sport’s reporting at a significant disadvantage to male reporters. Prior to what she reports, her observations are marked with the asterisk of ‘not coming from a male body’.

Male reporting on male sports, as with male athleticism, is the standard against which all reporting is judged for its accuracy and expertise. Female participation in these sports may be slowly opening up, and this could become an important site of feminist opposition to male dominance, through the transformations explained in the previous chapter. But such resistance will be contained as private unless females can also access positions of authority from which to speak about these sports. As Stedman argues, with respect to the male dominance of the surfing media;

The exclusion of women from the world created in surf magazines is important not because it ‘represents’ any collective attitude that exists in ‘real ‘life’ but because women are thereby excluded from making ‘legitimate’ use of the symbolic resources needed to identify as a surfer, and that identity is thus denied them (1997, p. 77).

This symbolic annihilation does not simply deny women a voice in the production of surfing reality, it creates a reality which includes the absence of women as an important

defining feature. Such absence occurs, regardless of whether women actually surf or not (Stedman, 1997, pp. 78, 83).<sup>211</sup> Rarely has the suggestion been made that this construction by the sports media has inadequately catered for the possibly different viewpoints offered by the female's appreciation of traditionally male sports.<sup>212</sup> But in the phallogentric world of sports reporting, the possibly different viewpoint of the woman becomes the inferior 'other' to the male standard.

The lack of female media analysis of male and female competition in traditionally male sports would seem to be legitimated by the idea that only men can understand men's sport, even when women participate in some 'inferior' version of these sports (Boutilier and San Giovanni, 1994, p. 192).<sup>213</sup> The 'it' that men know, because of their experience as male players, but also accessible to some non-players by virtue of being embodied male, is seemingly inaccessible for women. For this reason, female commentary on male sports often remains at the uncontroversial and uncritical level of covering the human-interest side of these sports; stories about the families of footballers and the charity work that footballers do. Whilst these stories should not be overlooked as trivial, the sporting community may be missing out on some incisive and creative female commentary about the game because of this attachment to the indefinable 'it' that men know and women cannot know. As Anne Hall explains:

I am afraid that we will engage in a fruitless exercise to modify that which cannot be reformed because whatever "it" is has an inherent logic that simply cannot accommodate an epistemological standpoint of women (1985, p. 38).<sup>214</sup>

Very few female sports' commentators in Australia are allowed to comment on men's sport.<sup>215</sup> Women are often allowed to comment on female's sports such as netball and gymnastics, although often with the assistance of a male anchorperson. However, with few exceptions, it is considered either useless or inappropriate for women to commentate on the dominant male sports in Australian society; the football codes and cricket.<sup>216</sup> There is an implicit suggestion that women are not capable of calling these games because they have never played them; that is, they are unaware of the mysterious 'it' that makes men expert commentators and analysts of the game. Such a suggestion has only ever been used to limit individual men rather than the entire group of men, in commentary about female

sport. Male journalists are often permitted to make critical comment about aspects of female sports such as netball or synchronised swimming, without the exclusionary phrase that ‘they have never played these sports’ being used to limit their authority.<sup>217</sup> Hence, authority in sporting commentary is not simply correlated with participation in sport.

Patriarchal and phallogentric discursive systems in sporting commentary makes the division of power in the sports media more complicated than merely counting numbers of female and male commentators. Jennifer Hargreaves explains:

...although there are slowly increasing numbers of female radio and television sports presenters and commentators, the vast majority are still men and those in high-status positions are all men. With few exceptions, sports media professionals reinforce rather than undermine gender inequalities... In general, media sports professionals reproduce prejudices upon which the patriarchal structures and sexist ideologies [of sport] are based. (1994, p. 198)<sup>218</sup>

Halbert and Latimer (1994, p. 300) agree that the commentator is in a particularly powerful position to shape and mediate the possible images and discourses of the sporting event, that the viewer or listener may consume. The commentator produces information in such a way that only a limited amount of readings are possible.<sup>219</sup> And, as professionals concerned with the maintenance of their expertise, male sports journalists and commentators are unlikely to challenge the very ‘it’ which grants them that expertise. That is, they are unlikely to question the knowledge that is suggested as only accessible to the male players and spectators of sports such as football (McKay, 1997, p. 126).

But equally, as females entering a profession where their position is marginal, the number of women in the profession may not be as important as what they are allowed to say.<sup>220</sup> Where women choose to defer to male power and expertise, to patriarchy and phallogentrism, they become unwitting accomplices to the maleness of reason in sport (Boutilier and San Giovanni, 1994, p. 205). As Disch and Kane explain: “... winning access to the locker room is an empty victory if women sports reporters are required to engage in a parody of femininity once inside” (1996, p. 304), to be deferential, non-critical and approximations of male reporters.

The next section of the chapter investigates the opportunities for, and the mechanisms of resistance to, the development of an alternative to the male epistemological method and the ‘reality’ of patriarchy. Resistance towards the authoritative female voice is

produced in patriarchy through a variety of methods, including cultural annihilation, sex marking, stereotyping and objectification. These methods come together to reinforce the notion of the dominant and authoritative male, and the incompetent and incapable female. The male is positioned as being worthy of speech. In contrast, the female is socialised in patriarchy to embody the position and values that the male epistemological method produces for her.

### **Political Methods of Maintaining Male Authority in Society**

Frye (1983) suggests that the oppression of women occurs via a colonisation and trivialisation of their thoughts and experiences by those who oppress them. But it is the diffuseness and apparent naturalness of the oppression experienced by women that makes it a difficult experience to capture and use for the development of an alternative to male epistemology. To use this experience as a tool for producing new and creative descriptions of society, it is important to first understand the variety of interconnecting forces which, acting together, produce these female experiences as non-authoritative and invite females to take up positions of silence in the social world. By looking at individual situations, these forces may not seem oppressive, or if oppressive, may seem easy to counteract. But when understood as a 'cage' which traps the women in an oppressed situation, the feminist is able to recognise the interconnectedness of such seemingly isolated phenomena as rape, harassment, pornography, men holding doors open for women and a variety of other oppressive practices and structures in society, with the media depictions of women in sport and the proportion of women in sporting organisations and the sport media. All reinforce the notion of the powerlessness of females (Frye, 1983, p. 5; Sherwin, 1989, p. 27; Code, 1988, p. 189; Bartky, 1990, p. 1). All are part of a cage maintained by the patriarchal reality. MacKinnon is more explicit about the ways that the barrier imposed by the cage of femininity is enforced. She states:

Women are randomly rewarded and systematically punished for being women. We are not rewarded systematically and punished at random, as is commonly supposed. We may or may not get rewarded if we go along with male supremacy. If we try to get out of the cage, it is virtually certain we will be punished. Actually we are punished whether we try to get out or not... So... we spend... [most of] our time skulking in the corners of the cages we no

longer try to leave. Not even when the door- as it occasionally is... ajar (1987, p. 227).

Bartky refers to this as the psychological oppression of women or the ‘psychic alienation’ of women produced in their lived reality as caged. Psychological oppression refers to the capacity for women to become her own oppressor by means of the “internalization of intimations of inferiority” (Fanon cited in Bartky, 1990, p. 22). Such a female consciousness arises from oppressive relationships, but it is a consciousness that reinforces and reaffirms her participation in those very relationships. The female experiences ‘joy’ in her narcissistic self-objectification, in her passivity and her shame, in her sacrifice of herself to the male in unequal heterosexual relationships, and in her silence (Bartky, 1990, p. 2).

Bartky suggests that women’s experiences of oppression occur in three ways in patriarchal discourse. These are; stereotyping, cultural domination and sexual objectification (1990, p. 23). These are the ways that messages of inferiority are translated to, and internalised by, women. Such internalisation makes the work of maintaining dominance easier for men, as women are trained to accept quietly and/or desire those positions that the patriarchal society leaves available for them.

Stereotyping is based on the epistemological paradigm of ‘s knows that p.’ In the case of women, the stereotype purports to explain women, as they are objectively understood; to reduce women to objects equivalent to tables and chairs. Whilst recognised as crude and generalised characterisations, stereotypes still maintain the dominance of the inadequate knower. They do so because the stereotype frees the knower from having to know ‘better’. At the same time, this limited knowledge allows the person who is stereotyping the arrogance to claim that he/she knows the subject, and does not need to listen to the accounts given by the subject about their own experiences. But this masquerade of knowledge can only exist where the stereotype maintains contact with historically dominant cultural lore about the silenced other (Code, 1991, pp. 189, 190).

Many of the stereotypes, which create women’s experience of their situation, have been explained earlier in this dissertation as part of the history of women’s participation in society and sport.<sup>221</sup> Women “have been regarded as childlike, happiest when they are

occupying their “place”; more intuitive than rational, more spontaneous than deliberate, closer to nature, and less capable of substantial cultural accomplishment” (Bartky, 1990, p. 23). They are defined by their sexuality, either in excess or deficiency, as well as their reproductive role. They are depicted as incompetent and incapable (Bartky, 1990, p. 24). For Bartky, “women... are psychologically conditioned not to pursue the kind of autonomous development that is held by the culture to be a constitutive feature of masculinity” (1990, p. 25). But such conditioning makes the woman appear as a parody of humanity. In Code’s terms: “Stereotyped perceptions of women’s nature, and actions based upon them, count amongst the most intransigent constructs that shape women’s experiences and make it difficult for women to move ‘beyond domination’” (1988, p. 189). Such stereotypes often act as self-fulfilling prophecies, “leading people to *be*” as the stereotypes describe them (Code, 1988, p. 190).<sup>222</sup> Code cites the work of Margaret Rossiter to demonstrate the tyranny of stereotypes. Rossiter argues that women will become more employable in science if they can ‘know’ that they should occupy the more appropriate roles of helping males (i.e. laboratory assistant). This makes the female applicant less threatening to the social order and more attractive to the powerful in that order. The female willfully engages in the truth of the stereotype. But in doing so, her opportunities for the production of knowledge are diminished. And so, the stereotype is confirmed (1982 cited in Code, 1988, p. 193).

For the woman, the difference from a colonised people is that there is no memory of a time when she controlled representations and stereotypes in culture. There is no memory of an alternate culture that the woman can turn to as her own.<sup>223</sup> Women are the victims of a cultural domination and annihilation that includes a dismissal of their language, institutions, art, literature, popular culture and sport, and an acceptance of the male versions of these things. All, “to a greater or lesser degree, manifest male supremacy” (Bartky, 1990, p. 25). But such manifestation of male dominance occurs in a deceptive way such that the woman’s absence from these things is taken as proof that she does not belong and cannot contribute. What she denied a contribution to becomes what she cannot do.

Sexual objectification is also evident in cultural descriptions of women. Women experience such objectification as oppressive because:

such an identification becomes habitually extended into every area of her experience. To be routinely perceived by others in a sexual light on occasions when such a perception is inappropriate is to have one's very being subjected to that compulsive sexualization that has been the traditional lot of both white women and black men and women of color generally (Bartky, 1990, p. 26).

Many times women do not welcome such sexual objectification. They may even fear the consequences of it. But for the maintenance of male domination, women must constantly be made aware of it (Gatens, 1986, p. 19).<sup>224</sup> The female who is made aware of the objectifying gaze of the male must choose between contented satisfaction, which safely condones the actions of the male, or overt dissatisfaction which may result in further and more dangerous forms of objectification. The choice is between participating in one's own erasure, or one's possible harm. As Frye suggests:

One of the most characteristic and ubiquitous features of the world as experienced by oppressed people is the double bind- situations in which options are reduced to a very few and all of them expose one to penalty, censure or deprivation.... One can only choose to risk one's preferred form and rate of annihilation (1983, p. 2).<sup>225</sup>

Regardless of how it is confronted by individual women, it is a mechanism of perceiving and maintaining differences in power between all men and all women (Bartky, 1990, p. 27; Duncan, 1990, p. 25). It is also a mechanism that weighs heavily in the psychologies of many women. The reality of the female condition is that they must face up to the critical scrutiny of (intrusive) men.<sup>226</sup> As Bartky explains:

Subject to the evaluating eye of the male connoisseur, women learn to evaluate themselves first and best. Our identities can no more be kept separate from the appearance of our bodies than they can be kept separate from the shadow-selves of the female stereotype.... Surrounded on all sides by images of perfect female beauty- for, in modern advertising, the needs of capitalism and the traditional values of patriarchy are happily married- of course we fall short (1990, p. 28).

And so, dissatisfaction with her body is a common part of female experience.<sup>227</sup> Not only is female rationality and authority inferiorised by her identification with the body, but also her sexed body is inferiorised as inadequate to the male ideal. Frye explains the politics of this oppressive self-identity in the following way:

Many of the restrictions and limitations we live with are more or less internalized and self-monitored, and are part of our adaptations to the requirements and expectations imposed by the needs and tastes and tyrannies of others. I have in mind such things as women's cramped postures and attenuated strides and men's restraint of emotional self-expression (except for anger)....

Like men's emotional restraint, women's physical restraint is required by men. But unlike the case of men's emotional restraint, women's physical restraint is not rewarded.... They mock us and parody our mincing steps. We look silly, incompetent, weak and generally contemptible. Our exercise of this discipline tends to low esteem and low self-esteem.... It is degrading and part of a pattern of degradation (1983, pp. 14, 15).

The crying man is mocked as womanly. But the athletic female is valued, athletically at least, as manly. Both transgressions maintain the positive valuation of the masculine, and the negative valuation of the feminine

The advantage of this view of oppression for feminists is that it locates male domination, rather than individual men, as the agent of oppression for females.<sup>228</sup> Whilst females may internalise their oppression, the cultural dominance of man produces the differences in perceptions which reinforce oppression. Sex roles become understood as a form of oppression, not because the female sex-role has been traditionally downplayed, as a cultural androgynist might argue, but because men to maintain their dominance have actively produced the system of sex roles. As Frye states:

Thinking they [men] might like the simple nurturant life (which they may imagine to be quite free of stress, alienation and hard work), and feeling deprived since it seems closed to them, they thereupon announce the discovery that they are oppressed, too, by "sex roles." But that barrier is erected and maintained by men, for the benefit of men. It consists of cultural and economic forces and pressures in a culture and economy controlled by men in which, at every economic level and in all racial and ethnic subcultures, economy, tradition- and even ideologies of liberation- work to keep at least local culture and economy in male control (1983, p. 13).<sup>229</sup>

Cases of inequality are explained as more than individual acts of gender injustice, because of the revelation that patriarchal society makes sex relevant, and the discriminatory practices reinforce the patterns of belief which make it relevant (Frye, 1983, p. 19). For Frye, sex is always made relevant in our society because patriarchal society has

provided us with two repertoires of behaviours; one appropriate for communication with women, and one for men. These two repertoires help to identify who is worthy of esteem and authority, and who is not. As she explains:

Greeting, storytelling, ordergiving and order-receiving, negotiating, gesturing deference or dominance, encouraging, challenging, asking for information: one does all of these things differently depending upon whether the relevant others are male or female (1983, p. 20).

In order for such patterns of interaction to remain useful and consistently applied, it is important that each individual is clearly marked as a member of one sex category.<sup>230</sup> Such marking includes linguistic devices, postures, practices (including sporting practices), facial expressions, surgical procedures, cosmetic changes and bodily decorations. Sex marking is not something done simply by choice. It is something that is rigidly imposed and required of all humans. All humans announce their sex, “we wear and bear signs of our sexes” (Frye, 1983, p. 24).<sup>231</sup>

This requirement to be sex-marked imposes a reality on society. The imposed reality is that there are two separate and distinct sexes. Anomalies in this reality, in the form of genetic and anatomical ‘differences’ are treated surgically and cosmetically, or engage in behaviours that demonstrate their ‘chosen’ sex category (Frye, 1983, p.25; Hall, 1985, pp. 26, 27). Even those who fit in a category must actively participate in their own sex marking through costume and performance.<sup>232</sup> And so, according to Frye, “One helps to create a world in which it seems to us that we *could* never mistake a man for a woman” (1983, p. 26).

Whilst sex-marking and sex-announcing occurs for both men and women, it is not experienced as equally oppressive. Maleness is rarely experienced as a disadvantage in our society. Femaleness is often experienced as producing a disadvantage for the women. Both men and women announce their sex, but the announcement of femaleness carries with it the fear of physical attack and victimisation, or condescension and humiliation (Frye, 1983, p. 31). But the differences are also subtle. The announcement of maleness often carries a requirement to respond with respect, to listen to the author’s story. The announcement of femaleness carries no such requirement (although the announcement of other individual characteristics of a woman may). Hence, the opportunities to speak

authoritatively are different. In addition, the sex-marking behaviours of females are “both physically and socially binding and limiting as the behaviour which announces maleness is not” (Frye, 1983, p. 32). In Tapper’s terms women do not wear skimpy athletic gear, or even outfits that allow free movement (1986, p. 42). Their outfits often restrict movement for fear of displaying something that should not be seen. So these learnt practices mold the bodies of females and males to the positions and postures of subordination and dominance. The female is corporeally socialised to accept her subordination, not just at the level of ideology, but at the level of embodied practice and costume. She marks herself by her walk, her posture, her weakness, and her athletic performance, as that which is inferior to the man (Young, 1979). In Frye’s terms “We do become what we practice being” (1983, p. 34), we are female in body.

The next section of the chapter again reveals how these methods of maintaining epistemic dominance for men are replicated in the sports media’s’ concerns with sex-marking, sex-announcing and sex-appropriate behaviour for female and male athletes. Women are produced as non-authoritative speakers in sport, by the sports media, through a similar (exaggerated) set of mechanisms to those employed in the wider society. And, as in the wider society, women are trained to consent to their position in sport, and actively take up their subordination in a number of ways.

### **Containing Female Athletic Authority in the Sports Media**<sup>233</sup>

According to Duncan (1990 cited in Wigmore, 1996), sport has become one of the few remaining areas in modern society where men could establish and maintain a ‘natural’ and overt superiority over women. As stated in the previous two chapters, this maintenance traditionally relied on the male exclusivity of certain sports. Regardless of how closely female athletes approximated the performances of male athletes in a number of mixed sports, there was still a set of sports that only men played. However, the increasing opportunities given to women to play these sports coupled with their increasing skill, power and competence in playing these sports posed a significant threat to the dominance of men in sport. More subtle methods of reinforcing this dominance were needed, and the media played a major role in undermining the strength, power and authority embodied by

these female athletes (Theberge, 1991b, p. 392). This allowed men to contain the threat which athletic women posed to them.<sup>234</sup> As Boutilier and San Giovanni argue, “regardless of what is actually happening to the relationship between women and sport, it is the media’s *treatment* and *evaluation* of that relationship that will shape its direction and content” (1994, p. 184).<sup>235</sup>

The sports media has played a part in the perpetuation of the phallogentric standard in sport. This has been achieved in much the same way that male authority and privilege in any system of knowledge has been maintained in the face of the feminist challenge to it. That is, female participation and commentary on sport has been ignored, trivialised, minimized or presented in stereotypically feminine ways which result in objectification and sexualisation of the athlete/knower (Halbert and Latimer, 1994, p. 299; Hargreaves, 1994, p. 194; Lenskyj, 1994, p. 357; Lenskyj, 1998, p. 20; Bruce, 1998, p. 1). Male athletes have been presented as active, strong, competent, authoritative and physical. In contrast, female athletes, when reported on, have been described and pictured in ways that emphasise heterosexual attractiveness and passivity. Lenskyj suggests that this maintenance of the dominance of men in sport is an example of “symbolic annihilation” (1998, p. 20), ignorance of their achievements and participation to a large degree<sup>236</sup> and distortion to serve male purposes when they can be found in the media (1998, p. 31).

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, female sports are sexed marked as inferior through their formal structure. Women rarely play tennis matches of five set duration. Nor do men normally, but when it comes to the much publicised events where men and women play together, that is, the major championships, men play five set matches. The difference between men’s and women’s tennis is emphasised more as the matches become part of the public media. The men’s doubles competitions at the Australian Open tennis championships of 2000 played best of three sets, the same as the women’s doubles, before the final. Yet the final of the men’s doubles, which was telecast, became a best of five-set match. The women’s final, also telecast, remained a best of three-set match. The mixed doubles final had to also be best of three sets because it should not be apparent that any woman, even with the assistance of a male partner, is capable of playing five set matches. There are numerous other examples of such sex marking which

have been discussed including the lack of body checking in female ice-hockey (Theberge, 1997) and the different criteria for judging in male and female bodybuilding (Ndalianis, 1995; Obel, 1996). The longest pool swimming races for women at the Olympics is shorter than the longest race for men, despite women having a magnificent record in marathon swimming. All are founded on the dubious idea that women aren't durable enough to play the male variant of these sports (Knapp, 1999, p. 2).

In a number of ways the media maintain or exaggerate this hierarchy of athleticism through its own form of sex marking. As Halbert and Latimer state: "By consistently defining women's athletic events as "women's" athletic events while men's athletic events are defined as athletic events, women are marked as the "other"... and men as the norm" (1994, p. 300), through commentary about the games. Women are marked as the inferior other to male athletes, even when performing the same skills as male athletes, as exemplified by the coverage of the men's and women's NCAA basketball championships (Messner, Duncan and Jensen cited by Duncan, 1993, p. 43), the men's and women's 1992 Olympic Basketball Teams (Fairchild, 1994, p. 67) or televised coverage of professional men's and women's basketball in America (Bruce, 1998, p. 2). For Bruce, the marking of women's basketball as an inferior version of the game not only occurs through sex-marked and stereotypical commentary, but also via the paucity of slow-motion replay, close-up shots and different camera angles, the programming of games late at night or not at all, the commentators lack of familiarity with the players and the teams, and explicitly negative comparisons with the men's game which was held as the standard of basketball. The absence of anything that regularly occurred in men's games, the dunk, physical play, individual competitive battles, was treated as a deficiency, and not simply a difference, in the women's game (1998, pp. 2, 6-8).<sup>237</sup>

According to Harris, even at times and with sports where equal coverage could be expected, as in major championships in tennis, the women's game was still reproduced as less serious, and thus given less prominence, than the men's game (1999, p. 3). The television programming of the Olympics or the various World Championships marks the women's event as less important than the men's event. The women's event will rarely be broadcast live or in its entirety, unless the players confirm stereotypic notions of female

attractiveness. For example, the nighttime coverage of the Australian Tennis Open commences at 8.30 p.m. even though the women's night-time match commences at 7.00 p.m. The men's match is scheduled not to start at any earlier than 8.30 p.m. As Boutilier and San Giovanni conclude:

...television programming blatantly discriminates against women's events when they are jointly held with men's contests.... The message is once again evident to the viewing audience: what men do is more important than what women do.

... The exceptions to this rule are those events that confirm the stereotyped images of the acceptable sportswoman. Loving and detailed attention is paid to pixie-like gymnasts... (1994, p. 190)

It is allowable for women to be athletic in a feminine way in sports which men do differently or do not play. As Hargreaves (1994, p. 193) argues, the limited extent of coverage of female sports to mainly those, which confirm feminine stereotypes, gives a distorted viewpoint of the breadth of female athletic participation, and this has a significant effect on women's participation in sport. Instead of the theory that what women do not do becomes what they cannot do, it may be that what women cannot be reported to do becomes what they will not do. Duncan's metaphor of "the gun which points backwards" exemplifies that even when women can command coverage of their sporting performance, such coverage represents the female athlete as "a pale imitation of the real (read: male) thing" (1993, p. 44).

Such marking becomes most distinct when television coverage shows men and women competing in the same event. Halbert and Latimer's (1994) investigation of the *Battle of the Sexes* tennis match between Navratilova and Connors revealed that, whilst overt mechanisms of sex marking were rare, more subtle methods of commentary demonstrated the male player as the standard with the female as the inferior other.<sup>238</sup> Bryson (1987) cites the example of a contrived swimming race on a current affairs program in Australia in 1984. At this time, there was a debate going on as to whether primary school sport should be integrated. The race included six competitors; three boys and three girls. All six competitors, interviewed prior to the race felt the boys would win. The girls came in first, second and third. The male anchorperson of the show commented that the race "must have been rigged" (1987, p. 357). In one sentence, he had reasserted the

gender hierarchy of sport, trivialised and marked female athletes as inferior, and impugned female athletes who compete successfully against men.

Sex marking also becomes an important focus in the media when dealing with outstanding or eccentric female performance. Both gender verification and drug testing of female athletes become concerns of the media when there is no other apparent explanation of performances by female athletes which approach male standards. Performances, which reveal overlapping continuums between the sexes, are treated as suspicious by a media which makes efforts to reinforce the 'natural' differences between the sexes (Hood-Williams, 1995; Fairchild, 1994, pp. 66, 69). The degree of threat posed by eccentric female performance may be understood by the extent to which female athletes are sex marked by gender verification testing.<sup>239</sup> Because only females must be verified, so as to prevent males participating in inferior competitions, all female athletes are participating in competitions that, by definition, are inferior to male sports. In Birrell and Cole's terms "The implication is that superior athletic prowess is the natural domain of males" (1994, p. 233). Such sex testing becomes a part of the female competitions even when there is no complaint from the athletes. Sex marking serves a purpose beyond the production of 'equality' between competitors. Exemplary female athletes and teams are treated, as 'add-on', such that the hierarchic relations between the sexes are maintained even when 'objectively measured' performances by female athletes refute these relations (Fairchild, 1994, p. 67). Women are incorporated into a phallogocentric structure of sport as either inferior athletes or gender eccentrics.

According to Theberge and Cronk (1994, p. 290 cited in Wigmore, 1996, p. 60), "the continued underrepresentation of women in sport and the denigration and trivialization of their sport experience provides strong support for the myth of female passivity and frailty." It also exemplifies their inferiority to the male sporting standard (Theberge, 1991b, p. 391). Women are trivialised in a number of ways in the sports media in comparison to the commentary on male athletes and sports. The ignorance by the media of women's sporting achievements makes it seem that such achievements are not newsworthy<sup>240</sup> as well as misrepresenting the amount of women participating and interested in sport at all levels of involvement (Halbert and Latimer, 1994, p. 299; Boutilier

and San Giovanni, 1994, p. 187; Stedman, 1997, p. 84; Messner and Sabo, 1990, p. 2). In commentary on female sports or mixed sports, female athletes are often referred to as girls or ladies, neither of which connotes ideas of strength or athleticism (Halbert and Latimer, 1994, p. 300; Bruce, 1998, pp. 1, 2). Also, commentators on female sports use ambivalent descriptors when describing female strength, power, participation and abilities (Halbert and Latimer, p. 301; Bruce, 1998, p. 2). Their athletic performance is often placed within a larger context of family life or romantic relationships with men, both of which are seen as more important in the female's life than sporting achievement (Lenskyj, 1998, p. 29). In these ways and more, the media constructs the belief that women are not 'real athletes' when compared to the male standard. Female athletes are reduced to the stereotypes of incompetence and unimportance associated with the assessment of the typical duties performed by women in society; extraordinary women are reduced to ordinary women (Kolnes, 1995, p. 71).<sup>241</sup>

According to Hargreaves (1994, p. 162), the favored image of the female athlete with which to achieve this reduction in the print and television media is a heterosexualised image.<sup>242</sup> Females are portrayed in ways that explicitly demonstrate their sexuality and undermine their athleticism and athletic knowledge; as Lenskyj suggests, the portrayal sees "the female body as a sexual asset and a physical liability" (1994, p. 357; also see Balsamo, 1996, p. 46). This occurs whether the demonstration of sexuality is 'normal' heterosexual attractiveness or stereotypical depictions of 'deviant' sexualities. In normality or excess, the sexuality of the female athlete is made paramount. As Anne Hall argues, within our sporting discourse there is a "pervasive obsession with the femininity (and masculinity) of female athletes and sportswomen but *never* with the masculinity (and femininity) of male athletes and sportsmen" (1988, p. 331). Sportswomen are first and foremost sexual women, and then athletes. Athletes such as Florence Griffith-Joyner are 'othered' by this concentration on certain bodily 'facts' that constructs them as an erotic, rather than athletic, person (Balsamo, 1996, p. 47). As Kane and Greendorfer describe:

Do we remember Florence Griffith Joyner, an outstanding athlete who won three Olympic gold medals in track and field? Or do we remember "FloJo", a fashion model/designer who performed in "long tresses, lavish makeup, and racy one-legged running suits that emphasize sexual difference" (Duncan, 1990, p.28)? This latter portrayal clearly depicts Florence Griffith Joyner as

“FloJo, a woman who is portrayed ( and therefore socially constructed) as different from and other than her athletic male counterparts- primarily because the dominant media themes emphasized her femininity and sexuality, not her athleticism. (1994, p. 30)

By emphasising the physical attractiveness of female athletes over their athleticism, this significantly undermines their position and authority as athletes (Halbert and Latimer, 1994, p. 300). In contrast, Bruce suggests that television commentary actively undermines any attempt to treat male athletes as sexual objects, as “other” to athletic bodies (1998, p. 4).

Margaret Duncan (1990), in her exploration of the photographic depictions of female and male athletes, demonstrated that female athletes are often depicted in poses that are similar to the poses of female models in soft pornography. In both media, the heterosexuality of the female is presented via physical attractiveness, poses that accentuate sexual availability and an intimate focus on sexual body parts, and positioning of the female body in the picture so that she is often shot in sexual poses which emphasise her smallness, weakness and vulnerability (Duncan, 1990, p. 28; Stedman, 1997, p. 84; Lenskyj, 1998, p. 20).<sup>243</sup> Such photographs openly express the otherness, objectification and inferiority of the female athlete in comparison with the photography of male sports (Duncan, 1990, p. 29; Duncan, 1993, p. 44).<sup>244</sup> It represents the features of the female athlete which “believe the very qualities we associate with athleticism (Duncan, 1993, p. 43). Such photographs may further sexualise the female athlete by concentrating only on the pieces of her body that signify heterosexual sexuality, or by photographing the female in such a way that her gaze is avoided. So she is positioned as an object for the male connoisseur (Stedman, 1997, p. 84; Mikosza and Phillips, 1999, p. 8).

The female athletes themselves often actively take up this oppression, exploiting their heterosexual attractiveness to gain money, status and media attention (Kolnes, 1995, pp. 72, 73). Female athletes have recently produced a number of pin-up style calendars, obviously driven by the satisfaction of a male heterosexual market demand.<sup>245</sup> As Lenskyj states:

in women’s sports circles, while much has changed, much has stayed the same. As in the early decades of the century, issues of appearance and

propriety, defined according to white, middle class heterosexual values, were the key to public and media approval of sportswomen. (1995, p. 59)

The liberal defense by female athletes and ‘supportive’ media commentators on the calendars is that the calendar presents women who are athletic as also being feminine, thereby correcting negative stereotypes associated with female sports. But this defense ignores that it is these very prescriptions of femininity that limit female authority and opportunity in sport. The taking up of the stereotype that oppresses a group by individuals members of that oppressed group would not seem to be a very good strategy in resisting oppression.<sup>246</sup> As D.A. Clarke suggests, the starting points of liberal individualism and market capitalism has allowed for some women to profit from the exhibit of their bodies, whilst ignoring “the potential harm done to other women by the perpetuation of hoary (or whory) patriarchal stereotypes” (2000, p. 1). If it’s personally right and profitable for the individual athletes, then it is considered right and empowering for all women.

The calendar is further defended from a liberal-egalitarian perspective because male athletes have done a similar calendar. What is overlooked in this defense is that gender and heterosexuality do have an effect on the consumption of the meaning of the calendar. Heterosexualised images and practices of females in society are one mechanism of maintaining male dominance and female exploitation. Females are heterosexually vulnerable in ways that men are not (Lenskyj, 1995, p. 56; Clarke, 2000, p. 1). The (semi) naked female body presents a different message in society to a semi-naked male body (Lenskyj, 1995, p. 56). Additionally, in a world that largely ignores female athletic achievement, the only image of a female athlete is a highly sexual one. In contrast, the sexualisation of male rugby players occurs in a media replete with images of rugby players doing rugby.<sup>247</sup> For Lenskyj, the extent of our society’s concern with the sexuality of female athletes is indicated by the fact that the controversy over the female calendar occupied the general news section, and not the sporting section, of the Australian media (1995, p. 48). Rarely does a female athletic achievement get reported as a general news item, let alone a sports item.<sup>248</sup>

The extent to which the female athlete is reproduced as sexually vulnerable, and not as autonomous and assertive, can be gauged by the way that the athletic female is now a favorite of the soft-porn industry (Harris, 1999, p. 8). As Hargreaves suggests:

Models in immodest, suggestive or erotic poses, holding and wearing sporting accoutrements, make popular pornographic images. Snooker cues, cricket bats, boxing gloves and footballs are such obvious symbols of manliness that for bare-breasted women to be holding them suggests a provocative sexual message: that 'real' sports are for men, and women are there to provide excitement and arousal. It is as if women's bodies are part of the equipment... 'playthings' for men. (1994, p. 167)

The taking up of this discourse by female athletes, as well as by the mostly male media of sport and pornography, reproduces the language of sporting femininity that limits the seriousness of athletic participation by females. All female athletes are limited by the prescriptions of a stereotypical, trivialised and sexualised femininity, inferior in comparison to male athleticism.

The danger is more widespread than just the effects on individual elite athletes. Recalling MacKinnon's claim that stereotypes become objectifications which become limitations on corporeality, if the most successful female athletes take up the notion that feminine attractiveness is still an important benchmark of athletic success, where does that leave all other females who aspire to play sports? The type of trivialisation and sexualisation that elite female athletes endure, and may take up themselves, could affect the image that all female athletes have of themselves; it could produce the psychic alienation of female athletes (Bartky, 1990). As Helen Elliott suggests about the female athletes who appeared in the *Golden Girls* calendar:

Calendars like this make women like me despair. It can't even be taken as a joke because the women obviously took it seriously. Here are women who have made it to the top in their careers, a very difficult career that is traditionally dominated by men. They are superb role models because they obviously have exceptional gifts. Yet where is their sense of themselves? They still don't believe that they are validated in the world unless they are validated sexually. That is unless they have the approval of men....

What these pictures are about is trivializing the reality of the achievement of the athletes. You're not really going to tell me that adolescent girls are going to find this a turn-on. What they will find however is the age-old message- the

true value of a young woman lies in her sexual attractiveness, and not her remarkable achievements (1995)

Kolnes, in her study of elite female athletes in athletics, skiing, soccer and handball, found that many emphasise symbols of femininity such as long hair and attractive clothes to compensate for perceptions of reduced femininity in playing sports (1995, p. 66).

Also, it becomes particularly limiting when female sporting organisations incorporate the stereotypes that limit female athletic authority. As Burroughs, Ashburn and Seebohm argue, “Many women’s sports have gone to considerable trouble to construct an appearance of emphasized “heterosexual femininity” (1995, p. 167). Women’s cricket, netball and basketball in Australia have all undergone uniform changes to make their athletes more marketable, that is, more heterosexually attractive, to the public. Athletes in ice dancing, bodybuilding, volleyball and synchronised swimming may undermine their athleticism by wearing make-up and costumes to emphasise their femininity. In both these sets of cases, the female athlete is a parody of the male standard; they become the comic other to the seriousness of male sports.

The previous chapter outlined the importance of female athletes producing new, different and more liberating understandings of female physicality through participation in a wider range of sports. But the sports media limits the extent to which such privately, or locally, produced understandings become publicly consumed and authoritative. For Kane and Greendorfer, the media has been successful in developing more subtle ways of incorporating such resistance and maintaining male dominance. In their terms:

The media have transformed the meanings of women’s physicality... to commodification, sexuality and femininity. As such, the dominant belief system of patriarchy has successfully incorporated women’s challenge to male superiority by transforming it in a way that it (the challenge) becomes compatible with stereotypical ideological themes related to sportswomen and their bodies (1994, p. 40).

The future for feminist sports activists must include the transformation of the phallogentric sports media so that a space is produced for female standpoints to be respectfully produced in the media. But such production will require a novel way of dissemination in the media. Neither years of gender equity programs, nor deconstructions

of the maleness of the sporting media, have successfully produced forces that are changing the perspective of the media. But phallogentric knowledge systems in other areas of the female's life have been revealed and challenged by feminist theories, and these theories may offer some mechanisms for challenging the maleness of the sports media. The next section of this chapter investigates how feminist standpoint theorists have challenged the male epistemological method in the various disciplines that control women in society. The final section of this chapter will use these challenges to produce a space for female speech in the sports media.

### **Producing Feminist Standpoints and Female Authority**

Feminist standpoint theories eschew the pure 'objectivity' of the modern epistemological method. They recognise the importance of gender politics in both orienting and understanding investigation. The inclusion of the female experience attempts to produce "more complete and less perverse human understanding." In doing so it resists the dominance of the male experience, subsumed as the impartial method, in traditional knowledge (Harding, 1989, p. 196; Bradiotti, 1986, p. 48). Sandra Harding (1989) argues that female experience offers a necessary correction to the notion of philosophy, or any discipline of knowledge, as a monolithic epistemology by exposing the sex-bias in this epistemology, and providing a counter-description (a feminist standpoint) which takes into account women's experience.

This tradition of feminism deconstructs the empirical method of both science and philosophy by displaying the relevance of the perspective of the observer to the discovery of so-called 'true' results. In opposition to the modern view of truth, feminist empiricism recognises that society is made up of groups of isolated people, and traditional empiricism fails to take into account the embeddedness of the investigator in social structures, which are ordered by gender, race and sexuality amongst other things (Hawkesworth, 1989, p. 536; Grosz, 1988, pp. 97-99). This embeddedness affects both the types of research questions that are asked, and the way that research data is collected and analysed (Harding, 1989, pp. 192, 193).

Feminist standpoint theory reveals the gaps in ‘objective’ knowledge that are posed by the female experience. For example, the characterisation of housework within the empirical science of economics is of non-productive [profitless] work. Yet such a characterisation occurs because the system of thought comes from a male-perspective which understands productivity in terms of economic profit. So the economically driven division between work and leisure time makes little sense to a mother’s experience of the ‘double shift’, or even of house labour and child rearing. The mother’s experience is neither economically defined work nor leisure (Smith, 1979 cited by Hall, 1996, pp. 72, 73). The motor to the production of feminist standpoint theory is the dissonance felt by females in the descriptions provided for them by male systems of thought; some females experience housework and childcare as productive, most do not experience them as leisure. Feminist standpoint theory allows for an epistemology grounded in this different female set of experiences. This is ‘biased’, but only as biased as traditional epistemologies have been. It allows bodies of experience into science that avoid the male bias of excluding bodies in empiricism (not only gendered, but raced and classed, bodies as well). In doing so, it undermines the foundations of empirical ways of knowing. According to Harding:

...human activity not only structures but also sets limits on understanding. If social activity is structured in fundamentally opposing ways for two different groups, “one can expect that the vision of each will represent an inversion of the other, and in systems of domination the vision available to the rulers will be both partial and perverse” (Hartsock, 1983, p. 285)...The reason the feminist claims can turn out to be scientifically preferable is that they originate in, and are tested against, a more complete and less distorting kind of social experience. The experience arising from the activities assigned to women, seen through feminist theory, provide a grounding for potentially more complete and less distorted knowledge claims than do men’s experiences. This kind of politicized inquiry increases the objectivity of the results of research (1989, p. 194).<sup>249</sup>

Susan Hawkesworth captures the problem with these early accounts of feminist standpoint positions. She states:

... the claim that women will produce an accurate depiction of reality, either because they are women or because they are oppressed, appears to be highly implausible.... Appeals to the authority of the female “body” to substantiate such claims suffer from the same defects as the appeals to the authority of the senses so central to the instrumental conception of reason that these feminists

set out to repudiate.... Both adhere to notions of transparency and a “natural” self who speaks a truth free of all ambiguity. Both adhere to the great illusion that there is one position in the world or one orientation toward the world that can eradicate all confusion, conflict, and contradiction (1989, pp. 544, 545).

This essentialised and universalised feminist standpoint position generates a privileged position which ignores the fallibility of knowers, the diversity of female experiences, and the historical and contextual discourses which structures each individual’s experiences of the world. Hence, it, like the modern epistemological method, generates a foundational view of knowledge, truth and reality (Hawkesworth, 1989, p. 538).

The political danger of this is that these early statements of feminist standpoints maintain patriarchal language and ideas that support the dominance of males (Lloyd, 1984, p. 16; Code, 1986, p. 54; Code, 1991, pp. 7, 13; Bradiotti, 1986, p. 54; Brook, 1999, p. 7). Whilst this standpoint does produce a positive, rather than a negative, valuation of women’s roles and abilities, “to affirm difference, when difference means dominance ... means to affirm the qualities and characteristics of powerlessness” (MacKinnon, 1987, p. 39), to affirm all that men want women to do.<sup>250</sup> Women’s knowledge and ways of knowing are different because that is what men have allowed. MacKinnon states:

I do not think that the way women reason morally is morality “in a different voice.” I think it is morality in a higher register, in the feminine voice. Women value care because men have valued us according to the care we give them, and we could probably use some. Women think in relational terms because our existence is defined in relation to men. Further, when you are powerless, you don’t just speak differently. A lot, you don’t speak. Your speech is not just differently articulated, it is silenced. Eliminated, gone. You aren’t just deprived of a language with which to articulate your distinctiveness, although you are; you are deprived of a life out of which articulation might come...it is also silence of the deep kind, the silence of being prevented from having anything to say. Sometimes it is permanent. All I am saying is that the damage of sexism is real, and reifying that into differences is an insult to our possibilities. (1987, p. 39)<sup>251</sup>

Later forms of feminist standpoint avoided the temptation to essentialise and idealise the knowledges gained from woman’s oppressed position. In Gross’ terms: “Feminist theory today is not simply interested in reversing the values of rational/irrational or in affirming what has been hierarchically subordinated, but more significantly, in

questioning the very structure of binary categories” (1986, pp. 202, 203). The identified enemy of these feminists remained the male control of reason and value, but their method was to expose the inadequacies (the gaps and silences) within the paradigms which supported that control, and not simply within its practice or valuations. Feminists move from a desire to include women as the objects of study in patriarchal methodologies, to the use of female experience as data with which to criticise patriarchal and phallogocentric methodologies (Grosz, 1988, p. 97). In summary, Grosz suggests:

Rather than a norm, a feminist philosophy seeks a new space in which women can write and think as women and not men’s imperfect counterparts or approximations. This space may be capable of sustaining several types of discourse, many perspectives and interests (even contradictory ones). No one form dominates the others.

In short, a feminist philosophy could accept its position as historically grounded in patriarchal texts; yet its future involves a movement beyond this history (1990a, p. 169).

The epistemological project should be refigured so that the authority of the speaker is determined by the usefulness and meaningfulness of what gets said, and not merely by whom does the talking.

An early example of this type of standpoint theory is the work of Adrienne Rich in *Of Woman Born*. In contrast to early radical feminist views of childbirth (which ignored the female experience as much as the patriarchal views which romanticised but naturalised it) Rich sees the female capacity to mother as, not the basis for enslavement, but as the basis for a creative description to produce a new epistemology. For Rich, “the experience of motherhood has not been entirely formed or controlled by the institution of mothering...and it is in the excess...that women have retained and developed capacities for resistance to male power” (Eisenstein, 1994, p. 73). The male control of the institution or discourse of motherhood has endeavoured to redescribe the excess in ways that silence it (Eisenstein, 1994, p. 70). Motherhood is institutionally described as a natural condition for women, and not as a choice which involves risk, challenge, achievement and autonomy. But the dissonance between the male description and the female experience allows a creative resistance for females. This is the gap in patriarchal discourse, a gap which was

unrecognised by early radical and liberal feminist theorists, but which produces both the data and the impetus to produce a transformation in discursive paradigms.

To subvert patriarchy and phallocentrism it is not necessary for women to stop having children or to engage in more equal heterosexual relationships with men. It is necessary for women to have the economic, social and psychological resources to view their experiences in ways that may differ from patriarchal and phallogentric explanations of those experiences. As an example, motherhood may be viewed as a powerful, creative and independent choice made by many women, in order to redescribe mothering from a woman's viewpoint which is not phallogentric or patriarchal. Mothering gives the woman the opportunity to transcend her own position in patriarchal society; as a means of growing and learning. In this respect it is similar to other activities cherished in patriarchal society; mountaineering, around the world sailing, music and film production, business development. Such autonomous choices on behalf of women also exist in sexuality, in work, in education and in sport. The female athlete may experience dissonance between the way she is meant to experience aspects of sport (aggression, competition, risk, and violence) and the experience she has of these aspects. This dissonance could produce liberating counterdescriptions. But as yet not many counterdescriptions of female athleticism have captured the support of the public.

### **The Rejection of Patriarchal and Phallogentric Reality**

According to Bartky, the pervasiveness of dominance makes the experience of the feminist revelation of this dominance almost overwhelming. The 'meaninglessness' of the situation is the only vaguely appreciated characterisation of such things as oppressive. The patriarchal language does not have the conceptual resources to describe such things as oppressive. How is the tone of a news report or advertisement conveyed as oppressive to those who have not had the type of experiential 'earthquake' that produces a feminist consciousness? Why does the sexual preferences of female athletes carry such an interest in sport reporting? How is an accepted practice, such as opening a door for a female, described as part of a cage of oppression, when it is conventionally described as helpful? Does the term 'unhelpful help' have a meaning? As Bartky suggests, "... since many

apparently harmless sorts of things can suddenly exhibit a sinister dimension, social reality is revealed as *deceptive*” (Bartky, 1990, p. 28). Or, in Frye’s more explicit terms

...these very numerous acts of unneeded or even noisome “help” occur in counterpoint to a pattern of men not being helpful in many practical ways in which women might welcome help....The gallant gestures have no practical meaning. Their meaning is symbolic.... So the message is that women are incapable. The detachment of the acts from the concrete realities of what women need and do not need is a vehicle for the message that women’s actual needs and interests are unimportant or irrelevant. Finally, these gestures imitate the behaviour of servants toward masters and thus mock women, who are in most respects the servants and caretakers of men. The message of the false helpfulness of male gallantry is female dependence, the invisibility or insignificance of women, and contempt for women.

One cannot see the meanings of these rituals if one’s focus is riveted upon the individual event in all its particularity, including the particularity of the individual man’s present conscious intentions and motives and the individual woman’s conscious perception of the event in the moment (1983, p. 6).

The danger to the political program is that such ‘politically isolated’ women may internalise the ideas of their oppressors. Because the system of oppression, and its agents, are both deceptive and everywhere, the female is constantly bombarded with ‘evidence’ of her inferiority to men. She may experience doubt about her own capacities, or be tempted to comply with the oppressor’s valuation of her (Bartky, 1990, p. 30). She may have no conceptual scheme that is capable of revealing such isolated incidents as a pattern of discrimination (Seller, 1988, p. 175).

But liberation is possible when the feminist is able to conceive of the theatre and performance that is occurring in her sex marking as a female, through the provision of a new schema that demonstrates the pattern of these isolated incidents. It is the intimations of inferiority of females that these actions carry that make any suggested help, unhelpful. Behaviours and events become re-interpreted within the new framework. Each action is revealed as an instrument of oppression within the newly developed feminist consciousness (Seller, 1988, p. 175). The feminist sees the oppressor in a variety of places, sees the ‘cage of oppression’ (MacKinnon, 1987, p. 169). The female experiences her situation such that “the living of one’s life is confined and shaped by forces and barriers which are not accidental or occasional and hence avoidable, but are systematically related

to each other in such a way as to catch one between and among them and restrict or penalize motion in any direction” (Frye, 1983, p. 4). Or, as Bartky states:

... there are few places where I can hide, that I can be attacked anywhere, at any time, by virtually anyone. Innocent chatter- the currency of ordinary social life- or a compliment (“You don’t think like a woman”), the well-intentioned advice of psychologists, the news item, the joke, the cosmetics advertisement- none of these is what it is or what it was [for the feminist consciousness] (Bartky, 1990, p. 28)<sup>252</sup>

So the feminist experiences her personal battles against such language as part of a political struggle. Through constant and repetitious practice females may train themselves to be otherwise; to be self-defined and self-marked women.

Cracks in the patriarchal reality of women’s lives appear as the position of women within society is altered. The feminist consciousness “turns a fact into a contradiction” (Bartky, 1990, p. 26; Harding, 1989, p. 195; Nash, 1994, p. 67).<sup>253</sup> Aspects of social reality, previously seen as normal, are now perceived as contradictory. The female, who can make such a move away from patriarchal reality, experiences the contradictions between the patriarchal reality and the newly developed feminist consciousness as anguish. It is the anguish of recognising that the female’s reality has been described and limited by male society, and not nature, throughout history.<sup>254</sup> Whereas once her description of her experiences were either trivialised, ignored, or described as neurotic and self-centered, she now grabs back the authority of her first-person accounts of that experience. She refuses any attempts to change those accounts to fit a patriarchal theory (Seller, 1988, p. 176). She apprehends herself as the victim of unjust treatment produced by a patriarchal force, and that this treatment is an offence. What were once experienced as normal degradations to be endured are now experienced as forces of domination, able to be resisted. (Bartky, 1990, p. 27; Rowland and Klein, 1990, p. 299; Harding, 1989, p. 195)

Feminist consciousness is this “apprehension of possibility” (Bartky, 1990, p. 25). Rather than seeing their reality as normal or natural, the feminist sees their situation as something that is contrived (Bordo, 1988, p. 628). The lament of their situation is replaced by a hope for a better, or radically transformed, female condition. As Bartky explains:

The very *meaning* of what the feminist apprehends is illuminated by the light of what ought to be: the given situation is first understood in terms of a state of

affairs not yet actual and in this sense a possibility, a state of affairs in which what is given would be negated and radically transformed.... [T]he feminist apprehends certain features of social reality *as* intolerable, as to be rejected in behalf of a transforming project for the future. "It is on the day that we can conceive of a different state of affairs that a new light falls on our troubles and we *decide* that these are unbearable" (1990, p. 25).

A feminist standpoint endeavours to raise the consciousness of women to the political dimension of practices of oppression, which are presented as normal or even beneficial to the women in the patriarchal discourse. It is the structure of male dominance that normalises these practices. But it is the feminist imagination, and the feminist community's endorsement of that imagination, that allows these practices to be replaced by a world that might be otherwise. As Gross argues: "...feminist theory has simultaneously attempted to explore and develop alternatives to these phallogocentric systems, bringing into being new, hitherto unarticulated, feminine perspectives on the world" (Gross, 1986, p. 195). Discourse or knowledge production precedes revolution by allowing for the imagination of an alternative. Until the alternative is imagined, the oppression is not felt (Seller, 1988, p. 178).<sup>255</sup>

To this point in the chapter, feminist standpoint theory has been used to deconstruct the maleness of knowledge systems in society. Lloyd's (1984) and Code's (1991) deconstruction of philosophy, as with Young's (1990a) deconstruction of objectivity, MacKinnon's (1987) of the impartiality of law and Harding's (1989) revelation of the maleness of science all reveal the practices of the various discourses that characterise our understandings of maleness, femaleness and authority. Lloyd's task is to reveal how the symbolic maleness of 'Reason', as developed throughout the history of philosophy, affects how sexed bodies are lived. For the notion of 'Reason' affects not only our understanding of truth, but also our understanding of what character traits constitute a good person, and of what constitutes authoritative knowledge, and of what constitutes worthwhile practice for each sex (1984, p. xviii). According to Lloyd:

There are not only practical reasons, but also conceptual ones, for the conflicts many women experience between Reason and femininity. The obstacles to female cultivation of Reason spring to a large extent from the fact that our ideals of reason have historically incorporated an exclusion of the feminine,

and that femininity itself has been partly constituted through such processes of exclusion (1984, cited in Grosz, 1990a, p. 163).

The abstraction or exclusion that does occur in ‘objective’ knowledge production is the removal of the particular perspectives of oppressed groups and the reification and universalisation of the perspectives of dominant groups (Young, 1990, p. 97). What makes this appear as an oppressive fiction is that impartial moral, scientific and philosophic judgements cannot cope with, and do not fit, the particular requirements of oppressed groups. The experiences of being oppressed reveal the partiality of the judgement. As Gross explains: “Feminists do not seem eager to slot women into pre-existing patriarchal categories and theoretical spaces; instead, it is women’s lives, and experiences, that provide criteria by which patriarchal texts can be judged” (Grosz, 1988, p. 97; Gross, 1986, p. 193).

As Sherwin states: “Feminist methodology directs us to look for the political significance of personal experience” (1989, pp. 23, 24). Woman’s experience becomes the data by which knowledge claims can be judged. Theories of knowledge become seen as necessarily sexualised. The distinctions, so important to patriarchal systems, between objectivity and subjectivity, absolute and relative, reason and emotion, are revealed as political propaganda by the feminist standpoint (MacKinnon, 1987, p. 169). What is achieved in feminist standpoints is the two part removal of patriarchal and phallogocentric knowledge systems; the deconstruction of the ‘objectivity’ of such systems, and the redescription of knowledge systems to include as relevant the particular perspective of the sexed knower. The feminist standpoint does not wish to divide knowledge from experience, or oppression, or particularity, or politics. It breaks down the binaries that are structural in phallogocentric knowledge. Knowledge, from a feminist standpoint, necessarily includes these experiences and political hopes in its make-up. Whereas phallogocentric theory cannot admit its own masculine interests without threatening its status and rationale, feminist standpoint openly acknowledges its context-dependent interests and uses. The feminist connects epistemology with politics (Grosz, 1988, pp. 100, 102; MacKinnon, 1987, p. 169). For Gross, the feminist standpoint is a:

space [for women which] will encourage a proliferation of voices, instead of a hierarchical structuring of them, a plurality of perspectives and interests instead of the monopoly of the one- new kinds of questions and different kinds of answers. No one would be privileged as *the* truth..., rather, knowledges, methods, interpretations can be judged and used according to their appropriateness to a given context, a specific strategy and particular effects (Gross, 1986, p. 204).<sup>256</sup>

### **Feminist Epistemology**

In such a space, the ‘alien voice’ of woman may be represented and engaged with (Gross, 1986, p. 204). For Bartky, oppression will continue to exist in society until the voice of the woman is treated with the same authority as the voice of the patriarch (1990, pp. 8, 9). Or, in Kristeva’s point of view, the position of marginality confers an opportunity to displace the prevalence of hierarchical dichotomies that exist in phallogocentric thought (Bordo, 1988, p. 628).

Lloyd’s liberatory thesis from the male epistemology does not involve the desire to valorise a language developed from female experience as better than the philosophical method (1984, p. 104).<sup>257</sup> She does not believe that all dualistic thought is necessarily patriarchal.<sup>258</sup> Feminist philosophers can accept female dissatisfaction with the maleness of ‘Reason’, without rejecting either Philosophy or Reason (Lloyd, 1984, p. 109). In Lloyd’s view, it is the manifestation of some dualisms which may be discriminatory and oppressive, whilst other manifestations make the same dualism liberating and productive.

This recognition allows Lloyd to claim that feminists can, and do, use philosophy from their own perspective, guided by the idea that all discourse can be strategically used to solve the problems faced by feminists (Grosz, 1990a, p. 163). Philosophy has the conceptual tools and imaginative spaces available to critically reflect on its history as male, by contrasting that knowledge with the knowledge produced from the position of living in a female body. This feminist standpoint, produced by the different female consciousness, continues the philosophical tradition by using the symbols and metaphors that had previously been used to support patriarchal dualisms. But the feminist appropriation of these metaphors gives them a distinctly different use/truth. As Spivak suggests:

Given our historical position we have to learn to negotiate with structures of violence, rather than taking the impossible elitist position of turning our backs on everything.

The practical politics of the open end is not like some kind of massive ideological act (the surgical operation) which brings about a drastic change, but I have always emphasised that there have to be both these kinds of things [dreams of a utopia and feminist negotiations with male philosophy]<sup>259</sup>, each bringing the other to crisis. (1990, p. 101 cited by Griffiths, 1995, p. 63).

Feminist knowledge must not only maintain continuity with female experience and with female political programs, but must also maintain continuity with the terms used in male discourses (Gatens, 1986, p. 27). Females need to engage in a dialogue with current 'male' knowledges. The dissolution of the value dichotomy does not make the terms of the dichotomy meaningless (Code, 1991, p. 30). Instead, it allows the terms to be used in a dialogue between different parties supporting different platforms. Feminist strategies include reading male discourses 'against the grain' to expose and elaborate on gaps and exclusions between that discourse and their experiences, whilst retaining the terms necessary to be understood by the oppressor (Code, 1988, pp. 188, 189; Griffiths, 1995, p. 5).

Women's refusal to be subordinated by objective descriptions of knowledge is assisted by asking the question 'Whose knowledge' is considered authoritative or expert? (Code, 1991, p. 324) Code's new paradigm asks the questions; Who should we believe? Whose knowledge is credible? How can others be trusted to give knowledge? This relates power and truth in ways the objective paradigm of knowledge could not. Knowledge claims become ideally modeled on friendship, usefulness, compassion, sympathy and trust, things that had traditionally been understood as interfering with knowledge (Code, 1991, pp. 181-188; Griffiths, 1995, p. 58).<sup>260</sup> In everyday life, what makes people willing to accept the authority of a speaker is that the speaker is trusted to solve our problems, or can communicate their view of things to us in ways which are acceptable (Seller, 1988, p. 172; Code, 1991, pp. 3, 4). The solution to the exclusive maleness of epistemology is to develop new discourses that permit women to trust themselves about what they know; to create women as autonomous and authoritative, as usefully trustworthy (Code, 1991, p. 68). Code hopes to develop a new philosophical paradigm via the development of a new epistemic

paradigm that involves listening to the first-person stories of people (1991, pp. 86ff); that involves interplay, rather than an opposition, between subjective and objective factors in knowledge production. The commitment to know the ‘other’ as well as possible becomes, for Code, a “worthy epistemological paradigm” (Code, 1991, p. 41). By knowing the other through first-person storytelling, we both have the opportunity to access a wider array of knowledges than is currently available under the dominant epistemology, and reduce the likelihood of ignoring their claims to be authoritative.

The shift that occurs is from an ‘obsession’ with the rational independence of the knower, to a recognition of the necessary dependence of the knower on the community for validation (Seller, 1988, p. 170, Grosz, 1988, p. 100). Humans are considered authoritative knowers, in so far as they learn about their status as knowers in their conversational relationships to others. Production of knowledge status normally occurs as a co-operative thing. Dialogue is primary; knowledge is ‘made legitimate’ in conversations with other people. Even thinking is constructed on a conversational, rather than an adversarial, model (Code, 1991, pp. 120, 121). The knowledge of any person is verified as a member of a community, rather than as the classic isolated individual within traditional epistemology (Code, 1988, p. 197; Code, 1991, pp. 284, 285, 313). This emergent realisation of the importance of interdependence, as well as autonomy, in knowledge production and evaluation, creates a new epistemology developed around storytelling and respectful listening. The production of knowledge becomes both subjective and communal, and the claimant either endorses or criticises the discursive possibilities laid down for him/her as a member of the community (Code, 1991, pp. 120, 121).

### **A Feminist Politics of Standpoint: Producing a Mitigated Relativism**<sup>261</sup>

Code suggests that, even when both the internal and external critiques of the dominant epistemology reveal that it plays a major role in maintaining the position of the male as the authoritative knower, the question remains as to how oppositional epistemologies can be ‘forced’ on to members of the dominant group. How can the prejudices in dominant epistemology, which devalue women’s experience and knowledge, be resisted so that the woman can become an authoritative knower (Code, 1991, p. 12)?

Marianne Janack (1997, p. 125) suggests that the impact of feminist standpoint theory has been to shift the important question in feminism from ‘what makes an epistemic claim privileged’ to ‘how do feminists become trusted as epistemically authoritative?’ The first question has traditionally resulted in Enlightenment distinctions between objective and subjective, impartial and partial, universal and particular knowledge. Male philosophy was said to be epistemically privileged because it produced such justifiable knowledge. The early feminist standpoint theorists suggested that the position of oppression of women allowed them to produce knowledge from their experiences that was more epistemically privileged because it included the position of the socially marginalised person (Janack, 1997, p. 126).

In contrast to both claims, Janack suggests that the more important and pragmatic question for feminists to address is to work out how to have their experiences included in theory making; in other words, how can their experiences be given epistemic authority? She wishes to demonstrate a distinction between epistemic privilege and epistemic authority, and claim that feminists should focus on the ways that a marginalised voice can produce epistemic authority for women (1997, p. 130). What social and political practices and institutions feminists can use to gain epistemic authority? Once authority is granted, privilege and justification will follow automatically.

In contrast to Enlightenment claims, epistemic privilege is not granted purely on the basis of knowledge claims. Janack states:

Epistemic authority is conferred in a social context, as a result of other people’s judgement of our sincerity, reliability, trustworthiness, and “objectivity”. Such judgements are usually explained by an appeal to epistemic privilege: certain people are in a better position to “see” the world than are other people. Notice though, that the attribution of epistemic privilege is secondary, and it is private, not public. (1997, p. 133)

The recognition that discussions of justification are prone to dominant values and interests about who makes a trusted knower means that feminists must work on becoming trusted. In her terms, “epistemic authority is conferred on persons or groups through social, political, and economic practices, as well as through sexist, racist, and classist assumptions about reliability, intelligence, and sincerity” (1997, p. 130).

What is noticeable is that epistemic authority privileges certain embodiments. Women often find that their interpretations of their own experiences are granted less epistemic authority than those offered by their husbands, doctors, or other authorities (Janack, 1997, p. 132; MacKinnon, 1987, p. 164). The political effect of these totalising and patriarchal discourses is that women's experiences are often not taken seriously. Women's experiences are made invisible by male methods of knowledge production. The oppression in male systems of truth occurs because there is an unwillingness to grant a provisional authority to the subjective accounts of experience produced by any person (Code, 1986, pp. 61, 62), because testimony by the person is treated with distrust and accorded minimal status as knowledge. Only certain people are granted epistemic authority. Code captures this in the following way:

The 'double standard'... is vividly illustrated in the conduct of the 1984 Grange Inquiry into infant deaths from cardiac arrest at Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children. Calling this inquiry "the highest-priced, tax-supported sexual harassment exercise that we've ever witnessed," Alice Baumgart observes, "When lawyers, who were mostly men, questioned doctors, the questions were phrased in terms of what they *knew*. When nurses were on the stand, the question was, 'Based on your *experience*...' Nurses should not know... What the doctor-nurse game is really all about is that nurses know, but cannot let the world know that they know" (cited in Code, 1991, p. 222)

The women's voice has traditionally lacked the political credibility necessary to make authoritative statements, because it has been aligned with experience. The knowledge/experience dichotomy produces the devaluation of 'women's knowledge'. Their experience is made subordinate to the reason/expertise of men (Code, 1991, pp. 10, 242). Psychologically oppressed by that paradigm, women don't trust their own experiences and capacities as knowers because they have traditionally not been granted the authority given to the 'objective' observer (Code, 1991, pp. 176-183).<sup>262</sup> The alignment of femaleness with testimony, opinion and hearsay, the 'others' to knowledge, has a marked effect on the abilities of women to be authoritative under the current epistemological paradigm. The sex of the knower is epistemologically significant as being a female disqualifies one from being a knower in the most valued sense of the term (Code, 1991, pp. 10, 176).<sup>263</sup>

Code hopes to displace the hierarchies in authority in patriarchal society, because such hierarchies have epistemological, political and individual effects on the lives of women.<sup>264</sup> She calls for a change in the discursive practices of philosophy from the precedence of objective analysis to the usefulness of subjective and ‘passionate’ story telling. The feminist project involves “moving away from theoretical positions which advocate a purity of knowledge that would leave experience behind in a search for an epistemic ideal of unrealisable clarity” (Code, 1988, p. 187). It is the polarised dichotomy that is produced between objective and subjective which forces experience to be eschewed from knowledge. These discursive methods are disabling because they cannot capture the complexity and diversity of gendered experiences from a variety of contextual positions.<sup>265</sup>

### **Conclusion on Feminist Standpoint Positions: Exposing the Maleness of Knowledge/Power/Authority**

The feminist standpoint positions discussed in this chapter share an important idea, in that they argue that women’s oppression is linked to the way in which women’s differences have been inscribed with negative meaning and value in culture so as to maintain the dominance of men. Women were oppressed by more than just the limitation of opportunity which liberal feminism dealt with. Every aspect of culture oppressed them because they were sexed and/or gendered<sup>266</sup> females. As Millett argues, “sex is a status category with political implications” (1969, p. 24).

Feminist Standpoint theorists emphasised and radicalised, rather than silenced and counteracted, the difference between male and female experience to produce a woman’s ethics of female liberation (as distinct from human equality) and a woman’s epistemology (as distinct from ‘objective’ disciplines of knowledge). Feminist Standpoint theory builds its theory from this different female experience (feminism unmodified), without relying on another philosophical theory. Both the ethics and epistemology valued female experience as different to male experience, rather than trying to produce male experiences within females.

Feminist Standpoint theorists promoted and celebrated the different female experience as the data for the production of radical knowledge claims. Whilst still aiming

to destroy patriarchy, this destruction was based on the development of a new society which was based on qualities and virtues which had been assigned to the feminine. The differences between the sexes became a source of power and liberation for women, rather than a handicap to be overcome. Women's experiences became the impetus and data for the creation of "a society organized along different lines" (Eisenstein, 1994, p. xiii; Rowland and Klein, 1990, p. 272), so that it could be perceived as more attractive than the current society for women, and possibly for men.

Oppression went beyond the internalisation of sex roles, to the methods of making knowledge claims in society. The female had been defined in contrast to the authoritative subject of knowledge. The feminist standpoint position challenges the structure of the discourses that maintain male power in society. It questions the patriarchal and phallogocentric knowledge systems in the following ways. The commitment to a universal, rational subject as desexed in patriarchal systems is revealed as an inability or unwillingness to recognise the different social positions occupied by men and women, and the effects that these positions have on experiences. The commitment to the production of singular or universal truths is revealed as a failure by patriarchal systems to "acknowledge the costs (the silences, exclusions and invalidations) on which they are founded: in seeking the status of truth, they seek a position beyond history and outside power" (Gross, 1986, p. 198; Sherwin, 1989, p. 31). This politics of truth, or the complicity of discursive systems with structural oppressions, is brought into question by the feminist standpoint position (Harding, 1989, pp. 534-535, 550-551). As Thompson suggests:

No system of domination, even the most totalitarian, functions without contradictions, ambiguities and resistances. The chief contradiction within male supremacist conditions is the existence of women.... Female existence continually gives the lie to the male as the standard of 'human' existence (1994, p. 174)

In contrast to patriarchal and phallogocentric knowledge, the feminist standpoint position recognises its perspectivism. From a feminist standpoint, all thought is located, normally from a male perspective (Bordo, 1988, p. 628). Reason and knowledge must include understandings of the social, political, personal and moral interests in the subject. But the goal of feminist standpoint philosophy is to expand concepts that are currently used

in philosophy so that the biases within their current usage are acknowledged as related to the male subject of philosophy, and the gaps and exclusions caused by the ignorance of the female subject are also included. A feminist philosophy seeks a reason which is based on female experience, that accepts the importance of the sexed body's affect on knowledge, and that is cognizant of differences in the everyday lives of differently sexed subjects (Grosz, 1990a, pp. 167-169). Women become recognised as the authors of knowledge, as producing female perspectives of the world. Feminists, amongst others, produce viable alternatives to the current phallogocentric methods, procedures and practices of knowledge.

The danger, as perceived by Code, is that the embrace of the storyteller may still not escape the imbalance it proposes to resist. The male, as a storyteller, is still granted greater authority. The possibilities available to a storyteller are restricted/extended by notions of history, society, race, sex and class (Code, 1991, p. 178).<sup>267</sup> The sex of the knower is one of a cluster of subjective factors playing a role in the ability to understand and convey experiences, and be listened to with authority. It is important to recognise that authority has traditionally resided with male knowers (Code, 1988, pp. 195-197). The woman has been discursively produced as that which is not authoritative; that who relies on the expertise of others. For Code, it is important for spaces to be created where the woman's stories can be judged as sufficiently authoritative to be acknowledged as potentially useful for a community (Code, 1991, p. 215). But it may be that their embodiment is a distinct barrier to traditional ways of gaining epistemic authority, and so they may have to come up with novel ways of becoming a trusted knower. Rortian pragmatism may offer some innovative tools that can be used to appropriate discursive spaces that are congenial towards female storytelling.

### **Feminist Standpoints and Authority in Sport**

Catherine MacKinnon's reconceptualisation of women's oppression in liberal society from difference-based to dominance-based is useful in discussing the oppression of women in sport. As discussed in Chapters One and Three, the dominance of men was probably initially established through the formal and social exclusion of women from participation in sport.<sup>268</sup> Dominance was probably maintained by the incorporation of

women into positions and opportunities in sport that did not challenge the gender-order in society. This gender order was further maintained by the male control of authoritative positions in the discourse of sport. So, whilst sexism may have been challenged by the liberal inclusion of women into sport, opposition to patriarchy and phallocentrism was contained. As Hall characterises the findings by radical feminists about sport:

One of the recurring themes... is that sport, play and games are institutionalized aspects of our culture which help to maintain male and masculine hegemony... specifically by how it is defined, by the direct control of women's sport by men, and by ignoring, or at best trivializing, women's achievements in sport (1987, p. 333).

The authority that males have in the sporting discourse results in sexist and misogynistic practices toward women such as, the exclusion of women from participation in certain sports, the sexual objectification and trivialisation (infantilisation) of women's performance in sports by both the media and the institutions which organise those sports, and the direct and indirect physical threats posed to women who wish to occupy authoritative positions in the sports media. But, the lack of female authority is also partly the result of patriarchal and phallogentric traditions and practices in sport which see the male athlete as the standard for excellence in sport, and which survive reforms to the sexist practices in sport. If Lloyd believes that Reason and femaleness have been mutually exclusive traditions in philosophy, then sporting reason and femininity have also been suggested as separated. As Iris Young suggests, "if there is a particular female person participating in sport, then, either she is not "really" a woman [token female, biological anomaly, drug taker], or the sport she engages in is not "really" a sport" (Young, 1988, p. 336).<sup>269</sup>

But, paraphrasing Thompson (1994, p. 174), the existence of female athletes is the contradiction that the phallogentric view of sport cannot completely cope with. The final section of this chapter will try to imagine pragmatic, feminist standpoints that can sustain the contradiction of an authoritative female voice in the sport's media. This voice may be produced via a number of different mechanisms that have had some effect in feminist standpoint positions in the wider society. These mechanisms include challenging the male control over sporting knowledge by telling stories about female experiences in sport that

invoke sympathetic listening, or by creating parodic references to the dominant sporting knowledge that undermine its claims to objectivity.

### **Containing and Challenging Feminist Standpoints in the Sports Media**

In September, 1990, Lisa Olson, a female sports journalist, was reporting on the National Football League in America. She was required to interview a New England Patriot's player, in the locker room, after training, when she was sexually harassed. Disch and Kane describe the harassment:

The incident was initiated by one player who walked over to Olson and thrust his penis toward her, asking “Do you want to take a bite out of this?” It escalated quickly as several more players paraded past her, “modeling” their genitals in a mock strip tease while various others shouted: “Did she look, did she look?” “Get her to look”; “That’s what she wants”; “Is she looking?” “Make her look”.”<sup>270</sup> Olson resisted the players’ accusations by reporting the incident to her editor.... (1996, p. 278).<sup>271</sup>

Whilst hoping for the matter to be dealt with privately, Olson refused the option, taken by many other female journalists, of ignoring or trivialising the incident as a joke. She demanded an apology from the instigators of the incident. The story broke into the media four days after the incident.<sup>272</sup>

The players’ claim against Olson was that she was ‘peeking excessively’, that she was using her position as a sports reporter for sexual gratification. Supporters of the player’s claims suggested that a male in the reverse situation would also peek excessively, so it was natural to assume that any human, including Olson, would. The male sexual behaviour becomes the standard for all humans; any sexual difference is not important to an understanding of the issue. Defenders of Olson also tried to silence sex from the issue. Dan Madden suggested that women reporters have an equal “right to talk to an athlete, to look for stories, to be treated no worse and no better than men are treated” (1990 cited in Disch and Kane, 1996, p. 279).<sup>273</sup> Both groups mis-conceptualise the issue.

As Kane and Disch (1993, p. 346) explain, the liberal response tries to ignore the importance of the sex of the writer:

Where a male sportswriter enters the locker-room with credibility because he is a male, a female sportswriter must first establish that credibility. If she cannot

automatically enter the locker room with professional credibility because she is a woman she must leave her gender at the door (1993, p. 346).

But men constantly remind the female writer that sex does matter. She, like all females, is reminded that males are dominant and females are subordinate, and that males enjoy the privileges that this division produce for them (Schacht, 1996, p. 558). The issue is not simply about equality of rights. It is about the reinforcement of the inequality of power that is produced by sex. Sex matters when understanding power in sport. As Olson suggests: “We are taught to think we must have done something wrong and it took me a while to realize I hadn’t done anything wrong. They resented a woman in their domain and it all became a power issue” (Brown, 1993, 1C cited in Disch and Kane, 1996, p. 280). Or in Schacht’s terms, women in sport must constantly be reminded that sport helps to construct a gender hierarchy that has “men at the center... with women relationally being chased off and not even allowed on the sidelines” (1996, p. 558).

Olson, and all female journalists, were threats to the naturalness of male power and authority in sport, and the locker room is a central site in the construction of hostile and violent relationships towards women by male athletes (Kane and Disch, 1993; Curry, 1991; Schacht 1996).<sup>274</sup> By entering this terrain, literally and as a critic, female journalists exemplify the contest to male exclusivity and privilege in sport, and in the wider society. But they also have access to, and a public forum in which to reveal, the ‘secret men’s business’ that goes on in the male change room that may contribute to the sustenance of hierarchical relations in sport and society.

This power of the female journalist provokes a violent reinforcement of the stereotypes, annihilation and sexualisation which Bartky (1990) claims are a part of the female’s normal life. In so doing, the female’s epistemic authority is challenged and conquered, she is sex-marked as an unreliable source of information about male sport. In this respect, sex matters. Male journalists may be demeaned and harassed. But Olson was reassigned to the sexual stereotypes associated with subordinated femininity (Kane and Disch, 1993, p. 343), and one of those stereotypes is a lack of knowledge about male sport.<sup>275</sup>

It wasn't what Lisa Olson was trying to say that seemed to be the threat in this case. Male journalists often enter changerooms and comment critically on male performance. It also didn't seem to be the idea that Olson could gain sexual gratification from seeing male athletes in a state of undress. Females are often in male changerooms as trainers, wives, girlfriends, casual acquaintances and so on. But Olson's presence in the male domain was different. The threat to male authority was that Olson, a female, had the resources to be a public critic about male performance in a male sport (Kane and Disch, 1993, p. 333).<sup>276</sup> The authors suggest that Olson's presence was an intrusion, both into a male sporting world, and into the certainties which society holds about maleness, femaleness, heterosexuality, and sex difference. Her access and her actions placed Olson in excess of what she, as a female, ought to do (Disch and Kane, 1996, pp. 281, 283). Her excess was to act in a way that dis-identified with femininity whilst not slipping into a female endorsement of masculine roles. She destabilises the apparently natural dichotomous structure of sex categories, and therefore the relations between the sexes, through her position, and her actions. She not only refuses her prescribed role, but the very dichotomy that is important to understanding patriarchal society. She is neither female, nor male, and is certainly not some combination of the two. She is a professional critic of [exemplary] males and hence, in excess of what she should be as a woman. Her intrusion is into "certainties about gender relations and sex differences that sport serves to guarantee" (Disch and Kane, 1996, p. 282), and regulate (Disch and Kane, 1996, p. 283).

Disch and Kane go on to suggest that Olson's 'looking' was the threatening and eccentric position that female analysts take up which allows them to comment about the weaknesses and faults of male athletes. Such analysis was undermined by the sexual charge of 'peeking excessively' being laid against Olson, and other reporters of her sex. Olson's excess was contained as the authoritative and critical female voice is redescribed as the sexual and criminal one. The significance of Olson's comments was trivialised by making this attachment to [female] sexuality and desire. Olson, according to the players' charge, had revealed herself as another female envious of, but attracted to, male power and physicality.<sup>277</sup> The charge made by the players was an effort to discipline female journalists' excess, and so renders them more docile subjects (Foucault, 1979 cited by

Disch and Kane, 1996, p. 289). The threat posed by Olson, and other female journalists, is contained by the charge laid against her.

But the power of the male is also made manifest by the charge. Olson was expected to 'peek', because she was female. The dictates of femininity and compulsory heterosexuality require that a woman, in the company of exemplars of masculinity, must peek (Creedon, 1994a, p. 93). She is the audience to such power. Peeking is "not an offense but a ceremonial tribute" (Disch and Kane, 1996, p. 291) which reinforces the envy of women, flatters manhood, whilst recognising that such power cannot be viewed directly or for too long.

The assertion of the player's privacy through the use of the term 'peeking excessively' makes the case that women should peek, but not for too long (or too critically). The traditional gender roles are reaffirmed by the charge at the same time as the eccentric female's power is undermined. The males, subordinated by the power of Olson, reverse the positions by laying the charge. Olson must either peek more excessively in the face of the harassment, or defer and look away. She must either agree to enter changerooms, and display her voyeurism, or defer, and leave her profession. Either way, her power is compromised. According to the authors; "The ingenuity of the patriarchal reversal is that the players disciplined Olson by taking the very thing they claimed not to want her to see and- in their words- making her look" (Disch and Kane, 1996, p. 293). Olson was taught how to look in a deferential, feminine way. Reminiscent of Frye's claim that women must be constantly made aware of their own sexual objectification, Olson and female journalists must be constantly made aware of the threat of male objectifying behaviour.

There is an unwritten set of rules which female reporters must normally observe when granted access to the male changerooms (Kane and Disch, 1993, p. 344).<sup>278</sup> These rules "spelled out the dictates of an apologetic: an overly deferential posturing that works to reaffirm normal certainties in situations where they are threatened" (Disch and Kane, 1996, p. 300). Women were expected to be exemplars of feminine decorum; deferential, awestruck by male power to the point of needing to 'peek', yet still aware that they should

not look. To compensate for the excesses of reporting, the female engages in a charade of femininity that reassures the threatened male.<sup>279</sup>

Olson's further excess was to neither be awestruck nor deferential. She did not laugh off her attack, nor break down in the face of subsequent attacks. She refused the 'truth' of the apologetic she was asked to perform. She did not accept the players' characterisation of the situation; she did not defer, as a woman should do to the disablement caused by charges of 'peeking'. She publicly contested her status as a criminal, and demanded an apology from the players and team (Kane and Disch, 1993, p. 345). In doing so, she transgressed the heterosexual matrix (Butler, 1990 cited by Disch and Kane, 1996, p. 282). She would not uncritically bear witness to male power, as male athletes expected. She refused to take up the position of femininity as in awe of the sexuality of the players.<sup>280</sup>

For Olson, her job entailed more. Her job was to 'look excessively', and it was a job that she felt the need to angrily, and not deferentially or apologetically, defend. As Olson wrote: "I was naïve enough to believe the Patriots understood what it meant to be a reporter.... I am not a stenographer. There is much more to reporting than writing down quotes. It is my job to observe who is injured, to see who is throwing chairs, to capture the mood of the day" (Olson, 1990, p. 74 cited by Disch and Kane, 1996, p. 304). Lingered and looking were part of the sport's reporter's job. She did not buckle against the 'attractive and overpowering' hypermasculinity presented by the players.

The charge against Olson characterised her position more perfectly than her opponents were aware of. She had access to some of the more hidden aspects of male sporting practice; the emotional and physical inadequacies of male athletes, and she had the public forum in which to make comments (Disch and Kane, 1996, p. 292). The effect of this power that Olson had over the male athletes was reduced by the suggestion that she saw her position as an opportunity for sexual gratification, and not properly as male reporters see it as a position of sporting commentary. But rarely is such a charge laid against those male sports commentators who nod and wink at the attractiveness of Steffi Graf, Gabriela Sabatini or Katarina Witt. The concentration on the sexual attractiveness of these athletes by male reporters is normally suggested as 'understandable' moments of

individual tactlessness, which reflect little on the expertise of their commentary. Jennifer Hargreaves exemplifies the sexism of this contrast in the following way:

[An] example is provided by the commentator during the 1989 World Ice-Skating Championships who made a blatantly sexist remark on BBC television when he was observing Claudia Leisint's performance: "There are a lot of men here who think she should be at the top of the rostrum- but I don't think it's because of her skating!" Individual comments of this sort tend to be treated as unimportant... but their effectiveness in objectifying sportswomen and belittling women's sport is because they are one tiny element of a huge structure of gender relations of power. Because sexualized images of female athletes are just one example of the general bombardment of sexualized images of women, the message that female sexuality is more important than sporting ability is very important. Because sexism is part of the everyday discourse of sports- a taken-for-granted way of thinking and behaving- it forms the basis of institutionalized discrimination (1994, p. 165).

The sexism inherent in Olson's case, when compared with the example given by Hargreaves is obvious and unsettling. The accusation made about Olson suggests that women are not meant to be sports reporters. If they express a desire to be so, they must be convinced that it is not a job for which members of their sex are suited. But the inappropriateness must be located within the woman. Olson's inappropriateness was her 'natural' proclivity towards sexual gratification. Such a claim ties in with the stereotypes of oppressed females, as described by Bartky (1990), whereby the oppressed female's close ties with nature and sexuality undermines her authority, a stereotype that maintains female's intellectual subordination. The female sport's reporter simply cannot get sex out of her mind. Both gender hierarchy and compulsory heterosexuality are maintained by this charge. The charge, and the acceptance of it, ignored the possibility that woman sport's reporters may be uninterested in the attractiveness of those they report on (Kane and Disch, 1993, p. 342).<sup>281</sup> As another reporter, Claire Smith states, "It's [the locker room] a smelly, stinky, nasty place" (cited by Cramer, 1994, p. 163).

Yet the sexism can be transcended, via equal opportunities laws and consciousness raising sessions for athletes, whilst maintaining a hierarchy of authority between the two genders in terms of sports reporting. Olson's case makes clear the importance of male dominance in sport, and the threat that the critical female (or male) journalist poses to that dominance. The 'reversal' produced by Olson's harassers, and supported by a number of

Olson's defenders, permitted male authority at the theoretical level. If Olson did not accept her position and marking as a member of the subordinate sex, then this disavowal is made obvious as eccentricity. Olson is presented as 'the other' to both maleness and femaleness; an impossible position for anyone to occupy. So, Olson is reproduced as that which demonstrates the foundational dichotomy of patriarchal and phallogocentric society.

But Olson's response demonstrates the dissonance she feels with such categorisation. Her response, and not just her occupation, is in excess of what is expected of those marked female. She denies the position that has been prepared for her by the patriarchal society. But she denies it in such a strong-minded and persuasive way, that her denial becomes the standpoint around which others might rally. According to the authors, Olson's actions brought to light the discomfort shared by many female sports' reporters who agree to play by male rules. Kristin Huckshorn, a woman sports reporter urged fellow journalists to join Olson in her resistance, rather than simply defend or pity her in the terms of the male discourse. Olson provided a stinging reminder to those who are incorporated by the male discourse. The battle for equality is not ended by the occupation of reporting positions. It continues until such positions are not limited in their scope by prescriptions of femininity (Disch and Kane, 1996, p. 304). The authors go on to suggest that this parody of femininity displayed by the deferential female reporter is an indication that females have not achieved equality in the world of sports reporting (Disch and Kane, 1996, p. 304). But it might offer a way of reducing male domination. The next section of the thesis will show how a comic parody of feminine sport's reporting by one group of female reporters has been useful in undermining the dominance of both maleness and heterosexuality in sport.

### **Engaging Playfully with Male Authority in the Sports Media**

How might a woman gain the space necessary to be able to express her expert comments about male sports without being threatened or trivialised? Duncan and Brummett suggest that: "People can find within texts the resources to structure their relationships with others in different ways" (1993, p. 59). Bruce's (1998) ethnographic study of experienced women basketballers' reactions to viewing the patriarchal and phallogocentric televised coverage of women's basketball revealed that there is a site for

resistance to this coverage produced by the frustration felt by the viewers. The women viewers resisted the coverage because the trivialisation and denigration of the female basketballers, and the holding up of the male game as the standard did not resonate with their own experiences as women basketballers. The resistance took the forms of refusing to grant legitimacy to the 'expertise' of the commentator, mocking the commentator's lack of knowledge about the game and its history, refusing that male basketball is the standard against which women's basketball is judged as deficient and denigrating the male game for its violence, individuality and the skills that are emphasised in it. So television viewing was not simply passive, but was an active interpretation carried out by individuals from a certain context. For experienced individuals resistance can exist in both the dissonance between the commentary and the broadcasted vision of female athletes as "physically strong, skilled, tactical, and aggressive" (1998, p. 12), and the interpretations of events given by the commentator with the viewer's experiences of similar events (1998, p. 3). This ironic and mocking reaction to male sportscasters by female viewers has also been reported on in watching televised professional men's football in America (Duncan and Brummett, 1993) and Australia (Lindley, 1995; Brook, 1997), soccer (Leonhardt, 1997 cited by Bruce, 1998, p.4), and rugby (Star, 1992 cited by Bruce, 1998, p. 2). This privately experienced strategy for women might be made public and political by using the popular male characterisations of both the female supporter, and the male expert, to create a space for public commentary, by presenting comic parodies of these characterisations which highlight their limitations.

Messner and Sabo (1990, pp. 1-15) suggest that the indefinable quality that allows men to claim that their experiences are objective in sport, oppresses and terrorises women. This division of power in the world of mediated sport has an important conservative function in society. Cook and Jennings argue, "that television sport has had a hegemonic role in producing and reproducing conservative ideologies of racism, ethnocentrism, national chauvinism and sexism within contemporary popular culture" (1995, p. 5). And, because sporting commentary continues to be a closed-shop to women, mainly because of recruitment based on this mysterious 'it' which male athletes know, it is important for women to recognise this practice as central to the preservation of the hierarchy between the

sexes. Because of this old-boy network, it is necessary for women to appropriate commentary roles in novel ways (Brook, 1997, p. 5). One such way, according to Cook and Jennings (1995), has been the inclusion of the female voice and experience in the comedy-sports show, *Live and Sweaty*.<sup>282</sup> This section of the thesis will endeavour to display the type and effectiveness of a comic challenge to the male dominance of sport reporting.

The deconstruction and redescription of the male discourse of sport occurred partly through the presentation and demeanor of the female host of *Live and Sweaty*, Elle McFeast. McFeast represented all women who are disenfranchised from sport by virtue of their sex. McFeast used the most overt visual appearance of women in Australian Rules Football; Brownlow<sup>283</sup> medal night, and placed this image in the context of the interview. She dressed glamorously in evening dress and long gloves to interview players at, or after training, a dress-choice which Cook and Jennings refer to as a “kind of cross-dressing” (1995, p. 7) in the frame of the standard of sports reporting during wintry football seasons. With each question she gazed deeply into the interviewees’ eyes, and thrust her heaving breasts toward them. Smaller and younger footballers would be her toyboys, older and bigger footballers her protectors. This was how feminine women were supposed to act toward footballers (Brook, 1997, p. 1).

The challenge to male authority occurred because it was disconcerting for footballers to face such exaggerated displays of femininity from a sports reporter. Footballers were reduced to incoherence, by a female commentator who was dressed up and made up to appear seductive, passive and subordinate, but who asked questions which were confronting to the dominant ‘male’ understandings of sporting and social life. The flaunting use of her body as a powerful, destabilising tool made McFeast anything but a submissive female sports reporter who followed the unwritten rules that were used against Lisa Olson (Disch and Kane, 1996, p. 301). As Brook explains more generally about female performers, “Much, though by no means all, feminist performance art and feminist comedy transgresses through the eruption of both body and speech into public space” (1999, p. 128). McFeast’s body and speech was an intrusion on the public space of male sport.<sup>284</sup>

Through these comic challenges, McFeast and the other two female reporters on the show were able to undermine the self-appointed, commonsensical superiority of the male discourse in sport, and in most other arenas of public life. All three female participants appropriated male authority spaces, whilst “reproducing a more feminised image” (Cook and Jennings, 1995, p. 10). Yet, at the same time, the passive feminised image did not always reflect the confrontational, satirical commentary concerning the male sporting practice. Debbie Spillane, the professional female sports journalist, produced the unapologetic description of Mike Tyson as “world championship rapist” by using the authority of sport commentator, usually reserved for men, to undercut the power of male sexual conquest within the sporting discourse. The male athlete is stripped of the discourse which controls sports commentary, and which usually protects him from analyses of any of his actions, sporting or non-sporting, by women. As Brook explains “...feminist performance artists and comic actors deliberately ‘speak the unspeakable’ and embody in their performance spaces, experiences and discourses that are kept out of sight, in the male domain, or heavily policed” (1999, p. 133). The clash between this cutting satire and the normal approval shown towards athletes from female or male sports commentators at other media outlets was revealing about how a more widespread feminist politics could be developed as a comic standpoint.<sup>285</sup> As Boutilier and San Giovanni argue, the female journalist, as an outsider to male sports, creates an opportunity for a new sensitivity or different orientation to male sports, as well as producing a position which is adversarial rather than celebratory in their coverage of male sports. This occurs when there is no investment of personal identity (awe or envy) in the coverage of sport by the female journalist (1994, pp. 205, 206).

Resistance is subtle, unconventional, and not obviously threatening in *Live and Sweaty*'s comedy. Keenan and Mossop, as the examples of expert male commentators in football and rugby, and employed as such in the mainstream media, appeared comfortable with their positions in this show as comic idiots who were continually revealed as foolish in their romantic sporting commentaries. Similarly, the male anchor of the sports news on the show, Mark Warren, seemed to be employed simply for the sexual delight of McFeast and Spillane. Warren constantly demonstrated inadequacy in his knowledge of sport, but

looked ‘tasty’ to McFeast and Spillane when presenting from the autocue. The contrast between Warren-as-object and the critical and knowledgeable female hosts, McFeast, Spillane and Karen Tighe (the female sporting news anchor) was evident. Also, the reversal of the usual position of the woman at the news desk as a pretty ornament<sup>286</sup> and the dominant male provider of knowledge was brought sharply into focus. As Cook and Jennings suggest, “While the focus is still frequently on male sport, there is a blatant destabilisation of the male expert and a consistent assertion of female expertise” (1995, p. 7).

Athletes were asked to discuss social issues, their private lives, their personal, psychic states and the potential homoeroticism of sport. The hosts often referred to the homoeroticism of the male changerooms, the scrum in rugby and the pack in football, and the overwhelming and suspicious maleness and misogyny of the football crowd. According to Morse, televised sport is “the only situation in which [the male body] is a legitimate object of the male gaze” and that televised sport “can license such a gaze and render it harmless” (1983 cited by Trujilo, 1995, p. 414). The transformation of the male body from a sexual object to be desired, into an athletic object to be admired, occurs both by the use of production techniques such as slow-motion replays, and through the influence of the dominant discourse of the male commentators. The ‘gaze’ is disavowed as a sexual one, which allows the heterosexual man to derive pleasure from watching other men, without becoming homosexually implicated. It also helps deny the homosexual discourse on behaviours engaged in by male athletes, such as hand-holding, hugging, and bottom patting, which would be considered strange in any other environment (Arens, 1976 cited by Trujilo, 1995, p. 418). This transformation then allows athletes, and commentators, to deny the objectification of the athlete by homosexual viewers. The hosts of *Live and Sweaty* challenged this ‘ignorance’ of the sexual gaze. They made apparent the obvious attraction of tight shorts, muscled bodies and graceful and powerful movements, to heterosexual women (‘safe’ viewers)<sup>287</sup> and homosexual men alike. In this, the traditional homosocial setting and misogynist and homophobic behaviour of male sporting practices was further destabilised. Females objectify the male athlete in a heterosexual frame, but the objectification also reveals the homosexuality of the player (Brook, 1997, pp. 1, 4).<sup>288</sup>

The set of *Live and Sweaty* continued the radical challenge to the dominant, mainstream discourse of male sport. It intertwined the Ancient Greek statues and Renaissance paintings that depict God-like heroes with modern portrayals of sporting icons. According to Cook and Jennings:

The graphics over which the sporting results are superimposed appear to be almost subliminal snatches of classical Greek art featuring muscle-bound male nudes in homo-erotic poses. This excess is not gratuitous but resonates with parodic reference to the valorisation of the male body which characterises mainstream sporting coverage. In particular, the homo-erotic graphics allude to the post-match bath rituals and old jokes about ‘rugger-buggers’ (1995, pp. 8, 9)

Further on, Cook and Jennings suggest, “*Live and Sweaty’s* playfulness with the trappings of high culture works to rupture the earnestness and lyricism of... mainstream coverage. By playing with the excesses of all gender codes,... [it] critiques the apotheosis of the hegemonic male” (1995, p. 9). The authors described one such playful excess:

In one program Elle’s studio guest was John Quayle, the manager of the New South Wales Rugby League... Elle suggests to him that the League’s highly successful use of Tina Turner’s *Simply the best!* performance should be replaced by an Australian artist. She persuades him that she herself would be a suitable candidate. Calling on ‘a few girlfriends’ to assist her, Elle and four transvestite male dancers, all wearing yellow fringed and sequined mini dresses and stilletos, together perform *We like footy*.... Their routine is intercut with close-up shots of a bemused John Quayle. (1995, p. 8)

Traditional understandings of the ‘heroic’ heterosexuality of the dominant and possessive male athlete and the sporting performance were decentred, and with this, the position and expertise of the male player/ expert was partly challenged. The male athlete was no longer unquestionably embodied as authoritative.

Outside of the studio, McFeast continued this form of ‘grassroots’ resistance. She entered male changerooms without a hint of discomfort (as distinct from the various American reporters discussed in Disch and Kane’s article on Lisa Olson).<sup>289</sup> She glamorised these changerooms as attractive places for women; a ‘smorgasbord’ to select from. This appreciation of football as a place where women may gaze on men established the woman as the commentator, and not merely the audience. It also placed the male

athletes in the uncomfortable position of being the object of appreciation for others, where an unsatisfactory performance resulted in the man being discarded and criticised. This constant interplay of sportspeak and sextalk (e.g. inadequate and impotent males are below par, striking out, bench players) made for provocative, displacing and challenging comedy in Elle's interviews. In Cook and Jennings terms, this sexual objectification of the male body for female consumption was additionally destabilising because of "... a very Australian corollary: the right to the ribald comment" (1995, p. 10).<sup>290</sup>

In all, McFeast gained dominance in the interview, from guests who were used to more submissive displays of worship from the media. This comic resistance to the dominance of the male discourse, and the displacement of women to the centre/production of the discourse, and men to the periphery, might both be effective means of gaining space for women and disenfranchised men to comment about their experiences of sport. It was intrusive and challenging, yet in the nicest and most comfortable way possible. It presented its challenges as entertaining and comic, at the same time as destabilising the power that male journalists, players and ex-players have within the male discourse of sport.

### **Women Gaining Authoritative Spaces in the Sports Media: Pragmatic and Standpoint Feminist Tools**

How are the stories of Olson and McFeast indicative of how a woman might gain the space to make her expert commentary about male sports, public? The destabilising comic work of *Live and Sweaty*, along with the legal challenge and sympathy-invoking story of Lisa Olson and the sociological reports by several authors on the position and number of female commentators in the media, are all parts of the wider feminist movement to challenge the dominance of the maleness of reason in sport, and in society by producing feminist standpoints on the sports media. None should be underestimated as useless, a valuation often ascribed to comedy, and nor should they be overestimated as successful, yet. The approach that women might take towards the objective male discourse in sport is a playful and creative experimentation outside of the space of this dominant discourse so that the female's experiences may possibly be heard and counted by a sympathetic community.<sup>291</sup> As Bruce suggests (1998, p. 4), the oppositional reading of sport produced

by culturally marginalised groups, such as women, will require both a deconstruction of the dominant voice, and a presentation of the marginalised voice.

What implications does a pragmatic feminist epistemology have for female sports commentators who are challenging the maleness of sporting reason? Sporting commentary is viewed as descriptions of phenomena that are commonly made by mostly male commentators. The 'truth' or 'reality' of these descriptions is revealed as a political/aesthetic judgement related to the relevance of these descriptions to the community of listeners, and not to any measure of the objective accuracy of the report. The relevance will be related to the desire of the community to either maintain the words and phrases which have been traditionally used to explain these phenomena, or to dismantle these traditional expressions because they are no longer doing the work that the community wanted, or because the community wants different work to be done by these descriptions. So, according to Roberts, the 'truth' or 'reality' of any descriptions relies heavily on the interests and habits of the listeners (1992, p. 17).

Feminist commentators, athletes and spectators must decide whether the common descriptions are working well for them. It would appear that this 'truth' about male sports is severely limiting their opportunities to both enter the professions of sport, to speak in the ways that they may desire, and to permit other females the opportunities to play male sports and commentate on male performances. So feminists should attempt to change or expand the sports discourse, and pragmatic philosophy along with feminist standpoint theories, open up the space to produce such a change.

It should be stressed that developing such new methods of speaking is neither easy to produce, because it isolates the producer from the community, nor easy to get an audience for, because such new methods of speaking are threatening to those who are comforted by old stories. To paraphrase Roberts (1998b, p. 8), members of a practice community who think they have 'it' on their side, by virtue of being a certain subgroup, and who have translated the importance of 'it' throughout the practice's history, will be highly resistant to any discourse which endeavours to reduce the importance of this distinguishing feature. And members of another group who have been oppressed by a certain discourse whilst constantly having that oppressive discourse reinforced as an

unquestionable truth, will need to be both courageous and imaginative in order to produce a different discourse. But as Boutilier and San Giovanni suggest “To the degree that women remain outsiders to SportsWorld, their capacity to assume and maintain an adversary position should result in a qualitative difference in the nature of their sports coverage” (1994, p. 205).

### **Conclusions**

Those who hope to disrupt the discourses which support the ‘it’ in sporting commentary, and produce alternate ways of understanding expertise in sport which are more inclusive for females, must face the threatening prospect of being labelled ‘eccentric’ or ‘irrational’ or ‘immoral’. Frye referred to this as the courage or imagination of eccentric thought (1983).<sup>292</sup> Such is the position of female commentators in sporting commentary: unwilling to participate in the old discourse, but unable to be taken seriously, yet, in the production of a new discourse. But non-seriousness may be one position from which new discourses can be initiated.

How can these ‘other’ descriptions become part of the existing discourse, thereby changing the existing discourse and forcing members of the community to be more inclusive in terms of who they listen to? Firstly, the much maligned political movement of equal opportunities feminism has been useful in expanding the number of people who are allowed to speak by displaying the internal contradictions in the discourse in terms of the inequality between the sexes in being able to speak. The danger with equal opportunities feminism is that women will be limited to using the same words and phrases as men have traditionally used, and such words and phrases have not been particularly useful for women. Yet, at the very least, equal opportunities feminism may provide some women with the comfort and financial security to be able to engage in some playful experimentation with the dominant discourse of sport. It would appear more likely that inventive usages of words and phrases will be uttered by people who do not feel threatened by poverty or hardship. Additionally, equal opportunities feminism may allow women to embody authority through their sporting performance, and so appropriate commentary positions through some of the ‘old-boy’ mechanisms to which male athletes have access.

Sentimentality will also be important in expanding the community's capacity to listen to the stories of the 'other'. The story of Lisa Olson may help people to recognise the pain and suffering that female reporters endure to complete the job that they see as important. Some people may empathise with the feelings of fear, humiliation and objectification that Olson may have felt when accused of 'peeping excessively' by members of the sporting community. Others may empathise with the anger that Olson experiences against the impositions of a male sporting world; that women, when included in patriarchal and phallogentric sport will likely experience anger at the recognition of their previous exclusions from it (Fairchild, 1994, p. 68). With such empathy may come an increased willingness to listen to the story that Olson tells about herself and her relationship to male sport; that is, the story of one woman's 'appreciation' of male sports.

Finally, comedy may be a comfortable means of expanding the discourse. Guignon and Hiley explain: "Whereas the literary mode for self-purification seems to be what Frye calls the 'tragic'... the literary mode for self-enlargement is the 'comic', the promise of inclusion in the *bon homie* of a tolerant community where every identity is mistaken and every attachment is temporary" (1990, p. 352). The 'revolutionary' comic turns the discourse of hegemonic humour back on the dominant community. As Philip White suggests, "comedy can lampoon behaviour we often take for granted as normal" (1997, p. 19). The feminist comic challenges the dominant groups to engage in her comic distortions of their dominant discourse, or be labelled as too serious, unable to take a joke. But when they engage, the subversive discourse is destroying the unquestioned authority of their discourse. Charles Shephardson contends:

...the true function of satire, as a form of art that is also a political act, must be... where the inverted image rebounds upon the so-called normal world, and shows that this world is itself already inverted.... We have an image that, precisely because of its unreal character, shows us that there is no reality, that reality itself is already an inverted image in which we are not at home (1995, p. 2)

Many of these new descriptions will not survive. Some may only survive within exclusive 'comedy' and/or 'feminist' clubs, and will not become part of the dominant 'sporting' discourse. Some may quickly be controlled by a re-assertion of the dominant discourse. As Rorty explains:

Those who speak the old language and have no wish to change, those who regard it as a hallmark of rationality or morality to speak just that language, will regard as altogether *irrational* the appeal of the new metaphors- the new language games which the radicals, the youth, or the avant-garde are playing. The popularity of the new ways of speaking will be viewed as a matter of “fashion” or “the need to rebel” or “decadence”.... (1989, p. 48)

But some, fortunate to be created at a tolerant and inclusive place and time, may be included into a challenging and emerging language so that the dominant language of the community is ‘forced’ to be reshaped and some of the beliefs that it previously held dear, it can no longer support. Then, these once eccentric mutterings of the exclusive club, can be redescribed as literally ‘true’, until some other ‘truth’ replaces them (1991b, p.13).

The space that has been occupied by male sportscasters, by virtue of their ability to understand the ‘reality’ of the game, is now undermined as a contingently produced and politically sustained space. The ‘reality’ of the game is merely the tired, old truths that continue to silence and disenfranchise female, as well as any other eccentric, commentaries. But the space may be changing because of a series of seemingly unrelated, but important stories, jokes and movements which reveal the tension in the current discourse, and make demands for new ways of speaking, because new questions need to be addressed.

How might female commentators make such a change attractive to the men in powerful positions in sport’s commentary? The idea that all truth and reality is made, rather than found, that virtually anything can represent anything else if strong enough descriptions are produced which catch the ear of the community, and that realism or truth is a matter of habit, opens up the space for freedom for sports commentators from the potentially oppressive descriptions of their predecessors (Roberts, 1992, p. 27). Male commentators may recognise this space as something that is as useful to them, as it is to women. As Roberts comments:

...there is much to be gained. The most basic of these is the clear recognition that we and our journalists are free... to make and remake sport action, as we see fit... With such a recognition comes the realization that the boring homogeneity of sport action reportings is not a function of their common correspondence to a predetermining reality, but a function of the oppression of

realism or dominant interest or both. Redescriptions will be encouraged...  
(1992, p. 28)

And, as explained in a more practical sense by Roberts, the “cowardice and enervation” displayed by sportswriters in the face of the oppressive ‘realistic’ descriptions which television coverage ‘forces’ on the commentators (1995, p. 97), may be replaced by the production of courageous and imaginative descriptions as championed by Rorty and Frye. It may be this alliance between female and male sportswriters, against the oppression of television coverage of sport, which can open up a space for female football commentators.

However this new standpoint is always threatened by more subtle mechanisms of incorporation by the dominant male sporting discourse. It would be wildly optimistic to suggest that men will easily give up the dominant strand of the patriarchal web/cage, in order to permit greater creativity and innovation in sports reporting. The costs to men, in terms of power and authority, seem to greatly outweigh the idealistic benefits. When Bob Wussler, the CBS Sports vice-president hired Phyllis George, a former Miss America, to be a football broadcaster, he justified the decision in a way which maintained the natural maleness of the sporting discourse. He said that George “conveyed to me when I met her that she liked sports but she didn’t know a hell of a lot about them. That quality appealed to me and I thought it would appeal to other men as well. Phyllis doesn’t get into areas where she doesn’t belong” (Gilman, 1976a, p. 37 cited by Boutilier and San Giovanni, 1994, p. 193). The inclusion of women into sportscasting may merely be the result of the male controllers of the sports media finding new ways to cope with the demands of liberal equality whilst maintaining male dominance. Some ways, such as Wussler’s are not so subtle. And such incorporation of the female media may be costly. As Boutilier and San Giovanni explain:

For many feminists, merely increasing the number of women who share the same sexist orientations and assumptions of their male colleagues is less than a shallow victory. It is a dangerous instance of institutional co-optation whereby women become unwitting accomplices to the dissemination of sexist ideology in sport (1994, p. 205)

But it may be, as Rorty (1993, p. 101) explains, pragmatically beneficial for feminists to recognise the opportunity to attack patriarchy and phallogentrism in a piecemeal fashion.

Whilst the dominant strand of the web may be impossible, for a time, to break down, there may be a number of supporting beams in the web that can be surreptitiously broken, whilst retaining the appearance of a secure web. Following from MacKinnon's position on the law (1987), it is crucial that women occupy places in the sports media. But it is also crucial that they recognise, and do not repeat nor participate in, the types of stereotypes, objectifications, trivialisations and sexualisations that male journalists have used to maintain male power, and undermine female participation, in the sporting and social world. In so doing, one of the supporting beams to patriarchy in society and sport may be broken.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **FOUCAULT AND SPORT- EMBODIED AUTHORITY**

Call it sheer vanity if you like, but why shouldn't every woman want a well-developed, firm bosom?...As far back as historians can take us, a beautifully moulded bosom has been the object of great esteem and admiration....

[A] well-formed bust seems to make up for deficiencies elsewhere to quite a degree. For example, many's the actress or movie queen who has risen to the top with little else to offer other than a well-proportioned upper-body (Lou Ravelle, *Bodybuilding for Everyone*, 1964).

I know no woman- virgin, mother, lesbian, married, celibate- whether she earns her keep as a housewife, a cocktail waitress, or a scanner of brain waves- for whom her body is not a fundamental problem: its clouded meanings, its fertility, its desire, its so-called frigidity, its bloody speech, its silences, its changes and mutilations, its rapes and ripenings. There is for the first time today a possibility of converting our physicality into both knowledge and power (Adrienne Rich, *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution*, 1976, p. 284).

#### **Introduction**

The previous three chapters of this dissertation have investigated the spaces that are made available in sport for authoritative female commentary (recalling that commentary may be of a symbolic embodied form), by applying some of the work done within mainstream feminism to this issue. At several points in this investigation, it has been suggested that the discourses that invest the body with authority are gendered, such that they deny females the types of opportunities that males enjoy to speak with authority about their participation in sporting activities. It is to this point about gendered embodiment that this chapter returns; that is, this chapter will investigate the utility of Foucauldian and poststructural feminist viewpoints about the body in providing space for the development and maintenance of resistant female athletic bodies and commentary. Or, put differently, this chapter takes up the challenge suggested by Cole (1993, p. 78 cited by Hall, 1993, p. 98) that poststructural sport studies must “rethink the category ‘sport,’ to see it not as a descriptive term for institutionalized and formally organized activities involving the body,

but as a *construction of discourses* (medical, scientific, technological, media, etc.) *whose central focus is the body*,” whilst at the same time endeavoring to take up Hall’s challenge to locate sites where the female athlete is not produced as completely docile by these discourses (1993, pp. 102, 103, Cole’s emphasis).

As suggested in Chapter Three, in order to understand, and possibly reform, the current differences in access to authority between differently gendered bodies, it is important to recognise the ways that this difference has been produced and maintained throughout history. Sport has played a role in the maintenance of hierarchical gender relations, and the notions of sport and the various feminist theories must be expanded to include this role. Women’s participation and performance in sport has always been negotiated within this set of hierarchical gender relations. To critique the gender relations that exist today, it may be useful to understand the evolution of these gender relations from the past and the force that this history still exerts today.<sup>293</sup> To put a Foucauldian spin on contemporary athletic female bodies, we can look at how they *emerge*, how an archaeology of such emergence reveals that it could have been *different*, and how that revelation can be used to disrupt the basis, and resist the effects, of the strategies, technologies and discourses that maintain male authority in sport in contemporary times.<sup>294</sup>

The revelations of the historical investigations done by feminist sport historians, impose on accepted or romanticised understandings of feminist resistance in/through sport that are developed from ‘official’ histories of women in sport.<sup>295</sup> Feminist historians have revealed the position of females in sport as one that changed according to interplay between resistance and accommodation of that resistance at specific moments in history. The undeniable historical continuity with the present is one of the male dominance of the sporting discourse and practice. The underlying current, revealed by feminist historians, was that female athletes did often reject the passive subjectivities/bodies that the dominant discourse provided for them.<sup>296</sup>

The female body in sport has often been presented as a body in trouble (Cole, 1993, p. 90)<sup>297</sup>, such that both dominance and resistance concerning female participation in sport involved transformations of the discourses surrounding the troublesome female body. The dominance of men in sport was initially maintained by exclusivity, supported by a set of

medical, biological, moral and religious discourses. These discourses asserted that there was no redeeming value to the individual or the society in women playing sport, because of the damage that such participation would do to the reproductive and nurturing female body, and hence, the species-body (Lenskyj, 1986, p. 18). The effects of these discourses were such that many women took up the subjective position of frailty, weakness, passivity and femininity at the level of their own bodywork.<sup>298</sup> But other individuals, borrowing heavily from the impetus of newly won freedoms outside of sport, created an embodied resistance point to the ideas contained within ‘moral physiology’ about the female body. These females demanded opportunities to engage in physical exercise, to embody strength, autonomy and power (Lenskyj, 1986, p. 29).<sup>299</sup>

Strangely, it was not just feminists who produced the spaces for the ‘New Woman.’ Conservative theorists also argued for this space, on the basis that the frail female was incapable of being a good mother (Verbrugge, 1997, p. 278; Lenskyj, 1986, pp. 29-34).<sup>300</sup> The opportunities offered to females were still tightly bound up with the discourses supporting the female body as inferior to the male body, and the female’s biological purpose in life being caring for others.<sup>301</sup> Discourses about the woman’s role, physiology and sexuality, produced by (mostly male) doctors, scientists, teachers and priests, maintained and patrolled the boundaries of gender, whilst providing sex-appropriate activities for the two genders. The fragility of the female body, a medical ‘truth’, was modified slightly to allow for light activity for females (Lenskyj, 1986, p. 30). But the motivation for providing such activity was not to produce the athletic female as an end in itself, but to produce females who were healthier for childcare. Extensions of sporting freedom to women occurred at the whim of, and for the good of, *mankind* (Cahn, 1993, pp. 3, 4).<sup>302</sup>

Regardless of the discourses produced by the dominant class, females grasped the opportunity to produce new bodies and subjectivities through sport.<sup>303</sup> The symbol of female freedom became her body, which in the early twentieth century became a public body.<sup>304</sup> Yet the expanding opportunities granted to females to produce new and different bodies was still underpinned by the official scientific and moral knowledge that men and women were different, that women could not compete with men, and that the female’s

moral responsibilities were still oriented toward others; men, children and future children (Verbrugge, 1997). Official knowledge supported the notion that women played respectable, gentle games, in a way that was qualitatively different from men's games. Any transformation in the discourses that produced the female athletic body was made within a space bounded by the superiority of the male athlete and the natural roles of the female as mother, wife and carer (Theberge, 1991b, p. 386).<sup>305</sup>

Contemporary feminist historians have revealed a subjugated history of female participation in sport. The female actively and aggressively participated in a variety of sports. The female sporting body became a resistant public body, where integrated competition in certain sports like croquet and golf, and participation in what were once exclusively male sports such as soccer and baseball, allowed women to disrupt the notion of dichotomous sexual characteristics at the level of their bodywork. Expert female athletes displayed the dissonance in official discourses about female athletes. As previously stated in Chapter Three, Cahn suggests, "skilled female athletes became symbols of the broader march of womanhood out of the Victorian domestic sphere into once prohibited male realms" (1993, p. 2).<sup>306</sup> In addition, Verbrugge notes how the ideology of separate but different in female physical education still produced an avenue for resistance to male dominance in the field. She states:

... the principle of sex differences was essential to separatism and self-governance.... Still, women's claim over female fitness was a bold one. For decades male physicians and scientists had defined female nature, using the theory of sex differences as an especially powerful ideology of subordination. Ironically, the concept of sex differences allowed female professionals, among them physical educators and physicians, to demarcate realms in which women's expertise seemed essential, In the locker room and gym, teachers argued, only a woman could properly supervise girls, advise them about hygiene and menstruation, and understand their special needs. Citing the peculiarities of womanhood, female physical educators reappropriated the female body, in symbolic and literal terms (1997, pp. 294, 295).

According to Vertinsky (1999, pp. 1-3), the subjugated history of female sporting participation can be read as decades of active resistance against the 'truth' of gender boundaries that limited the female's participation in sport.<sup>307</sup> This resistance was produced at a variety of sites, some of which could not be considered feminist in their intent. It

produced a variety of modifications to the positioning of females in sport. Sport and physical education were sites where the gendered body was constantly under conflictual construction (Verbrugge, 1997, p. 304). So whilst the prevailing episteme of male dominance remained/remains in place, some of the supporting ideas that buttressed that belief were undermined, with the effect that females experienced greater opportunities, if not freedom and authority, over the use of their athletic bodies.<sup>308</sup>

Further, it is important to recognise how many of the techniques and strategies of female subjectification reappear in contemporary times. Feminist analyses of the body in contemporary sport look at the ways that the dominance of men in sport is partly maintained through the ‘truth’ of the historically-produced notion of dichotomous and hierarchical sex categories, both in and through sport. Strategies employed in the maintenance of hierarchical gender categories are diverse, and Chapters Four and Five of this thesis investigated a couple of the more obvious.

Equal opportunities legislation has been suggested as a starting point for women to obtain authority in structures where it has been previously denied to them. In Chapter Four of this thesis, this idea was used to argue for the participation by women in male sports as this will provide “empirical evidence that many women can outperform many men... and also that they can possess physical attributes such as strength and speed in greater capacities than do many men” (Kane, 1995, p. 197 cited by Theberge, 1998, p. 2). In so doing, binary and hierarchical constructions of gender are undermined and replaced by a continuum of performances, and diversity is unlimited by any suggested biological or essential gender categorisation.<sup>309</sup>

However, it was also suggested in Chapter Four that the current use of equal opportunities legislation is limited by the very notion of dichotomous gendered bodies, which it has the potential to disrupt. The legislation normally contains a clause that suggests that integration is not necessary when differences in size, strength and speed between the sexes will have an effect on the results of competition. The clause, designed to protect women’s participation in sport, has been utilised by men, to protect against integrated sport (Lenskyj, 1986, p. 11). The legislation has been used to protect the exclusivity of male sports from ‘eccentric’ females who could reveal the overlap between

differently sexed bodies in these sporting characteristics. Hence, one category of resistant female bodies, those that are capable of playing what were once exclusively male sports against men, are reined in by liberal legislation that was intended to protect them.<sup>310</sup> The solution suggested in this thesis was to utilise equal opportunities legislation to break free from official constraints on the female athletic body produced by the notion of dichotomous sex categories. The legislation can be used to support resistant female bodies that partake in sports such as boxing, ice hockey, and various codes of football and self-defense.<sup>311</sup>

Chapter Five investigated the ways that these actively resistant female athletic bodies are contained by technologies employed by the mostly male sports media. These technologies include ignorance by the sporting media about excellent female performance, and denigration, trivialisation and sexualisation when the performance is reported on (Lenskyj, 1986, p. 11). The athletic female body is positioned as a female first, and a sporting body after.<sup>312</sup> And the female commentator is also silenced by this disruption between femaleness and sporting expertise.<sup>313</sup> The response offered in this thesis was to investigate ways that eccentric female commentary can be forced into the sports media, using equal opportunity, parody and sentimentality.<sup>314</sup>

This Chapter will investigate the possibilities offered in poststructural feminism, especially as influenced by Michel Foucault, to the production and support of resistant female bodies in sport. The earliest section will give an overview of the main points of Foucault's work, concentrating especially on his notions of power, the body and subjectivity. The next section will look at the way that feminist theories have criticised, utilised and expanded on Foucault's position, so as to produce spaces for 'other' 'female' bodies. The final section will view the drug debate in sport as a site of containment of strong female bodies, and a site with which the poststructural Foucauldian feminist must engage. The drugged body, like the genetically engineered body or the cyberspace body, offers potentials to female athletes that require active opposition if the underlying episteme of hierarchical and dichotomous gender categories are to be maintained. So the drugged female body will be investigated as a site of feminist resistance to this categorisation, and a site of patriarchal containment within this categorisation.

In the introductory chapter of their book on the relationship between feminism and the body, Shildrick and Price give the following description of the importance of Michel Foucault to that relationship. They state:

Perhaps the area of greatest take-up of postconventional modes of analysis is evident in the work of those feminists who have been inspired, directly or indirectly, by Foucauldian theory.... Where Foucault famously sees his task as one 'to expose a body totally imprinted by history and the process of history's destruction of the body' (1977b: 148) – which he indicates has operated most recently in the interests of capitalism – feminists have undertaken to extend that explication to take account of patriarchy (1999, p. 8).<sup>315</sup>

And, according to Sawicki (1991, p. 161), it is not surprising that Foucault has been utilised by feminists. For Foucault shares a number of subjects in his works with some feminists.<sup>316</sup> Both groups see sexuality and the body as sites of political struggles (Grosz, 1990b, p. 92; McLaren, 1997, p. 109; Bordo, 1993, p. 181; Ramanazoglu, 1993, p. 2; Theberge, 1991a, p. 126). Both see such political struggles as occurring within the private, as well as the public, sphere (Sawicki, 1991, p. 161). Both suggest that disciplinary and scientific knowledge have effectively silenced other forms of knowledge and experience, and feminist standpoint theories have been particularly vocal in explaining the ways that disciplinary knowledge is sexist, patriarchal, phallogocentric and oblivious to the stories and experiences of women (Grosz, 1990b, p. 91; McLaren, 1997, p. 109; Bailey, 1993, p. 103; Aladjem, 1991, p. 2). Both are skeptical of the value that knowledge produced in the human sciences has for the freedom of oppressed groups from domination (McNeil, 1993, p. 157). Both have criticised both liberal humanism and biological determinism as fictions that perpetuate the oppression of some groups in society (Sawicki, 1991, p. 161; Grosz, 1990b, p. 91; Theberge, 1991a, p. 126). And both see counter-histories that include examples of local subjugated speech that have been excluded from official histories as an intellectual orientation that offers subjects the potential for liberation from some of the power relations and effects that discipline them (Bordo, 1993, p. 180).

One of the criticisms/extensions of Foucault, made by some feminists (Soper, 1993, p. 29; Grosz, 1990b, pp. 92, 107-108; Ransom, 1993, pp. 140-144; McNeil, 1993, p. 151; Bartky, 1988, pp. 65ff.; Hall, 1993, p. 102; Thompson, 1994, pp. 183, 184), is that in discussing the disciplining of bodies, Foucault did not attend to the specific forms of

subjectification experienced by the female body.<sup>317</sup> Whilst it is apparent that Foucault was not primarily concerned with explaining the gendered body/subject<sup>318</sup>, his concern for the emergence of ‘the modern human subject’ still lent itself for others to provide the feminist critique of the strategies and technologies utilised in the patriarchal oppression of the female subject/body.

According to McHoul and Grace, this question of the emergence of the human subject provides a (somewhat) unifying theme for Foucault across his work. They argue:

His [Foucault’s]<sup>319</sup> investigations are conceptual, and the main concepts he approaches in his work- discourse, power and the subject (among others)- seem to us to be geared towards what he called an ‘ontology of the present’. That is, Foucault is asking a very basic philosophical question: who are we? Or perhaps: who are we *today*?

... The question of the ontology of the present (who are we today?) entails for him the question of the *emergence* of the modern human subject along a number of conceptual fronts. If, that is, we want to know who we are in terms of either the disciplines (or forms of knowledge) we have of ourselves, or the political forces which make us what we are, or our ‘internal’ relations to ourselves, we are necessarily faced (according to Foucault) with historical forms of enquiry. But at the same time Foucault is no historical determinist. Things, he insists throughout his work, could easily have been different (1993, p. viii).

Whilst there are clear differences in the focus of Foucault’s work, this general question of ‘how the modern subject is produced today’ remains throughout his work. The early period of Foucault’s work specifically investigated questions of discourse, knowledge and truth. However, at the same time these questions allowed Foucault to investigate the emergence and control of certain methods of objectification of the subject practiced by the disciplines of knowledge, especially knowledge in the human sciences of linguistics, economics and natural history (Foucault, 1982, p. 229; 1986a, p. 49; Andrews, 1993, p. 153). The middle period investigated the political effects of the localised and non-discursive aspects of power that allow/force the disciplined subject to produce itself as an object of knowledge and self-discipline, through what Foucault refers to as ‘dividing practices’ (1982, p. 229; 1986a, p. 49; Colwell, 1994, p. 56). The final period of Foucault’s writing looked at the relations that the human subject has with itself and the ways that the subject can accept or resist the objectifying norms that it faces (Foucault,

1982, p. 229; 1986a, p. 49). Whilst there are elements of discontinuity in Foucault's work, there is also continuity in the underlying object of his investigation (McHoul and Grace, 1993, pp. viii, ix). The subject is in evidence throughout Foucault's work, albeit investigated in different ways and with different methods. As Foucault states about his own work, "The goal... has been to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects" (1982, p. 229).

At the same time, political intervention in the constitution of the subject also is an important part of the Foucauldian analysis throughout every period of his writing. McHoul and Grace explain:

This supposedly new 'ethical' questioning of the subject (in terms of the relations one has with oneself) is just as political a question, however, as that of 'external' surveillance or the coercion of the confessional. Perhaps it is true that in ancient Greece and Rome... there was less disciplinary (scientific) or political-legal control over human conduct. But it *was* controlled- perhaps, for some, almost entirely by oneself. And this, too, is a political question (1993, p. xi).

The questions of 'who are we now?' and 'what types of political interventions will effectively allow for an expanded set of opportunities for who we can be today?', that is, the question of the emergence of, and resistance to, the modern subject remains theorised by Foucault utilising a variety of different concepts including discourse, knowledge/power, resistance, freedom and coercion throughout his writing. According to McHoul and Grace (1993, pp. 1-25), to understand the ways that Foucault approaches the question of the emergence of the human subject, it is important to first understand the traditions from which Foucault's own theories emerge.

### **The Emergence of Foucault:<sup>320</sup>**

Foucault sees any new knowledge as emerging from a space of disparity, riddled with power struggles, between current knowledges (1977, pp. 148, 149). Rather than speaking of origins (originators) or finalities in knowledge production, Foucault sees paradigms of knowledge as emerging from within relations of power and resistance in/between the disciplines of knowledge (1977, p. 140). As Foucault explains: "What is

found at the historical beginning of things is not the inviolable identity of their origin; it is the dissension of other things. It is disparity” (1977, p. 142). As with all new knowledge, Foucault’s knowledge emerged from disparities within the official knowledges about critical theory of his time.

But Foucault did not try to locate the production and publication of his works outside of these conflictual power relations. He did not place his program in an exterior position to that which he commented on. The genealogist is included in the grid of power relations that he/she investigates. There is no point external to power/knowledge from which the genealogist may identify ‘the truth’ (Sawicki, 1991, p. 162; Morrow, 1995, p. 19; Ransom, 1993, pp. 130, 131; Bailey, 1993, p. 103; Aladjem, 1991, p. 1).<sup>321</sup> Foucault’s explanation of his own task was that it was one of breaking down a unity of knowledge, or a ‘truth’, that was produced by the official understandings of history, the human subject, freedom and critical theory in his society. The emergence of Foucault’s ‘counter-history of ideas’ from the disparities that were revealed in these dominant understandings involved a rethinking of three concepts that were central in critical theory of his time; discourse, power and knowledge. His thinking emerged from what McHoul and Grace (1993, p. 3; also see Eribon, 1991, p. 160; Shumway, 1989, p. 158; Pizzorno, 1992, p. 210) refer to as a set of crises caused by the gradual splitting of a complex network of ideas which had been supported by Marxist critical thinking, liberal and existential humanism, structural linguistics and the traditional history of ideas. This counter-history of ideas was worked out as an alternate to, and a move beyond, crises that were occurring in the dominant methodological frameworks for critical thinking about knowledge in Foucault’s time.

The classical Marxist understanding of the relationship between economic base and ideological superstructure was increasingly seen as too mechanistic and deterministic to explain some of the events of late capitalism. The model seemed unable to cope with the kinds of racial, sexual and ecological (i.e. not economically based) struggles that were emerging in the post-industrial society. Also the development of knowledge-based industries made the distinction between economic base and ideological superstructure far less clear than it had been previously. In addition, the ruling bourgeois class appeared to be

surviving the changes that were occurring in the mode of production during late capitalism (McHoul and Grace, 1993, pp. 5, 6).

Foucault's new method of critical analysis took into account these questions of classical Marxism. It was sensitive to the local and particular struggles of different groups, as well as being aware of how these local and particular struggles reinforced or challenged non-economic forms of power. It was seen as no longer sufficient to posit class struggle as the single motor to critical change in society. The resistances performed by other subjugated groups in society supplemented the Marxist centrality of the working class to the activity of changing conditions in a society. Also it was important to include the ruling bourgeois class within a conflictual set of power relations and struggles over knowledge. In response to these crises in Marxist thought, Foucault produced a theory of critical struggle that recognised the importance of,

... constraint (or 'structure') and enablement (or 'agency'), locked into a broader conception of society than economic models had allowed. Such a theory would need to think of the 'wielders' of power as being just as inextricably caught in its webs as the supposedly powerless. It would have to see power in terms of *relations* built constantly into the flows and practices of everyday life, rather than as some *thing* imposed from the top down (McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 7).

The two dominant philosophical explanations of the 'history of ideas' of Foucault's time were the Hegelian tradition and the tradition of existential phenomenology as influenced by Husserl, and taken up by Sartre and Merleau-Ponty (McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 8). The basic tenet of the Hegelian tradition was the notion that continuity in both the human and natural sciences, and between stages in scientific thought, was produced by a foundational and abstract universal reason which existed beyond individually or socially produced forms of human knowledge. Continuity involved the progress of this universal reason toward a true human consciousness and knowledge (McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 8).

Phenomenologists suggested that any objective world is a product of interpretations of human consciousness, and any reading of the objective world is therefore highly subjective, local and specific. Hermeneutics suggested that the description of the objective world is therefore a matter of interpretations, and must allow for singularity and for

individuality as the source of change. Existential phenomenology suggested that historical change and transformation was the result of the freedom of actual individual consciousness, rather than an abstract reason, to create new conditions out of current ones. Human thought is uniquely capable of transcending that which is given (McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 8). But Foucault denied the suggestion made by hermeneutics that ‘reality’ is constructed through the interpretations of the self-conscious human. In contrast to the priority given to the observing subject in phenomenology,

Foucault thought of the human subject itself as an effect of, to some extent, subjection. ‘Subjection’ refers to particular, historically located, disciplinary processes and concepts which enable us to consider ourselves as individual subjects and which constrain us from thinking otherwise. These processes and concepts (or ‘techniques’) are what *allow* the subject to ‘tell the truth about itself’ (Foucault, 1990, p.38). Therefore they come before any views we might have about ‘what we are’. In a phrase: changes of public ideas precede changes in private individuals, not vice versa (McHoul and Grace, 1993, pp. 3, 4; also see Morrow, 1995, p. 18; McNeil, 1993, pp. 154, 155; Fraser, 1989, p. 56).<sup>322</sup>

The ideas of Hegel and the phenomenologists were both in crisis in the late 1960’s, because of a critique of the progressivism and continuism explicit in both. The analysis of scientific change in history made it appear more likely that it occurred in a “piecemeal, local and quite *ad hoc*” way (McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 9). In addition to this critique of continuism, the idea of progress was also being challenged. The epistemological shift from the idea that any theory aims to produce an accurate description of real ‘objects’, to the idea that ‘objects’ are produced through theorisation and are therefore unable to be used as an independent measure of the quality of theories, made progressive notions of theory development impossible to sustain. The notion of difference began to replace the notion of superiority and inferiority in terms of the history of ideas (Rorty, 1986, pp. 42, 43). Any judgement of progress was made from within a discourse, and was therefore a mode of expressing the dominance of a particular set of knowledges.

This also signaled the ‘crisis’ in structural linguistics, as discourse became recognised as a political and social entity, rather than simply an accurate mental representation of a pre-existing reality (McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 13). Discourse created objects, rather than simply represented them. Structuralism had posited an essential or real

structure to all human thought that underpinned historical events, myths or discourses, and which was discoverable by a reductive analysis of mythic texts. There was no room for distinctive or local interpretations of a myth in structuralist thought, as the underlying structure was universal (McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 2).

In contrast to structuralism, Foucault argued that the local and the particular always inserted their difference, and so he denied the suggestion of any essential or deeper structure of knowledge that transcended the local context (Bell, 1994, p. 11; McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 2).<sup>323</sup> In his works, Foucault avoided, rather than confronted, the debate between structural realism and phenomenological subjectivism/idealism, by seeking new ways of thinking about the relationship between knowledge, power and the subject. The way out of this crisis which retained the notion of power in discourse was to embrace the idea that differently constructed theories ‘compete’ for epistemic authority, and that fragmentation and contradiction is a normal state of thinking in general (McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 10; Fox, 1998, pp. 416, 417).

The Foucauldian methods of archaeology and genealogy are distinct from other histories of knowledge, because both search for the “...accidents, chance, passion, petty malice, surprises, feverish agitation, unsteady victories and power” (Davidson, 1986, p. 224) through which official knowledge about specific historical phenomenon (such as punishment, sexuality etc.) emerges at a particular time and in a particular discipline (Foucault, 1977, pp. 144, 145; Morrow, 1995, p. 16; Bell, 1994, p. 11; Andrews, 1993, p. 151). The accidental emergence of truth in archaeological or genealogical theory is not the historian’s search for depth: for the foundations, essences, or immobile ‘truths’ in knowledge. The origins of ‘truth’ in discourses are located in the unstable relationships of power between members of the discourses occupying both dominant and subjugated positions. Explaining the difference between Foucault's orientation and official knowledge, Sawicki states:

... continuist histories tend to... obscure the conflicts and struggles in history. By pointing to paths that were not taken, unactualized possibilities, and events that do not fit the functionalist schema of the total history, Foucault hoped to effect an “insurrection of subjugated knowledges.”

“Subjugated knowledges” refers not only to historical contents that are obscured within functionalist histories but also to those forms of experience

which fall below the level of scientificity... Through the retrieval of subjugated knowledge, one establishes a historical knowledge of retrieval and struggle. (1991, p. 168; also see Bailey, 1993, p. 103; Andrews, 1993, p. 151)

According to Davidson, genealogy disrupts these continuist histories because it "...disturbs what is considered immobile, fragments what is thought to be unified, and shows the heterogeneity of what is taken to be homogenous" (1986, p. 225). The purpose of genealogy is to problematise the present, by challenging the taken for granted 'truths' used by humans to construct their understandings of reality (Morrow, 1995, p. 16; McNeill, 1993, p. 149). Foucault explains:

... if the genealogist refuses to extend his faith in metaphysics, if he listens to history, he finds that there is "something altogether different" behind things: not a timeless and essential secret, but the secret that they have no essence or that their essence was fabricated in a piecemeal fashion from alien forms. Examining the history of reason, he learns that it was born in an altogether "reasonable" fashion- from chance; devotion to truth and the precision of scientific methods arose from the passion of scholars, their reciprocal hatred, their fanatical and unending discussions, and their spirit of competition- the personal conflicts that slowly forged the weapons of reason (1977, p. 142).<sup>324</sup>

Foucault's genealogies reveal and record "the singularity of events outside of any monotonous finality" imposed by a historical construction of the event (1977, pp. 139, 140). In so doing, genealogy seeks events in "qualities and properties which have formerly been considered ahistorical (e.g. feelings, sentiment, morality, ideals, the physiology of the body)" (Smart, 1983, p. 77 cited by Andrews, 1993, p. 150).

These ideas of discontinuity, fragmentation and particularity remain important throughout all stages of Foucault's theorising. Foucault's theory of knowledge denied the continuity and progress of bodies of knowledge. For Foucault, the shift away from continuity "...was a question of isolating the form of rationality presented as dominant, and endowed with the status of the one-and-only reason, in order to show that it is only *one* possible form among others" (1990, p. 27 cited by McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 9). As Rorty explains:

To see Foucault as a Nietzschean enemy of historicism rather than as one more historicist enemy of Cartesianism, we need to see him as trying to write history in a way which will destroy the notion of historical progress. His aim... is to 'introduce into the very roots of thought' the notions of 'chance, discontinuity

and materiality', and thereby to help us drop the notion that later and more inclusive thought is automatically closer to the real (1986, p. 46).<sup>325</sup>

So Foucault's exploitation of the crisis involved the conception of bodies of knowledge as potentially discontinuous and fragmented across history.<sup>326</sup> Foucault's theory of knowledge undertook the task of recognising the political and social forces which enabled those ways of thinking supported by any tradition of knowledge, that is "the relations between science, politics and ethics" (Foucault, 1986c, p. 386). This shift towards a political focus to discourse analysis was an important difference between Foucault's work and much of that which had preceded him (Grosz, 1990b, p. 80; McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 14; Fox, 1998, p. 415).

### **Discourse and Power**

The emergence of Foucault from the crises that the traditions of his time confronted resulted in a specific view of the relationship between 'truth' and power, which was conveyed by his idea of discourse. According to Morrow (1995, p. 16), "Discourses contain rules of inclusion, exclusion and classification which govern the content of knowledge... as well as rules about who can make knowledge claims, in relation to which domain and under what circumstances". So, a discourse would go beyond language to be whatever constrains or enables the ways that a specific population (or more likely, certain members of a specific population, i.e. the experts) is permitted to speak about an object (McHoul and Grace, 1993, pp. 36, 37). The purpose of Foucault's early work is to describe the discursive rules and practices that empower these specific knowledges; that is, allow them to claim the status of 'truth' for the statements contained within their boundaries (Grosz, 1990b, p. 81; Andrews, 1993, p. 152). Power is thought by Foucault to utilise certain strategies to permit 'truth' statements in discourse, and to disqualify and eliminate unreason from discourse (Grosz, 1990b, p. 89; Ransom, 1993, p. 123; Fraser, 1989, p. 20).

For Foucault, discourse involved a recognition of the relationship between bodies of knowledge and the relations of disciplinary power that are produced by/in knowledge. Discourse is enmeshed with the concept of discipline; with Foucault's work demonstrating the relationship between disciplines of knowledge and the effects of 'truth' which include

disciplinary practices of control and possibility, and which establish powerful and subjugated subjectivities (McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 26; Ransom, 1993, p. 123). As an example, Sawicki cites the Foucauldian case study of the hermaphrodite, Herculine Barbin. She argues that Foucault was not concerned with disproving the truth of the disciplinary knowledge which produced two sex categories, but was concerned with revealing the effects of this truth which “demanded that she be classified as either male or female and wrenched her from the ‘happy limbo’ of ambiguous sexual identity” (1991, p. 167; also see Grosz, 1992, p. 72).

Foucault argues that the rules that allow for the emergence of these truth statements can never be formulated by, nor are they available to, the members of discursive practices (1977, p. 151; Morrow, 1995, p. 16; Davidson, 1986, p. 222). In other words, these rules of discourse formation operate independently of the human subjects that are positioned by discourse (Fox, 1998, pp. 415- 418).<sup>327</sup> As Fox (1998, p. 418) explains, using a distinction between the surface level of statements and the deep level of discursive rules:

The system of rules which govern the production, operation and regulation of discursive statements (the surface level) mediates *power* or more precisely a ‘will to power’: not the will of one particular person or group but a generalized will to create the possibilities to be able to ‘speak the truth’ (Hacking, 1986, pp. 34-35). The will to power is productive, of ‘new ways of saying plausible things about other human beings and ourselves. Subjectivity (that is, the ability to know oneself) is itself achieved through discourse... clarifying why a prior, privileged or essential subject must be unacceptable within a Foucauldian framework (Nettleton, 1992, p. 132).

As these rules are relatively anonymous and autonomous, and as they allow people to make the claims about truth and falsity that they do in discourse, a history of the effects that these rules produce will not look like the traditional histories of knowledge (Davidson, 1986, p. 222). Foucault’s discursive analysis involved an investigation of the paths that were taken to allow knowledge claims to emerge in the way that they did at various discursive sites (Sawicki, 1991, pp. 166, 167; Fox, 1998, p. 417). Rather than suggest that ‘great thinkers’ produced change, Foucault’s archaeologies endeavoured to demonstrate the specific conditions that were in place to allow for something to be ‘known’ and for this knowledge to change, and for different subjectivities (including that of ‘the great thinker’)

to be produced by this knowledge (Bell, 1994, pp. 13, 14; McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 31). According to Foucault, emergence of new knowledge from old knowledge “proceeds from domination to domination.” Those who experience success/power in society are those who are capable of seizing the rules that allow for the production of knowledge, by replacing those that had previously used these rules, through insidiously perverting the meaning of these rules to produce effects that are contrary to the effects that had resulted in establishing the previous rulers (1977, p. 151; 1986b, p. 374).<sup>328</sup>

Foucault’s archaeologies of knowledge also discount both the supposed unities of particular disciplines of knowledge, and the supposed progressive and linear histories of particular discursive traditions, that prior accounts of knowledge had suggested (Grosz, 1990b, pp. 81, 82; Andrews, 1993, p. 151). Foucault displays the disparity and dispersion of discursive rules and practices, which are hidden during the quest for unity and identity in normal history. For Foucault, the counter-history produced in archaeologies will “...force regroupings of statements and practices into ‘a new and occasionally unexpected unity’ of discourses” (1977, p. 200 cited in Davidson, 1986, p. 222). According to Andrews, Foucault’s view of history as comprising elements of discontinuity and distinctiveness as well as unity and intersection, avoided the perils of traditional histories which attempt to legitimise the present as a totalising and progressive continuity of the past (1993, p. 151).

Of particular interest to Foucault are statements made within the human science disciplines (Foucault, 1984a, p. 6; Andrews, 1993, p. 154). These disciplines are considered too empirical, from a scientific standpoint, to have any sort of a regular archaeology of their discursive practices (Foucault, 1970, p. ix cited by Davidson, 1986, p. 222). According to McHoul and Grace (1993, p.58),

The systems of knowledge Foucault scrutinises imply immediate and solid connections to social relations: economics, medicine, and the ‘human sciences’. These are ‘sciences’, but unlike mathematics they can function as sciences only by relying on the ‘densest and most complex field of positivity’ (1978b, p.20). Thus the conditions required for the production of truth within these knowledges are much less stable and far more difficult to control. Yet... these are the knowledges most quick to pronounce truths about human nature, human potential, human endeavour, and the future of the human condition in general.

Foucault suggested that the kind of empirical thought exhibited in the various human science disciplines displayed a well-defined regularity, which overlaps and intersects across the various disciplines. The history of these knowledges exhibits systems of rules, and their transformations, which allow for certain kinds of statements about human subjectivities to be made possible (Davidson, 1986, p. 222; McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 32). So, the question posed by Foucault's analysis of these human sciences is: 'What economies of power exist that allow for the positivity of the knowledges produced in these disciplines, and allow for their relative stability across disciplines, given their apparent fragility?' According to Harvey and Sparks, it is the governmentality of life processes in the modern society that allows for this regularity. They state,

The disciplines form "bio-powers" (power over bodies) and require knowledge to be effective. The body of the individual must be named and studied to be susceptible to investment. The requirement for knowledge (for power) was at the root, according to Foucault, of the emergence of the social sciences and humanities (1991, p. 170).

Foucault's early work demonstrated the continuity in and between the various discourses, at certain historical periods (Harvey and Sparks, 1991, p. 166). As Eribon suggests about Foucault's first major work:

*Les Mots et les choses* [The Order of Things] maintains that every period is characterized by an underground configuration that delineates its culture, a grid of knowledge making possible every scientific discourse, every production of statements. Foucault designates this "historical a priori" as an episteme, deeply basic to defining and limiting what any period can – and cannot – think (1991, p. 158).

For example, the global redistribution of the episteme that resulted in the 'emergence of Man' in the nineteenth century as an object of investigation common to the sciences of biology, economics and philological linguistics, allowed for the emergence of the human sciences of psychology (concerning human life), sociology (concerning human labour) and literature studies (concerning human knowledge and language). The human sciences are understood as a relatively recent development in knowledge (Eribon, 1991, pp. 158, 159; McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 33). However, as part of the modern disciplinary episteme,

these pseudo-sciences are obliged to claim scientific status (Eribon, 1991, p. 158). Foucault explains that the scientific status of the human sciences is achieved by silencing the history of unreason. So Foucault's archaeological task is to investigate the silences, exclusions and containments that occur in these sciences. For example, he states:

The language of psychiatry, which is a monologue of reason *about* madness, could be established only on the basis of such a silence. I have not tried to write a history of that language, but rather the archaeology of that silence ([1961] 1973, pp. xii-xiii, cited in Grosz, 1990b, pp. 80, 81)

The 'death of Man' in the twentieth century with the advance of structuralism saw the development of a new set of human science knowledges including psychoanalysis, structural linguistics and ethnology, which were counter-scientific in the sense that they "ceaselessly 'unmake' that very man who is creating and recreating his positivity" (Foucault cited in Eribon, 1991, p. 158). Contemporary sciences and knowledges are thus demonstrated as historically specific, with the result that what we think we know with certainty today is revealed as something that could have emerged otherwise, given a different episteme (McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 33). One political purpose of this form of discourse analysis by Foucault is to provide a counter-reading to the presumed historical development and conceptual unity of the disciplines, which may offer possibilities for social critique and change in the present (Foucault, 1986b, pp. 375, 376; McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 27).

But Foucault also attempts to trace and describe the ways that the differences between the rules of knowledge formation are subsumed in an episteme. According to Foucault, archaeology "deprives us of our continuities" and more radically, "establishes that we are difference, that our reason is the difference of discourses, our history the history of difference, our selves the difference of masks" (1972, p. 131 cited by McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 41). For example, the case of the nineteenth-century multiple murderer, Pierre Riviere, documented the conflict that was occurring between two official discourses on punishment; an earlier retributive punishment inflicted on the body of the criminal, and a later shift to a reformation of the mind of the criminal through constant observation. So, what was to count as the 'truth' about punishment was being played out within a set of relations of force, involving disciplines of knowledge including

criminology, medicine, and psychiatry. Different forms of power contested with each other over their rights to make the subjectivity of the criminal. Hence, the archaeology of this case reveals the field of politics involved in specific claims of knowledge, truth, human subjectivity and the material effects of such decisions (McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 41; Fraser, 1989, p. 20).

According to Foucault:

“Truth” is to be understood as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, circulation and operation of statements.... “Truth” is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extend it. (1984, p. 74 cited by Davidson, 1986, p. 221)

Relations of power are produced coincidentally with fields of knowledge (Morrow, 1995, p. 17). Discursive analysis involves the connection of the forms of knowledge that are produced with institutions and relations of power (Hall, 1996, p. 53; Fraser, 1989, p. 20). The task of genealogy is to reveal the power struggles and break down the unity produced in the various disciplines of knowledge. Discourse allows humans to make sense of their fractured worlds, by imposing a coercive set of classifications on their world in flux. This secures order from disorder, identity from non-identity and homogeneity from heterogeneity (Morrow, 1995, p. 20). But for Foucault, any unity, created in these discursive practices through the effects of ‘truth’, does violence to all oppositional discourses, and hence creates relations of power. Science contains any opposition to the ‘truth’ of its objects of study. ‘Truth’ has an object that is always dispersed, and it is this dispersal of otherness, which Foucault tries to reveal. Foucault's purpose is to undermine these normalising disciplines by revealing the transitory and contested nature of their ‘truth claims’ (McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 21; Andrews, 1993, pp. 151, 153).

Foucault’s genealogical method not only attempts to analyse why certain statements are allowed to contain claims to ‘truth’, but also to demonstrate the effects that such statements have on the types of subjects that they bring into existence. It attempts to display the mutual relations between systems of truth and the modalities and relations of

power in subject formation. The model of power, which Foucault developed, enabled him to trace the power effects of the disciplines. He was able to reveal the normalising effects of knowledge, thereby liberating those ideas that were subjugated by the 'truth'. For example, the discourse on madness occurs at a variety of sites; the clinic, the hospital, the laboratory, the psychiatrist's office and the law courts. In each site the problem is defined in a certain way and the speaker is produced in a certain way. The genealogical method locates the relations of power that permit the emphasis of some knowledges about madness (i.e. the doctor's), and the subjugation of other rationalities (i.e. the patient's). The discursive unity produced by any such 'truth' has material effects that run beyond utterances to institutional practices, social structures and human bodies (Shumway, 1989, p. 157; Ransom, 1993, p. 123).<sup>329</sup>

The Foucauldian notion of power maintains that truth in all discourses emerges according to the social, political and cultural conditions in which this discourse emerges (Harvey and Sparks, 1991, p. 166). The detachment of these disciplinary power effects of this truth, from the regime of its production creates the unquestionable authority of the discourse that allows for these normalising effects. Only by investigating the conditions and rules of knowledge that allow for these 'truth claims' in specific discourses, can the effects of these discourses be resisted. The next part of this section of the chapter explains more fully the Foucauldian understanding of the relationship between modern forms of power, disciplinary and extradisciplinary knowledge, and the subject positions that are produced by this knowledge.

### **Modern Power**

Foucault's reconceptualisation of distinctively modern modalities of power is, according to Nancy Fraser, one of his most valuable accomplishments for critical theory, and the thing that distinguishes his work from the traditions of thought from which it emerged. His empirical investigations of the emergence of these specifically modern forms

of power rule out some political programs which have an inadequate conception of the techniques of modern power, such as classical Marxism, and early forms of radical feminism (1989, pp. 17, 18).

These empirical expositions allow for the recognition of power as a more diffuse, contextual structure, than that which is commonly described by the grand political theories, such as Marxism, feminism and liberalism (Grosz, 1990b, p. 82). These grand theories of society have misunderstood the modern relationship between truth and power. Marxism, liberalism and feminism all develop critiques of systems of knowledge and their effects, from outside the systems of knowledge they are investigating, by appealing to some universal or essential notion which will liberate the oppressed by transforming false ideology into true knowledge (Grosz, 1990b, p. 83; Sawicki, 1991, pp. 163, 166).<sup>330</sup> For example, some early strands of feminism suggest that the removal of patriarchal control will liberate female consciousness, and produce the feminist truth (Bradiotti, 1986, p.54).

The model of power contained within these grand narratives is one of sovereignty and repression. The sovereign, with control over the coercive mechanisms of society, exercises a 'legitimate' monopoly over truth and justice, through a right of seizure (Foucault, 1976, p. 136). This understanding of power as the capacity to punish those who resist the sovereign's control is, according to Foucault, an inadequate description of the ways that power operates in contemporary society (Bailey, 1993, p. 111). In this sovereign model, power operates in a haphazard, discontinuous and repressive fashion, with large regions of the social totality lying outside its reach (McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 64; Fraser, 1991, p. 18; Fox, 1998, p. 416; Bartky, 1988, p. 78). According to Sawicki, Foucault's criticism of the grand theories, was that they operated with a view of power that was centralised and possessed, either by individuals or social classes (1991, p. 164; also see Grosz, 1990b, p. 83). For Foucault, repression or domination is at best a terminal form of power, where power is no longer creative and productive, and where domination is complete (1976, pp. 92-94; 1988, pp. 3, 12; Grosz, 1990b, p. 83; McLaren, 1997, pp. 113, 114).<sup>331</sup>

In contrast to the model of sovereign power, Foucault suggests that in the modern period, power/knowledge emerged gradually in a local and piecemeal fashion from a

varying collection of ‘disciplinary’ sites such as the factory, the school and the prison, beginning in the late eighteenth century. A set of disparate experts perfected a variety of microtechniques of control that were far removed from the notion of the disciplining sovereign. Only subsequently did these disparate practices of organisation, surveillance, control and management of local populations (i.e. prisoners, schoolchildren) come together to form “global or macrostrategies of domination” (Foucault, 1980, pp. 158, 159 cited in Fraser, 1989, p. 22; Harvey and Sparks, 1991, p. 168). These local regimes were the first to face the problems that were definitive of the modern period’s concern for life management (Fraser, 1989, p. 22). But any analysis of power must take into account both the sovereign power of the state, and the pastoral relations of power exercised in a number of institutional and non-institutional sites. For Foucault, the sovereignty of the State relies on the existence of these other power relations that effect the governmentality of individuals and “invest the body, sexuality, the family, kinship, knowledge, technology and so forth” (Foucault cited in Smart, 1985, p. 123 cited by Harvey and Sparks, 1991, p. 168).

Within this model, power becomes exercised rather than possessed, decentralised rather than centralised and productive rather than repressive (Foucault, 1975, pp. 26, 27; 1976, p. 94; Grosz, 1990b, p. 83; Sawicki, 1991, p. 164; Ostrander, 1992, p. 172). The effects of this dispersed and anonymous power are presented as productive and desirable for the human.<sup>332</sup> Power is consensual, emanating from a variety of points that lie beyond human control (Harvey and Sparks, 1991, p. 166). Foucault states:

What gives power its hold, what makes it accepted, is quite simply the fact that it does not weigh like a force which says no, but that it runs through, it produces things, it induces pleasure, it forms knowledge, it produces discourse; it must be considered as a production network which runs through the entire social body... (1978, p. 36 cited by Grosz, 1990b, p. 85)

Foucault presents power as a positive force that normally creates the subject (and the body) in forms that are suitable or useful, forms that are usually taken up by the individual, and forms that reproduce the mechanisms and relations of power in the social body (Harvey and Sparks, 1991, p. 165).

During his genealogical phase Foucault shifted his political focus away from an analysis of relations of signification and towards an analysis of relations of power. Yet this

concept of power must necessarily be thought of in conjunction with the concepts of knowledge (the production of 'truth' statements) and the status of human subjects (the modern production of 'subjectivity'). Foucault's theory of power depicts a necessary link between power relations and the knowledges through which people are subjected (McHoul and Grace, 1993, pp. 57, 58). As he states:

...in any society, there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterise and constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse. There can be no possible exercise of power without a certain economy of discourses of truth which operates through and on the basis of this association. We are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth. (1980a, p. 93 cited by McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 59)

The existence of, and control wielded, by the disciplines of knowledge is exemplary of the relationships between truth and power. His political intervention in contemporary society is to demonstrate the power-riddled strategies and rules used by these disciplines to produce and reproduce both their knowledges, and the subjects that are produced by this knowledge.

### **Power and the Government of Life Processes**

The starting point for an analysis of power in modernity is to reflect on the conceptualisation of productivity in the modern society. Foucault suggests that a defining ingredient of the modern society is its concern with the government and administration of life (Foucault, 1976, pp. 137-139; Harvey and Sparks, 1991, p. 168). Modern methods of power, as exercised in peculiarly modern sites such as the prison, the clinic, the school, the factory etc., are concerned with the control, modification and augmentation of life processes (Bartky, 1988, p. 63; Andrews, 1993, p. 156). According to Foucault, the major difference between the modern period and previous eras is that,

Power would no longer be dealing with simple legal subjects over whom the ultimate domination was death, but with living beings, and the master it would be able to exercise over them would have to be applied at the level of life itself; it was the taking charge of life, more than the threat of death, that gave power its access to the body. (1976, pp. 142, 143)

Even political interventions in modern life were oriented by this question of 'life', in terms of both the provision of basic needs and the maximisation of life potentials (McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 62; Lacombe, 1996, p. 347; Deveaux, 1994, p. 4). As Foucault suggests about the nineteenth and twentieth centuries:

It was life more than the law that became the issue of political struggles, even if the latter were formulated through affirmations concerning rights. The 'right' to life, to one's body, to health, to happiness, to the satisfaction of needs, and beyond all the oppressions or 'alienations,' the 'right' to rediscover what one is and all that one can be, this 'right'... was the political response to all these new procedures of power which did not derive, either, from the traditional right of sovereignty. (1976, p. 145).

Liberalism, as a political call for the rights of the individual to freedom in the face of the public state, arose as a response to problems posed in biopolitics. Liberalism is understood as an "art of government", a set of practices and techniques used to administer and control the conduct of people (Foucault, 1976, p. 145; Lacombe, 1996, p. 347; McNeil, 1993, p. 155).<sup>333</sup> According to Foucault, the problem in using liberal rights language is that such a language "functions in contemporary society as a language of mystification, obscuring the actual processes of social domination and helping to produce the subjects of those processes" (Fraser, 1989, p. 57).<sup>334</sup>

The modern period produces unique mechanisms of power, such that the government of life processes extends beyond state control over the individual, and into non-institutional spaces. The state, whilst an important site in the strategies of power, is only one site among many in the production and ranking of bodies and subjectivities (Ostrander, 1988, p. 172). Modern society is characterised by the increasing utilisation of apparatuses of power which are invasive, continuously applied and "circulate through progressively finer channels, gaining access to individuals themselves, to their bodies, their gestures, and all their daily actions" (Foucault, 1980, p. 151 cited by Bartky, 1988, p. 79; Harvey and Sparks, 1991, p. 166). This diffusion of power precludes it from being easily located in a site that is attackable (Newton, 1990, p. 3; Deveaux, 1994, p. 2).

According to Turner, Foucault's later genealogical works turned away from institutional forms of discipline, to the non-institutional methods of subjectivisation. These

works were primarily concerned with “...the assumption that the growth in knowledge coincided with the expansion of power relations into the realm of controlling bodily practices and existence” (1982, p. 23 cited by Andrews, 1993, p. 155; also see Vertinsky, 1999, p. 5). Foucault studied the methods by which individuals became conscious of themselves as particular types of bodies and were able to constitute themselves as social subjects. In Foucault’s terms:

[T]he body is also directly involved in a political field; power relations have an immediate hold upon it; they invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs. This political investment of the body is bound up, in accordance with complex reciprocal relations, with its economic use; it is largely as a force of production that the body is invested with relations of power and domination; but, on the other hand, its constitution as labour power is possible only if it is caught up in a system of subjection (in which need is also a political instrument meticulously prepared, calculated and used); the body becomes a useful force only if it is both a productive body and a subjected body. (1975, pp. 25, 26)

The body is the only irreducible thing in Foucault’s work.<sup>335</sup> It is understood as the site of the effects of power/knowledge and the site for resistance to those effects. Forces of socialisation, discipline, punishment and freedom are inscribed on the body. As Foucault explains, “deployments of power are directly connected to the body- to bodies, functions, physiological processes, sensations, and pleasures” (1976, pp. 151, 152; also see Foucault, 1977, p. 153). But whilst the body may be irreducible, Foucault also saw the body as an “inscribed surface of events” which was in a state of “perpetual disintegration.” A genealogy of the body would “expose a body totally imprinted by history and the process of history’s destruction of the body” (1977, p. 148).

This shifted Foucault’s work away from institutions and strategies of domination and towards the constitution of the modern human subject through a ‘governmentality’ to maximise life (Foucault, 1976, pp. 139-145; Lacombe, 1996, p. 334). Dostie explains that “The result, for Foucault, is that the body in modernity becomes an “invested body.” By this he means that the body increasingly becomes subjected to social controls and interventions (powers) aimed at channeling and managing its forces, at “acting on its behaviour” (1988, p. 223 cited by Harvey and Sparks, 1991, p. 169). Foucault demonstrates that the modern technologies of punishment and control, including

observation, examination, measurement, classification and record keeping, produced a knowledge about individuals that helped to produce both the knowledge in the human sciences and individual human subjects. This knowledge permitted the exercise of power and control over individuals and their bodies, under the guise of maximising life (McNeil, 1993, p. 155). The surveillance, monitoring and control of individual bodies, and the species-body, was definitive of the modern period (Foucault, 1982, p. 234; 1976, p. 139; Fox, 1998, p. 416; Fraser, 1989, p. 22). For example, Lacombe suggests that: “Under Foucault’s influence, scholars have rewritten the history of penal reform as the history of dispersal of a new mode of domination called ‘disciplinary power’, a power exercised through techniques of objectification, classification and normalization, a power deployed through the whole social body” (1996, p. 332).

Power was productive of subjectivities, and of forms of embodiment.<sup>336</sup> As Sawicki suggests, “The materiality of the body is significant only insofar as it is invested in historically specific ways” (1991, p. 172). Foucault’s later work tries to explain the histories of these dominating political technologies of the body; those technologies “accepted” by the human in its subjectivisation (Grosz, 1990b, p. 86). In this regard, he rejects the suggestion that the progress of scientific disciplines increases human freedom, suggesting instead that advances in the measuring and statistical procedures of these disciplines intensify the means of social regulation (Sawicki, 1991, p. 162; Lacombe, 1996, p. 332). These technologies create the desire in the human subject to accept a position of usefulness and normalcy in the socioeconomic order (Andrews, 1993, p. 156). It is through these technologies that the human body agrees to self-discipline.

According to Balsamo, Foucault was not concerned with investigating or disputing the “truth” of the body, but was concerned with describing the apparatuses that produce the effects of these truth statements, contained in disciplinary and extra-disciplinary knowledge, at the level of the body.<sup>337</sup> Hence,

in his genealogical projects he annotates the intelligibility of the body in terms of the discursive, social, and political practices that construct it as an object/subject with meaning... These “apparatuses” organize the deployment of power; control is established through the cultural transformation of the meaning of body practices and bodily markers of identity. In short, these apparatuses identify a “conjunction,” or what I understand as an “articulation

of discursive practices” that produce body knowledges (Balsamo, 1996, p. 20; also see Harvey and Sparks, 1991, p. 170).

Foucault’s genealogies of punishment and sexuality describe the means of production of discourse through which power is exercised at the level of the body. For example, the hysterical female body is produced, not only through the effects of new discursive practices in medicine and science, including the importance of confession in psychoanalysis, but also the institutionalisation of social relations in the family and the clinic, and the development and reproduction of new knowledge claims in medicine and science through the education and socialisation of new professionals in these institutions. According to Balsamo, “Foucault suggests the term “apparatus” and later “technology” to name the process of connection between discursive practices, institution relations, and material effects that, working together, produce a meaning or a “truth effect” for the human body” (1996, pp. 20, 21). “Technologies” in this sense function to articulate power relations, systems of communication, and productive practices. Discursive practices work with other social forces to make bodies (Foucault, 1977, p. 153; Balsamo, 1996, p. 21).

The historical specificity of the modern notion of power sets Foucault apart from most other contemporary theorists. As McHoul and Grace suggest, “There are no *necessary* or universal forms for the exercise of power to take place: our society bears witness to the production of quite specific practices which characterise the ways in which power relations function within it” (1993, p. 65). Foucault’s positive notion of power in modernity deals with the issue of how time and labour can be ‘extracted’ from bodies who are not normally threatened, coerced, in positions of exploitation, and who are legislatively guaranteed freedom from these direct forms of control. How does this specifically modern form of power achieve this trick?

For Foucault, this trick is achieved because modern forms of power are also productive, rather than being considered as only repressive. The circulation and exercise of modern forms of power produces ideas, concepts, disciplines of knowledge, promotes subjectivities, institutions and societies (McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 64; Pizzorno, 1992, p. 205; Fox, 1998, p. 417; McLaren, 1997, p. 113). According to Foucault: “We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms.... In fact, power

produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth” (1975, p. 194).

The rupture that occurs from a sovereign view of power to the modern understanding of power as productive of objects, properties, subjectivities and knowledge makes the ‘norm’ more important than the ‘law’ (Foucault, 1976, p. 144; 1977, p. 155; Grosz, 1990b, p. 84; Ewald, 1992, p. 170; Fraser, 1989, p. 44; Harvey and Sparks, 1991, p. 170). Foucault argues that the human sciences have created regimes of normalising and disciplining power in all sorts of areas; in schools, workplaces, medical centres and hospitals, the family and the community, and the courtroom, to name a few. These institutions, which on the surface appear to facilitate life and freedom, possess a disciplining function (Lacombe, 1996, p. 333; Andrews, 1993, p. 156; Harvey and Sparks, 1991, p. 170). Governmentality, at each of these sites, exists to train and facilitate one’s ‘normal’ desires, to control the individual.

This emergence of a specifically modern domain of power also produced a highly specific set of techniques, apparatuses and instruments for the practice of power.

According to Foucault:

This new mechanism of power is more dependent upon bodies and what they do than upon the earth and its products. It is a mechanism of power which permits time and labour, rather than wealth and commodities, to be extracted from bodies. It is a type of power which is constantly exercised by means of surveillance rather than in a discontinuous manner by means of a system of levies or obligations distributed over time. It presupposes a tightly knit grid of material coercions rather than the physical existence of a sovereign (1980a, p. 104 cited in McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 63).

Foucault’s central thesis in *Discipline and Punish* is that there was an apparent shift in regimes of punishment from retribution on the body of the criminal to reformation of the criminal’s mind during the modern period (1975, pp. 7, 8, 10). According to Foucault, this shift can only occur with the emergence of a particular *mode of society*. He states:

Our society is not one of spectacle, but of surveillance; under the surface of images, one invests bodies in depth; behind the great abstraction of exchange, there continues the meticulous, concrete training of useful forces; the circuits of communication are the supports of an accumulation and a centralization of knowledge; the play of signs defines the anchorages of power; it is not that the beautiful totality of the individual is amputated, repressed, altered by our social

order, it is rather that the individual is carefully fabricated within it, according to a whole technique of forces and bodies. (1975, p. 217; also see Ewald, 1992, p. 172)

This shift produced new ways of treating the criminal, and these instruments and techniques of surveillance became available for use in any institution of modern society. The next part of this section of the chapter will explain some of the specifically modern mechanisms of power that Foucault discusses.

### **Micropower and Technologies of Normalisation**

Colwell (1994, p. 56) suggests that the subject remained a very real entity throughout Foucault's writing. The subject has not gone the way of history, the author, man and God. But the questions posed by Foucault about the subject reveal that it is a problematic entity. Foucault's questions include; "where does the subject come from, what produces it, what effects does this mode of production have on it, what sort of a subject is it?" (Colwell, 1994, p. 56; also see Foucault, 1986a, p. 49). The later genealogies of Foucault about punishment and sexuality reveal that the subject is an effect of a microphysics of power-knowledge. The body is forced by a network of relations to take itself as an object of self-discipline and self-knowledge, to 'train' itself as a normal subject (Foucault, 1975, p. 170). The investigation of the historical emergence of these modern forms of subjectification allows Foucault to make power intelligible in terms of the techniques of its exercise. The modern form of power has quite specific techniques for its operation (McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 65). The two strategies specifically investigated by Foucault are panopticism and confession, although both are indicative of other microtechniques of control<sup>338</sup> (Colwell, 1994, p. 56).

The panopticon is an architectural model of a prison with a central guard tower and cells radiating outward from the center. The entire space of the cell is visible from the central tower, so that the guard can see all prisoners. But the guard tower is baffled, so that the prisoners cannot see the guard. The resultant effect is that there is no necessity for the guard to actually be present in the guard tower. The mere knowledge that the guard could be present produces within the prison population self-regulation and self-surveillance. This

allowed for the potential of continual surveillance of prisoners, in an economically efficient way (Foucault, 1975, pp. 200-202). The assumption that one is being watched is enough to normalise the behaviour of the subject (Deveaux, 1994, p. 2). As Colwell states:

... while the observer is invisible power remains visible. It is visible in the architecture which focuses that visibility/power on the individual, produces h/er as individual, produces h/er as subject, in that focusing... It is the effect of the Panopticon to internalize the function of observation, to cause the gaze of the subjected to turn inward, to produce an individual that constantly watches h/erself, that internalizes the strategies of discipline and conforms to a norm. It installs the panoptic gaze in the consciousness of its subjects (1994, p. 57).

For Donnelly (1992, pp. 200, 201), *Discipline and Punish* provides a shift away from the specific disciplinary techniques produced by the birth of the modern prison, towards an account of the modern concern with the discipline and control of individuals. This allowed Foucault to suggest that the modern society was a “carceral society”, that the birth of the prison was a threshold point for the development of the modern era of surveillance throughout society (1975, pp. 205, 206).<sup>339</sup> The panoptic schema spread through the social body, such that the possibility of the gaze was not centralised, but was dispersed amongst a multiplicity of points. The power structure in the modern society subjects the person to a one-way gaze without a center. Everyone, including the person themselves, becomes implicated in the gaze, and has the potential to act as their own guard and disciplinarian (Duncan, 1994, p. 50). Hence, in the social body there is no [one] architecture of discipline (Colwell, 1994, p. 57).<sup>340</sup> For Foucault, the model of the panopticon is paradigmatic of the functioning of power/knowledge in the constitution of the subject. The prisoner, the madman, the student, the worker, all require continual monitoring of their body’s practices, in order to produce a docile body (Foucault, 1975, p. 205; Bartky, 1988, p. 63). According to Ostrander (1988, p. 171), “all [are] entangled in a network of diffuse and anonymous micropowers” involving the potential for techniques of observation by “eyes that must see without being seen” (Foucault, 1975, p. 171; also see

Lacombe, 1996, pp. 333, 335; Ostrander, 1988, p. 171; Fraser, 1989, pp. 23, 24). As

Foucault explains:

There is no need for arms, physical violence, material constraints. Just a gaze. An inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorising to the point that he is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against, himself. A superb formula: power exercised continuously and for what turns out to be a minimal cost (1980, p. 155 cited in Deveaux, 1994, p. 2; also see MacCannell and MacCannell, 1993, p. 211)

Panopticism is exemplary of the most economic techniques available for the continual surveillance of the modern subject (Foucault, 1975, p. 201; Deveaux, 1994, p. 2). It is exemplary because it relies on the internal training of the subject in self-surveillance to incite states of docility. It neither requires overt forms of violence, nor continuous surveillance by an other (Bordo, 1993, p. 191; Fraser, 1989, p. 23). The subject is induced to assume the prospect of continuous surveillance, such that surveillance becomes constant in its effect, without needing to be constant in its application (Foucault, 1975, p. 201).

According to Foucault:

this architectural apparatus should be a machine for creating and sustaining a power relation independent of the person who exercises it; in short, that the inmates themselves should be caught up in a power situation of which they themselves are the bearers. (1975, p. 201)

The panopticon is able to produce the observation and correction of the inmate's behaviour, in line with the goal of modern forms of punishment in terms of the governmentality of life processes, without the need for an actual onlooker.

The shift to this specifically modern form of criminal punishment represents an application of the normalisation of human subjects, which is necessary to the government of life-processes. The administration of life processes requires an understanding of the division between the normal and abnormal by social organisations. So disciplines of knowledge about categories of normality are developed, such that the inducement of certain bodily effects is produced in the social body. For Foucault the birth of the human disciplines produced an art of producing the 'useful' and 'obedient' human body. He

states: “What was being formed was a policy of coercions that act on the body, a calculated manipulation of its elements, its gestures, its behaviour. The human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it” (1975, p. 138).

The use of the term ‘discipline’ to indicate the ways that the human subject is produced and controlled in the modern period, ties the notion of forms of knowledge to techniques of power. The disciplinary control over subjects occurs as knowledge is gained according to the norms of behaviour. But the techniques of knowledge production in this disciplinary relationship all involve an unequal intercourse between two parties. The subject of surveillance is not able to observe the observer. The specialist makes normalising judgements about the deviant/normal. The judge is in a position of control over the judged, and this relationship is non-reciprocal. Only the judge is considered the possessor of knowledge (McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 71; Colwell, 1994, p. 63).

—A significant feature of Foucault’s notion of the relationship between disciplinary knowledge and subjection is that one of the effects of this knowledge was the production, and not the suppression, of individuality (Bartky, 1988, p. 65). The differences between people were highlighted by the techniques that were meant to seek these differences. Knowledge about people created different subjectivities (Ostrander, 1988, p. 173; Ewald, 1992, p. 172). As Foucault suggests, this individuation occurs more frequently as its techniques are imposed:

In a system of discipline, the child is more individualized than the adult, the patient more than the healthy man, the madman and the delinquent more than the normal and the non-delinquent. In each case, it is towards the first of these pairs that all the individualizing mechanisms are turned in our civilization (1975, p. 193).

The effect, rather than the intention, of disciplinary knowledge is to produce greater diversity between people collected as populations. As Foucault states:

The individual is not to be conceived as a sort of elementary nucleus, a primitive atom, a multiple and inert material on which power comes to fasten or against which it happens to strike, and in so doing subdues or crushes individuals. In fact, it is already one of the prime effects of power that certain bodies, certain gestures, certain discourses, certain desires, come to be identified and constituted as individuals. The individual, that is, is not the *vis-*

*à-vis* of power; it is, I believe, one of its prime effects. (1980a, p. 98 cited by McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 73).

Both individuality, and calls for the protection of individuality as in traditional liberalism, are the effects of, rather than the opposition to, disciplinary knowledge. The individual is produced by disciplinary knowledge, rather than preceding that knowledge (Foucault, 1982, p. 233; Ostrander, 1988, p. 173; Pizzorno, 1992, p. 205).

In his first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault deals with the role of power in the production of sexualities. The purpose of this volume is to use sexuality to deny a repressive model of power in modern society. Rather than the commonly made claim that sexuality is repressed in modernity, Foucault suggests that the modern concern with life processes has produced an explosion of discourse about sexuality, and a set of very specific understandings of the body (1976, pp. 7-13, 17-24; also see Bailey, 1993, p. 111; Lacombe, 1996, p. 339). The modern bourgeois concern with the maximisation of life processes produced disciplines of knowledge about sexuality.<sup>341</sup> Sexuality linked the two centres of life which disciplinary biopower took control of; the individualised biological organism, and the species body (Ramanazoglu, 1993, p. 22).<sup>342</sup>

In terms of the individualised biological organism, the modern period saw a proliferation of knowledge about sexuality (Foucault, 1976, pp. 12, 13, 18).<sup>343</sup> This power did not repress sexuality, but produced the expression of a “multiplication of singular sexualities” (Foucault, 1976, p. 47), which began with the codification of abnormal sexualities (Foucault, 1976, p. 44). According to Foucault, ‘sexuality’ was an historical object invented out of eighteenth century ‘desire’, which ordered subjectivities and disciplined and controlled populations (Foucault, 1984a, pp. 4, 5). It functioned as “an instrument of domination in the regime of bio-power”, grouping together a set of discrete elements into a unified system for judgement and control (Fraser, 1989, p. 59). The science of sexuality orders the confessed sexualities of individuals into a set of categories that reveal “the truth of our inner being” (Foucault, 1976, p. 53ff.). This proliferation of discourse about sexuality produces both greater disciplinary controls over individuals and greater impetus for resistances.

Not only did discourse proliferate, but the sites of discourse and confession also proliferated (Foucault, 1982, pp. 233, 234; 1976, pp. 19, 59). Foucault locates this as partly due to the increasing frequency, range and territory of the Catholic confession, so that desires, as well as acts, became aspects of confession (1976, pp. 19-21, 59-62; also see Colwell, 1994, pp. 57, 58). The gaze was turned inward, and meticulous self-examination and self-monitoring had as an effect the production of the subject as a desiring subject (Foucault, 1976, pp. 20, 44; 1984a, pp. 5, 6; also see Colwell, 1994, pp. 57, 58, Shumway, 1989, p. 143; Fox, 1998, p. 425; Lacombe, 1996, p. 340). But also, as with panoptic mechanisms, this productive form of power “demanded constant, attentive, and curious presences for its exercise; it presupposed proximities; it proceeded through examination and insistent observation” (Foucault, 1976, p. 44).

In addition, Foucault has argued that the domain of the confessional extends beyond religion, and into the secular world (Colwell, 1994, p. 58). According to McHoul and Grace (1993, pp. 79, 80) the confessional acts as a ‘versatile’ technology, able to infiltrate non-institutional spaces to produce knowledge. Confession colonised other areas of control over the subject, in particular medical science, pedagogy and law (Foucault, 1976, pp. 44, 45, 59; 1984a, pp. 3, 4). The confession is part of the practices of justice, medicine, education, psychiatry, and counseling, with the confessor revealing his/her sins, crimes, thoughts and desires. As Foucault suggests, “One confesses in public and in private, to one’s parents, one’s educators, one’s doctor, to those one loves; one admits to oneself, in pleasure and in pain, things it would be impossible to tell to anyone else... Western man has become a confessing animal” (1976, p. 59).

Whatever way the confession takes place, it produces/reveals a power relationship such that the authority receives, judges and intervenes because of the confession (Foucault, 1976, p.61). The confession does not reveal the truth about the subject wholly formed. Analysis of the confession by the expert who assimilates and records the confession completes the truth about the subject (Duncan, 1994, p. 57; McLaren, 1997, p. 117). But the analysis also produces the authority (and the sites of authoritative speech) (Foucault, 1976, p. 62). Authorities capable of judgement such as the priest, the doctor, the teacher and the psychiatrist, and confessing individuals who are judged according to their self-

expression, are both produced by the confession (Foucault, 1976, p. 64; Colwell, 1994, p. 63; Shumway, 1989, p. 146). Discourse about sexuality proliferates, but so does codification and policing of sexuality (Foucault, 1976, pp. 35, 48). The authorities that produce the knowledge about human sexuality, assemble and classify people's confessions about their pleasures and sins, and so construct normal and deviant sexual subjectivities. As knowledge about sex multiplied, so too did the type of individualised sexual subjectivities that were produced.

Far from sex being repressed in the modern era, the modern concern with the species-body meant that the administration of sex exploded (Foucault, 1976, p. 24; Shumway, 1989, pp. 142, 144). The pedagogisation of children's sex and the medicalisation of women's sexuality were both discourses that were produced by the concern with the species body, and these discourses produced new categories of individual sexual subject, in need of normalisation (McHoul and Grace, 1993, pp. 81, 82; Shumway, 1989, p. 142). The married couple was the norm of sexuality, with the child, the mad, the masturbator and the homosexual all set apart from the norm (Foucault, 1976, p. 3; Shumway, 1989, p. 144).<sup>344</sup>

The focus on the population as a species produced a further set of disciplinary techniques and supervisory regulations. As Foucault explains:

One of the great innovations in the techniques of power in the eighteenth century was the emergence of "population" as an economic and political problem; population as wealth, population as manpower or labor capacity, population balanced between its own growth and the resources it commanded. Governments perceived that they were not dealing simply with subjects, or even with a "people," but with a "population," with its specific phenomena and its peculiar variables: birth and death rates, life expectancy, fertility, state of health, frequency of illness, patterns of diet and habitation (1976, p. 25).

The confessional also becomes an important site in the relationship between sexuality and population, where the individual is linked to the species body (Foucault, 1976, p. 25; McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 77).<sup>345</sup> The confessional produces similar effects to panopticism. The confessing subject of the modern period offers experience and discourse about, for example, sex. The subject is incited to generate discourses about sexuality, discourses which are collected, analysed, confirmed or denied as truth statements, and used

in an analysis of population (Foucault, 1976, pp. 25, 26; Shumway, 1989, pp. 141ff.; Bailey, 1993, p. 112).

Both techniques, panopticism and confession, produce effects that encourage the individual to consent to the constitution of themselves as an object of self-control. The subject recognises and judges their desires as normal or abnormal, so as to escape punishment for acting on aberrant desires, so as to become a normal subject with self-control (Colwell, 1994, p. 58). As Pizzorno explains, following Foucault's notion of productive power:

We know that human beings can willingly submit to power, even to absolute or totalitarian power. They can even be made to love the hand that subjugates them. We know that ever-new techniques are devised and applied which lead unwary individuals to modify their preferences and their values so that these may accommodate the needs of the State, of some organisation, of some social institution, or of other sources of social and political power.... We know that the administrators of liberal-democratic regimes multiply the instructions and prescriptions that render their citizens more reliable, controllable, predictable. This does not mean that... they have become more equal, but simply that they are prepared to find it convenient to trade private idiosyncrasy for public normality. (1992, pp. 208, 209)

However, this is not the end of the story of power as far as Foucault is concerned. The final writings of Foucault investigated the ways that the subject can resist the institutional and non-institutional sites of power that make the individual. The next section of this chapter will explain the Foucauldian notions of resistance and self-governance that may be useful to those subjectivities, such as women, who wish to transform the knowledges that subjectify them.

### **Power, Resistance and Ethics: The Subject and Working on the Self**

The early Foucault refused to give priority to the individual creative subject of Enlightenment thought. Foucault's histories were written as a critique of paradigms of the history of ideas that suggested the notion of the genius that transforms a discipline of knowledge. Rather than take for granted the idea of an essentially autonomous subject, Foucault looked to the production of historically and contextually specific subjectivities (McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 91; McLaren, 1997, p. 112).

But Foucault never denied outright ‘the subject,’ simply “some formulations which were inadequate” (1988, p. 10). What he did deny was a progressive “history in the service of understanding the modern soul” (McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 92; also see McLaren, 1997, p. 112).<sup>346</sup> As McLaren states:

Foucault... refuses a particular formation of it [the subject]<sup>347</sup>, the formation that was constituted through the practices of Christianity and has continued on through its influence on and embeddedness in European morality.... On Foucault’s view, refusing what we are would enable us to liberate ourselves from the type of individuality (subjectivity) that has imposed itself on us through disciplines and practices for the last several centuries. The refusal to be what we are, to be a subject and hence subjected, opens up new possibilities for being (1997, pp. 112, 113).

In some of his archaeological and genealogical writings, the knowledge that the subject had of him/herself was often utilised by Foucault as a counter-discourse to the official discourses of subjectification in his histories. The ‘confessions’ of Riviere and Barbin act as subjugated counter-discourses to the description of their crimes and transgressions in official knowledge (McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 92). What Foucault rejects is an *a priori* subject that precedes, and is a condition of, human experience (1988, p. 12). For Foucault, it is experience that produces subjects (McLaren, 1997, pp. 110, 112).

This concern with the production of the normal subject through discursive proliferation also indicates the shift in the later Foucault to the relationship between knowledge-power and subjectivities. Subjectification is directly linked to the regimes of power-knowledge. The development of knowledge was not thought of as an abstract phenomenon, but had material effects, both on the individual, and on the social stratification of society. Knowledge affects the way that people live. But equally, Foucault’s relationship of knowledge and power also changes the idea of resistant political interventions. The resistant subjectivity is not outside some pre-existing site of power. Resistance is in a position of interiority to power relations (Foucault, 1976, p. 95; Fox, 1998, p. 417). As McHoul and Grace suggest (1993, p. 84) “states of power are continually engendered or incited on account of the political counter-powers which coexist with them.” Resistance is produced at the multiplying sites of disciplinary power, as a set of techniques and tactics with which to oppose the official knowledge. Both power and resistance engage

in this war of tactics, to negotiate positions within the multiplicity of force relations in the social body. As McHoul and Grace (1993, p. 84) argue: “Power’s conditions of possibility actually consist of this moving substrate of force relations: the struggles, confrontations, contradictions, inequalities, transformations and integrations of these force relations. Thus we are ‘positioned’ within any struggle only as a consequence of the existence of a struggle for power.” This understanding allowed Foucault to produce a different ‘method’ in studying power. He chose to analyse the effects of power relations by investigating the resistant; the antagonist to those effects (1982, p. 232; 1986a, p. 41).

Foucault’s antifoundational and antihumanist understanding of resistant political intervention is one that sees resistance as a set of strategic manoeuvres, tactics and techniques that produce discursive cultivation as the important sites of resistance. Power relations go all the way down. There is nothing hidden beneath that will produce interventional change (McHoul and Grace, 1993, pp. 84, 85). For Lacombe, it is this possibility of agency, subjectification and resistance in the late Foucault that allows for criticism of those authors that suggest that the disciplinary society makes individual freedom impossible, because the individual is always objectified and controlled by knowledge (1996, p. 332; McLaren, 1997, p. 112). The late Foucault investigated the possibility of resistance against the rigid systems of coercion covered in his earlier writings (1986a, p. 41).

The ethics of Foucault looks at the way that people, under the constrictions of knowledge and power, work on themselves to liberate themselves from these rigid systems of domination (1984a, pp. 6, 7, 29; McLaren, 1997, p. 113). Foucault investigates the techniques and practices through which the self can become a critical and autonomous agent (Hacking, 1986, p. 241; Fox, 1998, p. 425). It is these practices of the self that McNay (1992, pp. 5, 49,50) suggests represents the latter Foucault’s reworking of Enlightenment concepts, such as the interrelationship of freedom and autonomy, to offset the more passive subjectivities that seemed to exist in his earlier genealogies. Foucault himself regarded his work as running in a tradition of enlightenment rather than opposing it. As Hacking says about the relationship between Foucault and Kant:

Among the radical novelties of Kant was the notion that we *construct* our ethical position. Kant said we do this by recourse to reason, but the innovation

is not reason but construction. Kant taught that the only way moral law can be moral is if we make it. Foucault's historicism combined with that notion of constructing morality leads one away from the letter and the law of Kant, but curiously preserves Kant's spirit. Kant founded his metaphysics of ethics on the idea of freedom. That was another radical departure: what on earth do ethics and freedom have to do with each other? Foucault was always sceptical of liberation movements, be they political or sexual, except as means, for they always assumed a knowledge about how the liberation would create the true and objectively desirable natural state of people (1986, p. 239).

The final writings of Foucault look at how the human subject is constituted partly by the way they autonomously choose to act on themselves and others, in the sense of resistance to a norm (Lacombe, 1996, pp. 340, 341). This allows Foucault to fit Kant's construction of morality in with his own loathing of essentialism and the humanist self (1986a, p. 50; Hacking, 1986, p. 236).<sup>348</sup>As Colwell explains in a critique of those who think Foucault has returned to an originary subject in his later writings on sexuality:

...the subject... arises within a differential matrix of relations of power. The key term here is differential. What this denotes is that there are no positive originary elements of power or of the subject.... This means that the subject arises, or emerges, as a relation, a relation between itself and knowledge of itself (and other things), a relation between itself and those who have knowledge of it, a relation between itself and those who coerce it or are coerced by it. What we need to see here is that it is possible for the subject to have a relationship to itself, one of self-mastery or otherwise, without there being anything original to be mastered (1994, pp. 65, 66; also see Fox, 1998, p. 426).

It is in Foucault's final writings that he investigates the techniques and strategies that would allow for the emergence of the self-regulated subject in modernity. This investigation takes the form of comparing discourses of sexual subjectivity across historical periods. The second and third volumes of *The History of Sexuality* present, for Foucault, a history of a sexual ethics from ancient Greece and Rome, that was significantly different to our era, even if they appeared to share certain interdictions against different types of sexual practices; for example, monogamy in marriage (1984a, pp. 180-183, 250; 1984b, pp. 77, 171-175). The difference exposes the historical specificity of the modern period's government of the life processes, including the sexuality, of modern subjects via legal and scientific techniques. Because these legal and scientific techniques were almost

absent from ancient Greece, sexual subjectivities in ancient Greece were apparently controlled by the self's internal relationship to itself. Sexual conduct was a matter of individual comportment; an art of life that revealed the 'truth' about the individual subject (Foucault, 1984a, p. 10; McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 92; Colwell, 1994, p. 64; McLaren, 1997, p. 118).<sup>349</sup>

Sexual subjectivity in ancient Greek ethics was a matter of the stylistics of conduct for men (Foucault, 1984a, pp. 22, 23, 47, 53, 151).<sup>350</sup> An ethics of style, consisting of strategies of the proper and moderate exercise of sexuality, produced a sexual subjectivity strikingly different from the modern era (Foucault, 1984a, p. 50; McHoul and Grace, 1993, pp. 95-100; Colwell, 1994, p. 65). The correct attitude that one was to have toward oneself was of self-mastery, of victory over oneself through training in order to either produce an elimination of desires, or more likely a moderation of them (Foucault, 1984b, pp. 43, 44). Hence, neither legislative nor disciplinary precision was appropriate in a sphere that demonstrated self-mastery and personal choice (Foucault, 1984a, pp. 57, 91; McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 96; McLaren, 1997, p. 118). For Foucault: "To be free in relation to pleasures was to be free of their authority; it was not to be their slave" (1984a, p. 79). Freedom was counterposed with enslavement, and such enslavement could occur towards laws or norms of behaviour.

But the investigation of the autonomous Greek subject was still, regardless of the apparent freedom from rules of conduct, an investigation of control. As McHoul and Grace (1993, p. 24) summarise:

...it cannot be said that Foucault is advocating the existence of a 'free self', or any other humanist construct. Rather he documents a body of ideas, extant in Ancient Greece in particular, which assumed the *possibility* of such a 'deregulated' self. For, he argues, ancient ideas of sexual comportment required an ethics which was almost completely outside legislation....

In these last works, Foucault has located an instance of the fact that morality has not always been a case of formal-legal prohibitions. Consequently the *lifting* of these prohibitions- the aim of many contemporary liberation movements- will not *necessarily* guarantee moral freedoms.

The purpose of Foucault's historical studies of sexual subjectivities from periods different to the modern one, is again a problem that arises from the present.<sup>351</sup> As he states:

From Antiquity to Christianity, we pass from a morality that was essentially the search for a personal ethics to a morality of obedience to a system of rules. And if I was interested in Antiquity it was because, for a whole series of reasons, the idea of a morality as obedience to a code of rules *is now disappearing, has already disappeared*. And to this absence of morality corresponds, must correspond, the search for an aesthetics of existence (1990, p. 49, cited in McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 118: McHoul and Grace's italics).

Foucault did not, contra McNay (1992), rediscover the ethical subject in his final works. It is just that the emergence of the ethical subject in antiquity, as studied by Foucault, occurred in a historical period that had a significantly different set of power relations to the modern era. The ethical subject was not relevant to Foucault's studies of the emergence of modern forms of incarceration and the discursive control of sexuality (Hacking, 1986, p. 236).<sup>352</sup> But the field of ethics does still have an effect (may have an expanding effect) in the modern sexual field. After domination of the self by moral codes for a couple of centuries, the contemporary sexual subject may be becoming free of such codes. And such freedom must be accompanied by an investigation into an "aesthetics of existence" in contemporary life (Grimshaw, 1993, p. 64). Foucault's study of sexual ethics from antiquity to the modern period reveals how the modern ethical sexual subject could have been produced otherwise and also how such a 'different' production may be a contemporary phenomenon.

In investigating the former, Foucault looks at the ways that biopower is connected with the emergence of modern discourses of sexuality. His intention, in a comparison with ancient Greece (1984a) and Rome (1984b), is to display a "quite recent and banal notion of 'sexuality'" (1984a, p. 3), in modernity. Only the modern period allowed the diverse entities and phenomena understood under the term 'sexuality' to be grouped together, categorised and used as a science to reveal the 'truth' about the individual (Foucault, 1984a, p. 3; Colwell, 1994, p. 64; Shumway, 1989, p. 141). By demonstrating the modern emergence of norms and laws of sexuality, Foucault overturns the notion "that 'sexuality' is a human 'constant'" (McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 120; Foucault, 1984a, p. 4; Shumway, 1989, p. 148).<sup>353</sup> But, it was not simply the emergence of institutions, discourses and systems of power that allowed this banality about human sexuality, but also the way modern subjects came to subject themselves to a 'hermeneutics of desire' (Foucault,

1984a, pp. 5, 6; also see Sawicki, 1991, p. 83). Foucault sought to free the discourse of sexuality, and the production of sexual subjectivities in that discourse, from the *modern* emergence of the ‘desiring man’, by revealing how modern analyses of sexuality assume this as a starting point (1984a, pp. 3-6).

According to McHoul and Grace, Foucault insists,

...that our contemporary sexual subjectivities, and the ‘ethics’ derived from them, are based on scientific conceptions of ‘life’ tied to recent devices of power. It is this which places his recommendations for an ‘aesthetics of existence’ into its correct context. It is not a recipe for idealistically making up bodies... but an intervention which sets itself in opposition to a ‘science’ of sexual practice (1993, pp. 120, 121).<sup>354</sup>

Normalising power creates forms of resistance (Lacombe, 1996, p. 342; McLaren, 1997, p. 116).<sup>355</sup> The ‘truth’ of the discourse that creates the description of a normal subject, or desire, or behaviour, or gesture, in a certain way, also creates resistance to that discipline amongst the ‘inadequate’ subjects. Knowledge has violence built into it, in the form of classifications. But, the recalcitrant ‘other’ exposes the violence of normalising knowledge. Foucault suggests that the ‘truth’ of the religious, legal and ethical knowledges which created the homosexual as a particular deviant subject, and enforced laws concerning that subjectivity, also created the resistance to those knowledges, by those people affected by the effects of these discourses (Foucault, 1976, pp. 42, 43; Lacombe, 1996, pp. 341, 342; Bordo, 1993, p. 33). Hence, ‘truth’ creates a field of power relations that are in constant conflict and struggle and which have effects that could be considered liberatory and dominating. Liberation is not viewed as freeing oneself from power, but as freeing oneself from prevailing knowledges about people that are viewed as necessary, self-evident and neutral. So there is always the possibility of the strategic reversibility of power (Sawicki, 1991, p. 167; Pizzorno, 1992, pp. 204, 205; Lacombe, 1996, p. 342).<sup>356</sup>

Lacombe (1996, p. 346) continues by indicating the relationship between bio-power, as a totalising set of relations in the government of life, and resistance. Whilst totalising, bio-power contains the seed for resistance because it individualises the subject of the population. This mechanism of individualisation allows the individual subject the right to self-determination. Hence, Foucault’s productive notion of power allows for

strategies of self-development that are not only constraining, in the form of disciplinary practices, but are also enabling, in terms of subjectifying and individualising resistance. This insight allows for a reconfiguration of the relationship between structure and agency, between the political order and the individual (Lacombe, 1996, p. 334).

Foucault's ethical program is to create spaces for the rediscovery of fragmentary, subjugated, local and specific knowledges, bodies and subjectivities to oppose the subject positions created by official knowledges (Ostrander, 1988, p. 174; Fox, 1998, pp. 424, 426).<sup>357</sup> These fragments of local narratives are where freedom is located. Resistance occurs as the localised, specific oppositions to the effects of domination and subjectivisation. Foucault seeks out the spaces in and between disciplines of knowledge, which allow for the emergence of these differences. As Shumway suggests, following from Foucault, the resistance to the deployment of the science of sexuality occurs by “championing the multiplicity of pleasures and the body as the site of those pleasures” (1989, p. 152).

Secondly, because power is not only everywhere in discourse, but also the name given to unstable and potentially reversible relations, resistance is not in a position of exteriority to power. There is no way of escaping ‘power’ (Foucault, 1976, p. 95). Hence, the appearance in the modern era of a scientific discourse of sexuality that produces normal subjects, also produces abnormal subjects. The discourse that produces the species of homosexuality, also makes possible the speech of homosexuality, which demanded its legitimacy and naturalness using the same vocabulary as the scientific discourse that created it as abnormal. The relations of force producing these subjectivities are unstable and potentially reversible; they are tactics operating in the discursive field of sexuality (Foucault, 1976, p. 101). And because knowledge creates different effects in various subjects, resistance also varies between people. According to Foucault, the resistance is immediate; “In such struggles people criticise instances of power which are closest to them, those which exercise their action on individuals. They do not look for the ‘chief enemy’ but for the immediate enemy” (1982, p. 232; also see Fraser, 1989, p. 18). Or in Elizabeth Grosz' terms:

Because power can be conceptualized as an ever-changing grid with specific points of intensity, sites of greatest force, it can also be seen as a grid that

necessarily *generates* points of resistance. This implies that knowledges, methods, procedures which at one time support forms of power, at another time or in a different context, can act as sites of resistance, struggle and change. (1990b, p. 90)

As power acts as a grid affecting different people in various ways, it is also susceptible to pragmatic alliances between resistant groups. Such a position suggests that the desire to form large scale resistance groups, such as the working-classes, may be counterproductive (Grosz, 1990b, pp. 88, 90; Fraser, 1989, p. 18). It is possible to see knowledge and power creating resistance in a plural, multi-dimensional group of subjects, each affected by the power-knowledge relationship differently, but each struggling for self-determination.

The forms of power and resistance that Foucault deals with are particular and concrete (1986b, p. 376). His interventions are made at the level of specific problems, rather than with overarching political questions such as the dominance of men in society. What he views as important are the “mobile and transitory points of resistance” that are produced at local sites. These sites are of immediate importance to those who produce the resistance. Alliances between these strategic sites of resistance may permit challenges to more general forms of disciplinary power. But for alliances to be effective, Foucault, according to McHoul and Grace (1993, pp. 86, 87), would argue that:

resistance is more effective when it is directed at a ‘technique’ of power rather than at ‘power’ in general. It is techniques which allow for the exercise of power and the production of knowledge; resistance consists of ‘refusing’ these techniques. But the unearthing of power techniques in their modern configurations requires conceiving of the social body as a multiplicity of force relations... If resistance is to be effective, it requires the active interrogation of the tactics employed in a struggle. But this means that one must acknowledge in the first place that tactics *are* being used. In other words, the ethical relationship of the protagonist to the ‘power’ being opposed and the historical position of this relationship must be made explicit.

Finally, just as Foucault has made it impossible to think of the agent of power, it is also important to no longer search for an agent of resistance. Acts, gestures, states of mind and of body, all stand opposed to power, and may be either free or normalised. Among all these things are the subjugated and recalcitrant that may defy normalisation (Foucault, 1982, pp. 240, 241; Bell, 1994, p. 10). Freedom is apparent in a society/practice, when such defiant

activities are not yet abolished by knowledge-power, when, in Pizzorno's terms, "the recalcitrant is not transformed into the dutiful" (1992, p. 207).

These arguments are important in contemporary analyses of differences in gender and sexuality. Foucault presents sex as a historical construction associated with modernity (Shumway, 1989, pp. 142, 148). Hence, Foucault's work opens up a possibility for techniques of permission for the 'truth' of sexual difference to be challenged. So the feminist appropriation and extension of Foucault's work looks to challenge the techniques and strategies employed at the microlevel of practices which together produce the domination of the male sex in contemporary society, in its specificity (McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 124).

This resistance of the female subject is necessarily related to Foucault's positive notion of power. As power produces truth and truth is related to pleasure or taste, the relationship of the human to truth must include questions of freedom, domination and choice. In this latter Foucault, the notion of power as a fluid, contested domain, is distinguished from the rigid structures of domination investigated in his earlier writings (Grosz, 1990b, p. 87). Power is a transactional system occurring in discourse between people, who have the opportunity for self-regulation and oppositional self-confession. Resistant action occurs within the grid of power relations such that, if it is successful, it changes both the grid and the individual (Colwell, 1994, p. 67; Lycos, 1993, p. 1).<sup>358</sup>

### **Sites of Political Intervention in Foucault's Works**

Foucault's analysis of power (and resistance) offers several points of difference from other critical views of power, such as Marxism and many strands of feminism. According to Foucault, the problem with the grand theories of sovereign power is that the model of power that they use has "ignored the detailed operations of power by focusing largely on its more global forms" (Grosz, 1990b, p. 82; also see Grosz, 1990b, p. 88). Foucault is able to show how global effects of power, such as patriarchy, are created at the microlevel of a number of discursive relationships involving knowledge and normalisation (1976, p. 93). Power is viewed as both descending and ascending, but of most importance,

and most able to be resisted, as ascending from the micro-level to more general forms of hegemonic control of society through the various techniques that are allowed to function in the modern society (Fraser, 1989, p. 18; Grosz, 1990b, p. 83; Sawicki, 1991, pp. 164, 170; McLaren, 1997, p. 115; Cole, 1993, p. 85). As Foucault explains:

Power's condition of possibility... must not be sought in the primary existence of a central point, in a unique source of sovereignty from which secondary and descendent forms would emanate; it is the moving substrate of force relations which, by virtue of their inequality, constantly engender states of power, but the latter are always local and unstable. The omnipresence of power: not because it has the privilege of consolidating everything under its invincible unity, but because it is produced from one moment to the next, at every point, or rather in every relation from one point to another (1976, p. 93).

The global forms of power always require minute, local micropolitical channels to disseminate their dominant truth discourses and create their normalised subjectivities (Foucault, 1976, p. 93; Andrews, 1993, p. 157; Harvey and Sparks, 1991, p. 166). He argues: "I think the term *rationalization* is dangerous. What we have to do is analyze specific rationalities rather than always invoking the process of rationalization in general" (Foucault, 1982, p. 231). The idea is to investigate the rationalities of several fields, rather than looking for, and be guided by, any conception as broad as rationalisation in seeing how relations of force work in a society. The conception of a universal rationality, or a universal oppression, makes more difficult the strategic application of resistance to specific, local and particular discourses. Power touches people in different ways during the performance of their everyday practices (Fraser, 1989, p. 18; Sawicki, 1991, p. 171; Cole, 1993, p. 85).

Global forms of power rely on the local and particular practices at the microlevel of society (Foucault, 1976, p. 93; Grosz, 1990b, p. 88). Foucault investigates how these microlevel practices are consolidated into more global forms of domination, and how interventions in the effective techniques and apparatuses of power (such as the panopticon and the confessional) can take place at the local level (McLaren, 1997, p. 115). Secondly, Foucault's investigation looks at the techniques and effects of power's exercise rather than the motives of any individual/class in power. For Foucault, there is no author of power lying outside of the regime of power. Power is to be understood as a set of circulating and

unstable forces of relation. It is not held by anyone in particular, but is exercised through the web of relations within a social body (1975, pp. 26, 27).

But, according to Sawicki (1991, p. 164; also see Grosz, 1990b, p. 86), it is a misconception of Foucault's work to suggest that his analysis of power will replace what has preceded him by becoming a 'true' theory of what power is. Foucault's analysis is not a theory of what anything *is*. It is a method of engaging with those theories that have tried to demonstrate what power is, by demonstrating that such discourses are themselves material events that have power effects that produce things. Genealogy is not a theory of power, but a method of displacing and criticising other theories that present themselves as neutral producers of the Truth. Foucault describes his work as a set of potentially useful fictions that may be useful at certain times and within certain struggles, but that may be discarded when they have no use (Grosz, 1990b, p. 86).<sup>359</sup>

How then does Foucault's work on discourse, knowledge and power allow for interventional social and political writing by subjects/groups who are resistant? There are a number of important and distinctive elements to Foucauldian critique that stem mostly from the crises from which his ideas emerged. Whilst the archaeological method is mainly a descriptive tool of how disciplinary knowledges function, the purpose of archaeological investigation for Foucault has also been to recognise how bodies of ideas, contingently produced at points in history, may be transformed by a revelation of that contingent production (McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 15). As Foucault states:

It is fruitful in a certain way to describe that-which-is by making it appear as something that might not be, or that might not be as it is.... It is... why, in my opinion, recourse to history... is meaningful to the extent that history serves to show how that-which-is has not always been; i.e., that the things which seem most evident to us are always formed in the confluence of encounters and chance, during the course of a precarious and fragile history... It means that they reside on a base of human practice and human history; and that since these things have been made, they can be unmade, as long as we know how it was that they were made. (1990, p. 37 cited in McHoul and Grace, 1993, pp. 11, 12)<sup>360</sup>

In addition, the repetition of these subjugated knowledges by Foucault is itself also an act of resistance to the normalisation of knowledge by the various disciplinary sciences (McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 16; Sawicki, 1991, p. 168). Therefore, there is a political and

critical element to Foucault's archaeologies of the subjugated knowledges of the madman, the criminal, the sexual deviant and the patient. He states:

I believe that by subjugated knowledges one should understand something else... a whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to the task or insufficiently elaborated.... It is through the reappearance of this knowledge, of these local popular knowledges, these disqualified knowledges, that criticism performs its work (1980a, pp. 81-82 cited by McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 16).

McHoul and Grace continue by suggesting that the revelation of these subjugated knowledges also reveals the technologies of normalisation that appear in official knowledges, particularly in the social sciences, which constrain people to think and act in certain 'correct' and 'functional' ways. So Foucault's critique also is interested in revealing the techniques utilised by these official knowledges to produce normalisation, and to exclude subjugated knowledge. But further, Foucault is also interested in the value of these techniques. According to McHoul and Grace,

...in his case study of the nineteenth-century hermaphrodite, Herculine Barbin, Foucault (1980b, p. vii) begins by asking: 'Do we *truly* need a *true* sex?'. The question is far from being 'purely academic', as the phrase has it. He goes on to investigate how the medical and psychiatric sciences (among other discourses) have been preoccupied with assigning a single sex to all persons.... But now, this point is not simply 'archaeological' in any arcane sense. He is writing as much about our current prejudices and schemes of thought *vis-à-vis* essential and unitary sexual identities as he is about the medical, legal, religious and psychiatric practices of the nineteenth century (1993, p. 17).

His point is that the idea of a relationship between sex and truth (i.e. a true sex) is still found in many of the disciplines as well as popular opinion. The idea is as evident in what is considered 'the normal', as it is when something is considered 'in error'; the virile woman, the passive man, the homosexual couple. The error is established by the sense that such acts do not correspond adequately to an objective reality about sex. This is the 'truth' contained in disciplinary knowledge about sex, and it is maintained through a variety of techniques, but it is also a truth that perpetuates the idea of 'an objective reality'.

This desire for a single truth about all sorts of subjects in the human sciences including sex, criminality, madness, disease, is a topic of analysis for Foucauldian archaeologies and genealogies. According to Foucault, no scientific discourse can represent an objective reality about these objects of study. What the discourse can do, is contain those alternate knowledges, which challenge the sovereignty of the discipline. This makes evident the way that power circulates between different knowledges, such that power is “always a discursive *relation*” (McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 21). Foucault’s historical critiques act as reminders to a different set of ‘truths’, and are therefore “resources for critical action and interventional practice” which shifts relations in the discursive field (McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 19; Eribon, 1991, p. 162; Aladjem, 1991, p. 2). Resistance to ‘truth’ involves the local and specific opposition to the effects of knowledge-power. It exposes the politics of normalisation, and this exposure liberates knowledge from its supposed neutrality. For example, in resisting the deployment of the science of sexuality, Foucault’s work demonstrates the way that this science is a cultural production of the modern episteme that manipulates the desires of the subject to maintain certain relations of power. But also, Foucault’s histories demonstrate that sexuality could be deployed differently (Shumway, 1989, p. 152). Moira Gatens explains the usefulness of Foucault for feminism: “It is important to create the means of articulating historical realities of sexual difference without thereby reifying these differences” (1992, p. 130 cited by Hall, 1996, p. 53). According to Foucault, “the target nowadays is not to discover what we are, but to refuse what we are” (1982, p. 235).

So Foucault’s archaeological method is essential to an understanding of his later interventional writings. The idea of political critique in Foucault’s writings emanates from his reconfiguration of the concepts of discourse, power and knowledge in light of the recognition that the conditions which permit certain knowledge claims in disciplines may be transformed to allow for a different set of knowledge claims which allow a new set of subjectivities. So according to McHoul and Grace:

*Discipline and Punish* is not simply about the disciplines of criminology and its forebears; it is about the subjects produced by techniques of punishment and confinement- criminals. Likewise, the first volume of the *History of Sexuality* is not simply about the various sexological disciplines; it is also about the sexual beings (the ‘types’) they brought into existence. Furthermore, at this

time, Foucault began to consider questions of transgression and resistance in the face of ‘technologies’ of punishment and sexual classification.

One element of the critical phase, therefore, involves an attention to subjugated or ‘marginal’ knowledges, especially those which have been disqualified, taken less seriously or deemed inadequate by official histories.... They are the discourses of the madman, the patient, the delinquent, the pervert and other persons who, in their respective times, held knowledges about *themselves* which diverged from established categories (1993, p. 15).

Chapter Three of this thesis demonstrated the differences between the official history and a feminist counter-history of women’s participation in sport from the late nineteenth century through to the middle of the twentieth century. This counter-history was utilised to demonstrate the ways that individual women and women’s groups resisted their positioning in the sports discourse as passive and inactive.

In terms of political intervention, Foucault’s theories allow for subjects to challenge the ‘positivity’ and ‘normalisation’ of the discourses. These technologies of power create and shape human subjectivities into normal and ‘other’ categories. Disciplinary knowledge gives one member of the relationship power, and produces the other as subjugated or unruly (Sawicki, 1991, p. 164). So, for Foucault, one aspect of political critique involves an exposition of the ways that official knowledges, through techniques of data-collection, regulation, discipline and punishment, regulate subjects into different categories. The provision of these expositions to groups who have an interest in the subversion of this knowledge is a starting point for critique against apparent domination (McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 19).

This relationship of the ‘normal’ and the ‘other’ is often unsteady. As Lycos (1993, p. 10) argues, relationships between people often involve differences in power, where one member has knowledge which the other member has an interest in seeking. But this is normally viewed as a relation of power, rather than domination, because the seeker of knowledge can resist. The doctor acts on the possible field of actions of the patient. But the patient can still choose otherwise. Hence the relations between the agents are always potentially in conflict; they are reversible, shiftable, and unstable. It is only when resistance is not possible that domination has occurred (McLaren, 1997, p. 116). Mark Philp, writing in Foucault’s terms, argues:

Power relations are unstable and are always potentially reversible- I may affect your conditions of choice, but you may equally choose in a way which affects my possible course of action. However in modern society, the human sciences, through their claims to knowledge and expertise, have transformed these basically unstable power relations into general patterns of domination. (1984, p. 13)

Foucault's critique of power also exposes the practices and institutions "where official discourses over-assert their authority" (McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 21). Foucault demonstrates the illegitimacy of dominant relations at any discursive site. Freedom to intervene occurs where such apparent closure is resisted, and the possibility of thinking and acting differently is reasserted.

But such interventions are unlikely to be successful unless the calculators of such political intervention understand the techniques and strategies employed by the medical discourse to legitimate its claims to produce official knowledge. Microresistance certainly involves local and specific interventions in knowledge, but such resistance cannot simply transgress official knowledge. The success of transformation involves the changing of "the conditions of its emergence, insertion and functioning; it transformed the mode of existence of medical discourse (Foucault, 1978b, p. 21 cited by McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 54). Strategies of intervention do not work specifically upon the objects, concepts and operations of, for example, medicinal knowledge. Instead, they "modify its rules of formation" (Foucault, 1978b, p. 22 cited by McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 55). So, for Foucault, a progressive and interventionist politics involves neither calls to an abstract humanity nor to the creative genius of individuals. Instead, it recognises and tries to intervene at the level of the historically specific rules and techniques of a practice. In so doing, it recognises the articulation and correlation between practices. But at the same time, the possibility for transformation exists in and between these discourses, such that new subject positions and forms of embodiment are produced (McHoul and Grace, 1993, pp. 55, 56).<sup>361</sup> Chapters Four and Five both demonstrated the ways that contemporary female participation in sport and sport commentary are limited by rules of legislation and knowledge production that reproduce the historically produced female subjectivity as unathletic. The transformation of this subject position, that has material effects in terms of

both female participation and female commentary, involved the replacement of these rules and techniques of discourse production with a new, feminist-inspired, set of techniques.

According to Ransom, Foucault contends that struggles in society are “not essentially about the possession of power, but rather about the contested terms of the deployment of power” (1993, p. 128). Power is not considered as the possession of the conscious and decision-making agent, or class of agents, who dominates over others. Power acts autonomously and anonymously through effects that produce and reproduce subjects and knowledges (Lacombe, 1996, p. 339). The point of Foucault’s critique then is not to ignore the subjects who benefit from power, but to record the ways that subjects, both powerful and subordinate, are constructed through a collection of techniques and flows of power which run through the social body. Foucault’s critique of power looks at the conditions and techniques through which power-knowledge “...*installs* itself and produces real material effects” (McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 21). As Foucault suggests:

Let us not... ask why certain people want to dominate, what they seek, what is their overall strategy. Let us ask, instead, how things work at the level of those continuous and uninterrupted processes which subject our bodies, govern our gestures, dictate our behaviours etc. In other words, rather than ask ourselves how... the sovereign appears to us in his lofty isolation, we should try to discover how it is that subjects are gradually, progressively, really and materially constituted through a multiplicity of organisms, forces, energies, materials, desires, thoughts, etc. We should try to grasp subjection in its material instance as a constitution of subjects. (1980a, p. 97 cited in McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 22)

Hence, power is comprised of instruments and techniques of knowledge, which observe, classify, control and correct human behaviour, and in so doing, produce human subjectivities. Foucault’s critiques do not engage in these practices of the disciplinary sciences. His ‘discourse analysis’ endeavours to act in a way that describes without classification and control (McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 22; Shumway, 1989, p. 158). Its intent is to reveal the effects that these techniques of knowledge have on the material knowledge about the human, effects which can quite often be enacted at the ‘construction’ of the human body through discourse (Lacombe, 1996, p. 338). As McHoul and Grace neatly summarise:

When Foucault asks ‘how can the truth [of the sick subject ever] be told?’, it is obvious he does not mean that it is *he* who wants to tell truths. On the contrary, the stress is on the word ‘how’: by what techniques, according to what regularities and conditions, is it possible for something to *count* as the truth about sickness, life, labour, language, crime and sexuality? (1993, p. 25)

What Foucault does not do in terms of intervention is to speak on behalf of others.<sup>362</sup> His purpose is not to provide definitive answers about anything, but to demonstrate the ways and techniques that are used in producing the definitive. Political activists, affected by the silencing of their voices, can then take up the space provided by Foucault’s criticism of the terror of disciplinary truth, to produce political change in relations of power. As Foucault states:

When the prisoners began to speak... they possessed an individual theory of prisons, the penal system, and justice. It is this form of discourse which ultimately matters, a discourse against power, the counter-discourse of prisoners and those we call delinquents- and not a theory *about* delinquency (1977b, p. 209 cited in McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 19)

### **Foucault and Feminism**

The second section of the chapter will investigate the uses made of Foucault’s ideas by feminist theorists. According to Deveaux (1994, p. 1) there have been three waves of feminist literature that has appropriated the work of Michel Foucault, although these waves are “neither chronologically separate nor thematically discrete.” All three waves have used aspects of Foucault’s work to provide a space for females to understand and resist aspects of patriarchal power in society. The first wave used the notions of docility and biopower to explain the ways that the female body/subject is controlled and limited by patriarchal discourses. The second wave utilised the agonistic model of power to demonstrate that the multiple sets of power relations in society are unstable and contestable. The third wave of the appropriation of Foucault’s work by feminists utilised the idea that prevailing categories of sexual identity (and gender identity) are the result of social constructions of these things that emerged with modern regimes of power. The next section of this thesis will use this demarcation to elaborate on some of the criticisms of Foucault and to demonstrate the ways that feminists have extended, or can extend, the work of Foucault in both mainstream feminism and the feminism of sport. As Grimshaw explains, “Foucault

sometimes saw his own writing as a ‘tool box’, from which the tools might be bent and distorted in ways not envisaged by their creator” (1993, p. 52; also see Andrews, 1993, p. 159). The position taken up in this section of the thesis is that Foucauldian ideas are useful in supporting spaces for the recalcitrant female athletic bodies that might challenge the embodied authority of men in sport.

### **First Wave uses of Docility and Biopower:**

Foucault’s genealogies of punishment and sexuality demonstrated the transition from pre-modern sovereign forms of coercive power to modern disciplinary forms of normalisation and productive power. Two axes of influence were emblematic of modern forms of power. These axes were the “anatomopolitics of the human body” which produced a docile and useful body through the extraction of time and labour, and a “biopolitics of the population” which was the state’s concern with the health, birth, life expectancy and mortality of the population<sup>363</sup> (Foucault, 1976, p. 139).

The first axis of influence was concerned with the individual body and its usefulness. As Deveaux argues, “The body becomes a ‘political field,’ inscribed and constituted by power relations” (1994, p. 2). ‘Docile’ bodies were produced through systems of surveillance and normalisation. The encouragement of self-surveillance by subjects meant that modern forms of power were continuous, far reaching and localised in their effects on the body. Whilst sovereign forms of power still existed, their existence acted as a disguise for the more subtle and artful way that disciplinary power created modern subjects. These modern modes of power involved the subject in aspects of self-surveillance and self-control (Deveaux, 1994, p. 2).

The first wave of feminist appropriations of Foucault used the ‘docile bodies’ paradigm to investigate the transition from sovereign forms of patriarchy, exemplified by exclusion of women from life opportunities, to more insidious forms of control. This set of feminist writings drew heavily on two aspects of his work; disciplinary techniques, surveillance and the gaze which produced a docile body/subject, and the notion of biopower as both a totalising and individualising form of control over female subjectification (Deveaux, 1994, p. 2).

The modern technologies of power are directed against the body in “a policy of coercions that act upon the body, a calculated manipulation of its elements, its gestures, its behaviour” (Foucault, 1979, p. 178 cited by Bartky, 1988, p. 63). Bartky utilises this conceptualisation of power to explain the female’s acceptance of and agreement to patriarchal standards of femininity. However she also explains that Foucault’s understandings of the panoptic gaze and disciplinary power must be extended to include the peculiar ‘docility’ of female bodies; that is, the way mechanisms of discipline act on a gendered body (Bartky, 1988, p. 65; McLaren, 1997, p. 114; Ramazanoglu and Holland, 1993, pp. 250, 251; Soper, 1993, p. 35; Balsamo, 1996, p. 21). According to Balsamo (1996, p. 21), Foucault’s account of the production of subjugated bodies fails to treat gender as an “organizing framework for deciphering the disciplined body.” Gender is an “organized, institutionalised, system of differences that constitutes the individual body and renders it meaningful (Balsamo, 1996, p. 21). Bartky also criticises Foucault for his blindness toward the forms of disciplinary embodiment that are peculiarly feminine. This failure to consider the specific system of separation and differentiation of bodies produced by gender reduces the analytical sweep of Foucault’s work. This ignorance toward the specifically patriarchal technologies of power perpetuates the sexism of Western thought, where women’s different experiences of powerlessness are silenced, and men’s experiences of powerlessness remain the norm (1988, pp. 63- 65).<sup>364</sup>

That is, while Bartky suggests following from Foucault that femininity is a social construction that takes hold most strongly at the surface of the female body, she also views it as a manifestation of a specifically modern form of patriarchal power.<sup>365</sup> The practices that produce femininity such as diet, exercise, make-up, and training in comportment and posture, are embraced ‘voluntarily’ by women, through the effects of modern regimes of power (Bartky, 1988, pp. 65-71; Grimshaw, 1993, p. 53; Bordo, 1993, p. 192; Markula, 1995, p. 425). The female body is a practiced and subjected body, which desires the achievement of the perfectly feminine body. Hence, labour and time are extracted from the female through her bodywork. But the desirable ‘product’ is unachievable for most women, and so the female body is normalised as that which is inferior. As Bartky explains, “The technologies of femininity are taken up and practiced by women against the

background of a pervasive sense of bodily deficiency” (1988, pp. 71, 72). The female monitors herself, often compulsively, as a body in need of improvement and a body that has transgressed (Chapman, 1997, p. 206; Markula, 1995, p. 425; Bordo, 1989, p. 14). Susan Bordo (1990, cited by Cole, 1993, p. 88) refers to this obsession with self-monitoring of the body as a “plastic paradigm”, where the body is manufactured within an ideology of limitless improvement and constant need for improvement, “an ideology supported by science and its technologies”. As Chapman explains:

Through a variety of discursive techniques that cannot be attributed to any individual power brokers, women are offered health, happiness, and a way to symbolize self-control and liberation from domestic femininity by making the personal choice to work to create and maintain a slender body. By taking on the practices of body management, however, women learn to gaze upon their own bodies with a critical eye and invest considerable time, energy, and money in the ongoing production of appropriately feminine bodies. An ultimate effect of the technology of weight control is women’s disempowerment (1997, p. 207; also see Spitzack, 1990 cited by Markula, 1995, p. 426).

The disciplinarians in these modern regimes of patriarchal power are, as Chapman suggests, dispersed and therefore difficult to identify.<sup>366</sup> The Foucauldian feminist reconceptualisation of modern power explained power as dispersed and non-orchestrated, but still productive of the bodies, identities and relations that normalise female subordination and male dominance (Bordo, 1993, pp. 190-192; Theberge, 1991a, p. 127). Women internalise the messages of femininity so completely that one of the effects of forms of feminist resistance is to deny the female’s own feminine identity, and the ‘skills’ that their discipline requires (Bartky, 1988, pp. 77, 78; Chapman, 1997, p. 206; Theberge, 1991a, p. 127). But, for Bartky, the benefactors of this disciplining of the female body are recognisable and identifiable; men benefit from the discipline of women through the technologies of femininity.<sup>367</sup> Most women live their lives with the existence of a panoptical male gazer in their consciousness (Bartky, 1988, p. 72; also see Bordo, 1993, p. 189; Markula, 1995, p. 437).<sup>368</sup> They discipline their desires, their movements, their diets and their bodies to appear attractive to the male. And their efforts are self-defeating; they may gain admiration or attention, but little respect or authority (Bartky, 1988, p. 73).<sup>369</sup>

Hence, according to Bordo (1993, pp. 191, 192), the first wave of Foucauldian theorisation offered feminists a view of power that allowed for both an explanation of male control and female agency. Male control in society, and over women's bodies, could be explained as a set of power/knowledge effects that, whilst dispersed and dynamic, recreate a set of relations by "regulating the most intimate and minute elements of the construction of space, time, desire, embodiment" (Foucault, 1979, p. 138 cited by Bordo, 1993, p. 191; also see Bordo, 1989, p. 14). Whilst power is understood as impersonal and anonymous, the effects of its regime in modern patriarchal society is to position men and women differently in society. Not all people are made equal by the modern exercise of power (Foucault, 1988, p. 12). The maintenance of this positioning is partly carried out by the work that individual females do in terms of self-monitoring and self-correction. An analysis of women's domination in contemporary society must include the ways that they contribute to, as active agents, their own positioning. Whilst men are also positioned in society, the anonymity of power does not preclude the idea that they have a higher stake in the maintenance of the current relations between women and men in society (Foucault, 1988, p. 12; Bordo, 1993, p. 192; Ramazanoglu and Holland, 1993, p. 240; Chapman, 1997, p. 207; Andrews, 1993, p. 157). So the first wave of Foucauldian feminism found more nuanced descriptions of the effects of patriarchal power than those that came from earlier forms of radical and liberal feminism.

The problem with this first wave use of Foucault is that it removes the opportunity for women to be resistant (Grimshaw, 1993, p. 54).<sup>370</sup> The forms of disciplinary power are reproduced as so completely internalised by women, without a source that imposes these norms of femininity, that there is no space left to resist their effects. As Deveaux comments; "Women's choices and differences are lost altogether in Bartky's description of the feminine body and its attendant practices" (1994, p. 3). Women are treated as receptacles of culture, unable to oppose the effects of femininity. They lose their capacity as active agents who may be both "constituted by, and reflective of, their social and cultural contexts" (Deveaux, 1994, p. 3). Whilst useful as a descriptive or deconstructive tool (Grimshaw, 1993, p. 53), the notion of docile bodies as a metaphoric paradigm for women's experiences of modern patriarchal society does not allow space for the expression

of individual female resistances to, or experiences of, the effects of power. It denies meaningful discussion about how individual women feel about the effects of these modern regimes of power. All are lumped together as docile bodies, subjected to the insensitive discipline of femininity. The Panoptic gaze has the effect of smoothing out a wide range of subjectivities and experiences (Deveaux, 1994, p. 4).

### **Applications in Sport**

Lenskyj suggests that sport is important in contemporary society in providing an appropriate structure for education in masculinity and femininity. The maintenance of male power and dominance relies on ensuring that differences between the sexes are carefully constructed and institutionalised in social structures, beliefs and practices (1990, p. 240). To paraphrase Barry Smart, although disciplinary power arose in the early institutions of sport, through structures such as the formal rules and the legal sanctions against participation, its constraint soon spread into non-institutional spaces and populations (1985, p. 89 cited by Andrews, 1993, p. 158). As Cheryl Cole explains, the investigation of sport from a feminist standpoint must recognise

“sport” as a discursive construct that organizes multiple practices (science, medicine, technology, governing institutions, and the media) that intersect with and produce multiple bodies (raced, sexed, classed, heterosexualized, reproductive, prosthetic, cyborg etc.) embedded in normalizing technologies (classification, hierarchization, identity production) and consumer culture. In addition, this standpoint recognizes that the knowledges and practices produced by sport in advanced capitalism cannot be and are no longer contained by institutional spaces but are dispersed and expressed in the everyday normalizing practices of remaking bodies/identities/pleasures (1993, p. 78).

In Foucauldian terms, the self-disciplined control of the female body occurred with the female’s willing acceptance of, and pleasure in, the dominant discourse of male superiority/female frailty, partly perpetuated by sport, in society (Chapman, 1997, p. 207). This shift from the institutions of sexual difference in society, to the self-acceptance of this difference in discourse, allows for the maintenance of the dominant position of males in society, and the reproduction of those useful and preferred social relations in society.

The point of the powerful discourse of sport is one which Iris Young suggests, not only affects the creation of the formal rules in new sports, but affects the very practice of females participating in sport. Females carry the burden of society's views of them as inferior athletes. According to Young, women display timidity and uncertainty in their sporting actions. They are confined by an imaginary space which prevents them from extending into the beyond. They react to, rather than act on, objects (Young, 1980, p. 143). Although there are some females who transcend these limits, there is a general feminine style of body comportment and movement, which is socially determined and learned, and which effectively limits the participation of females in sports. According to Young: "The more a girl assumes her status as feminine, the more she takes herself to be fragile and immobile, and the more she actively enacts her own body inhibition" (1980, p. 153). For any person, this is a disadvantage in the performance of most modern sports.

Yet Iris Young is aware of the context and history of this description. The narrative she provides of female athletes, and females generally, has its source, not in physiology nor in anatomy, and certainly not in any feminine essence, but in the disciplining discourses for females in a specific society: "They have their source in the particular *situation* of women as conditioned by their sexist oppression in contemporary society." (1980, p. 152) Sawicki states:

Sandra Bartky provides her own compelling descriptions of the disciplinary technologies that produce specifically feminine forms of embodiment, for example, dietary and fitness regimes,... Bartky uses Foucault's model of power to show how these technologies subjugate by developing competencies, not simply taking power away.... The disciplines enhance the power of the subject while simultaneously subjugating her. (1991, pp. 164,165)

Theberge (1991a, p. 125) explains that the women takes pleasure in the production of an exercising identity because of an "[i]magery of emancipation and liberation, fitness and health" in the discourse of fitness for women that acts to "veil and mask new forms of domination and exploitation." Any possibility for transgression of norms of femininity through exercise by the female has been recuperated by the consumer culture, postfeminism<sup>371</sup> and the medical/science empire that strictly controls the reproduction of the female body through exercise. Exercise and aerobics tend to normalisation of the

female body rather than transgression, they are “practices invested in the status quo” (Cole, 1993, p. 87; also see Maguire and Mansfield, 1998; Lenskyj, 1987, p. 385). Whilst there are always individual women, and individual practices, that resist the constraining knowledge about femininity, these ideals of femininity dominate the bodywork of most female athletes and exercisers (Maguire and Mansfield, 1998, p. 110).

Duncan (1994, pp. 48-65), to investigate the disciplinary power that captures the female body in fitness pursuits, has used the Foucauldian ideas of docility and biopower. She explains that women in Western society are socialised to evaluate their bodies through the panoptic gaze of male eyes. The female becomes “both spectator and spectacle” (Berger, 1972; Spitzack, 1990 cited in Duncan, 1994, p. 50), and surveys herself for, and confesses about, transgressions of normal femininity (Balsamo, 1996, p. 78). But the source of the gaze is the disembodied and dispersed authority of the discourses of femininity and health. Feminine beauty is conflated with physical health for exercising females (Duncan, 1994, p. 55; Hargreaves, 1987, p. 141 cited by Andrews, 1993, p. 161; Theberge, 1991a, p. 125).<sup>372</sup> As no source of this patriarchal power can be located, the woman learns to see the ‘normalised’ body standards to which they aspire, as personal desires, rather than publicly produced ideologies of female beauty (Duncan, 1994, p. 50; Eskes, Duncan and Miller, 1998, p. 319; Markula, 1993, p. 98 cited by Hall, 1996, p. 57; Maguire and Mansfield, 1998, p. 112).<sup>373</sup> This allows for the conflation of the public and private ideologies about femininity. Hence, the blame for any failure to meet these standards is experienced as personal by the women involved in these fitness programs, such that their exercise is often accompanied by distress, shame and sometimes distaste for themselves and their bodies (Duncan, 1994, pp. 50, 51; Maguire and Mansfield, 1998, pp. 112, 118, 121).<sup>374</sup>

Exercise categorises and produces the subjects that engage in it. As Maguire and Mansfield explain, the practices of exercise construct desirable gendered bodies within a heterosexual matrix. Aerobics classes allow the female to sculpt her body to fit with established patriarchal readings of the attractive female body as slim, lithe and shapely (1998, p. 112).<sup>375</sup> And, as the authors explain in light of Featherstone’s (1992) work:

The view here is that the body beautiful has exchange value. It is status enhancing and brings with it the perception of youth, health, happiness,

heterosexual attractiveness, and longevity.... Aerobics is considered to be one practice of feminization that contributes to women's sense of self-identity (1998, p. 114).

As previously stated, the labour that is extracted from the docile female is directed toward the production of a saleable product, her beautiful body.

In addition, the exercise class is an environment where individual female subjectivities are produced and negotiated by a set of dividing practices. Maguire and Mansfield discuss the various ways that a hierarchy is produced between an established group of exercisers and 'outsider bodies' in the class. The established group occupy (own) positions at the front of the class, have more intimate access to the instructor, are familiar with the dance routines, commit themselves to the achievement of the ideal feminine body by working out their 'individual imperfections', and most closely embody patriarchal standards of femininity. Hence, female skill at this particular form of bodywork is closely aligned with masculine hegemony and patriarchal ideology (1998, pp. 119-123, 128; Eskes *et. al.*, 1998, p. 330).

But the establishment of this identity occurs at the expense of other women. Their position at the top of the hierarchy is achieved in comparison with the 'other' females in the class. The notion of community is undermined when females come together to exercise. There is an atmosphere of bodily rivalry produced in the gymnasium, through the existence of mirrors, the commodification of female exercise dress, the internalisation of the desire to attract a man and the competitiveness of the gymnasium environment (Cole, 1993, pp. 88, 89; Maguire and Mansfield, 1998, p. 131). In addition, the hierarchy of status between the established group and the outsider bodies produces a desire in the outsider bodies to become more perfectly docile. The rivalry between women makes them ignore the ways that all are contained by the discourse of femininity (1998, pp. 122, 125). Moreso, according to Cole, the contemporary commodification of fitness pursuits has had a further effect of individualisation. The individual female may be separated from other exercisers through her 'choice' of fitness product. The multiplication of the production of fitness videos, television fitness shows, personal fitness trainers and home gyms all have the effect of isolating women from each other (Willis, 1990 cited by Cole, 1993, p. 88; Hall, 1996, p. 58).<sup>376</sup>

Cole also suggests that contemporary sport "... is most usefully understood as a technology in the Foucauldian sense, an ensemble of knowledges and practices that disciplines, conditions, reshapes, and inscribes the body through the terms and needs of a patriarchal, racist capitalism" (Cole, 1990, 1991 cited by Cole, 1993, p. 86; also see Andrews, 1993, p. 149). In opposition to those feminists who see participation in sport as unquestionably a practice of transgression and opposition, Cole (1993, p. 86) argues that the modern regimes of surveillance technologies has produced the female athlete in such a way as to naturalise and manage gender relations. Indicative of this is the way that the boundaries between the genders are patrolled through compulsory drug testing, sex testing of female athletes, pregnancy testing to protect the 'unborn', and controls on femininity. The acceptance of this surveillance by female athletes as part of the highly regulated activity of elite sport, either on the grounds of justice or profit, reinforces the notion of the naturalness of gender boundaries (Cole, 1993, pp. 89-92).<sup>377</sup>

The problem with this work is that, whilst the notion of the panopticon and docile bodies is useful in providing nuanced descriptions of the types of public and private disciplinary forces that act on the female athlete, there is little room left for political and resistant interventions on behalf of women. The panoptic gaze appears so widespread and dispersed that there is no space for the woman to act. As McHoul and Grace suggest about Bartky's work:

When Bartky poses the question as to why all women are not feminists, she neglects to investigate the far more puzzling issue inherent in the converse: how come, historically, there are any feminists at all? Such a configuration of power suggested by the notion of a 'generalized male witness' structuring 'consciousness' would seem to preclude a feminist identity (1993, p. 75)

According to Foucault's ethical theory, whilst such discipline occurs from a variety of points, using a variety of discourses, it also encourages a variety of resistances (Bordo, 1989, p. 15). Sites of resistance to femininity in sport, commence at the same time as training in femininity begins. During childhood, the young girl enters society learning about the importance of restrictions in movement and physical manners of expression and appearance, for females. Opposition and resistance to these restrictions occur in many

young girls, and may continue to grow through an athletic woman's life (Lenskyj, 1990, p. 222).<sup>378</sup> Lenskyj states:

If being a woman is not to be a synonym for degradation, limitation and subordination, then it must free itself from the definition of 'femininity'. Womanhood must define itself independently from 'man' as a point of reference, and overcome the polarisation of sexual roles.... No-one can say at present what such an autonomous definition of being a woman, neither defined through its conformity nor through its contrast to 'masculinity' could be, since women have been dispossessed of their sexuality and self-determination by a patriarchal sovereign system thousands of years old. (1990, p. 227)

Bordo (1993, p. 193; 1989, p. 15; also see Soper, 1993, p. 34; Vertinsky, 1999, p. 5; Markula, 1995, pp. 441, 442) extends on Foucault and Bartky by suggesting that sites of resistance may emanate from the 'docile' body. The female who engages in a rigorous weights program to become more attractive to men may find that her newly sculptured body also permits her greater opportunities to assert her freedom. Where once she acted, as Iris Young described, in a way that was "physically inhibited, confined, positioned and objectified" (1980, p. 152), she may now resist that form of containment. In terms of the exercising female, McNeill (1988 cited by Markula, 1995, p. 428) observes that even though the sport of aerobics celebrates a heterosexual feminine look, it also promotes a muscular look and vital lifestyle. So there may be subversion of some norms in the docility produced by others. An investigation of the multiple sites of resistance becomes the focus of the second and third waves of Foucauldian feminists.

### **Second Wave uses of Agonistic Conception of Power**

The major criticism made about the first wave of Foucauldian feminism is that the emphasis on the disciplinary and expansive effects of power presented a view of the subject that appeared to be incapable of the types of political and social agency that were crucial to the feminist cause (McLaren, 1997, pp. 109, 110).<sup>379</sup> It is the ethical subject produced in the later writings of Foucault on sexuality, which is a subject, that is compatible with feminist political aims. McLaren (1997, p. 112) argues that this Foucauldian subject is a social subject that allows for the capture of the "specificity of women's experience" encouraged by feminist standpoint theorists, whilst also producing

the types of social transformations that will reduce the oppression of the collective group of women, by producing spaces for the public production of these subjugated experiences. The Foucauldian view of power and resistance as dispersed and omnipresent also ties in with the radical feminist claim that arenas of life that were considered private on a traditional liberal view, contained mechanisms that reproduced the power relations in the wider society. Finally, McLaren argues that the Foucauldian view of power recognises the possibility for power to be unequally distributed. The recognition of patriarchal power is not inconsistent with Foucauldian theory (McLaren, 1997, p. 116; Aladjem, 1991, p. 5).<sup>380</sup> But the site of Foucauldian political intervention is an investigation of how patriarchy works and how it can be resisted. For these purposes, Foucauldian feminists need to investigate local and specific effects of patriarchal power and resistances towards those effects (McLaren, 1997, pp. 114-116; Ramanazoglu, 1993, p. 5). The Foucauldian subject is capable of feminist resistance against the specific effects of the social relations that they find themselves part of.

What Foucault adds to all these ideas is the notion that knowledge and power are productive, rather than repressive. Hence, contrary to the criticisms of first wave Foucauldian feminists, Foucault opens a space for active resistance against the current relations of power, that was not available to earlier feminists who worked with a sovereign model of male power over women (Lenskyj, 1994, p. 358). For Foucault, political change could not be thought of as a liberation of a feminist consciousness from the oppression caused by patriarchal society. Instead, liberation involved the production of new discourses, new power relations and new subjectivities from within the current relations of power. Resistance could not escape power (Ramanazoglu, 1993, pp. 4, 24; Bailey, 1993, p. 114).

Some feminist writers have taken up Foucault's idea of the agonistic relationship of resistance and power. Part of its appeal is that its model of subjectivity for women is not one of passive victims of patriarchy. It allows space for women to actively fashion themselves and their social situation (McNay, 1992, p. 4; Deveaux, 1994, p. 5; Lenskyj, 1994, p. 358). As Grimshaw explains:

Precisely because he [Foucault]<sup>381</sup> does not see power as located in a single source, precisely because he thinks that the concept of power as the *possession*

of a particular group is not adequate to characterise the operations of power in modern societies, he argues that power can never be uniform, total or smooth in its operations. It is always shifting and unstable, and it always generates resistance (1993, p. 54).

This second wave of Foucauldian feminism concentrated firmly on the types of 'intervention', 'contestation', and 'subversion' against feminine norms by females. In Bordo's terms, "the dominant discourses which define femininity are continually allowing for the eruption of 'difference'" (Bordo, 1993, p. 193).

The second wave of Foucauldian feminists used the agonistic model of power, exemplified by the Foucauldian notion that "where there is power, there is resistance", and the idea that specific individuals contest the effects of power-knowledge on their subjectivities and relations with others in "ongoing and sometimes subtle ways" (Deveaux, 1994, p. 5). As an extension of the radical feminist creed that "the personal is political", this second wave of feminist analysis described the ways that women engage in resistance to modern regimes of power in their everyday lives (Sawicki, 1988, p. 185; Bordo, 1993, p. 193). With the effects of patriarchal power understood as circulating through ever diminishing microchannels, the site of most resistance will be the locally felt curtailments of freedom experienced by individual subjects. Foucauldian resistance may involve, as Frye (1983) has characterised feminist redescription, acts of great courage, persistence and dis-identification.<sup>382</sup>

According to Fraser the subject of these fluid relations of power is a complex of meaning "drawn from a fund of interpretative possibilities available to agents in specific societies" (1992, p. 178). She suggests that any woman is:

...knit from a plurality of different descriptions arising from a plurality of different signifying practices....the different descriptions... fade in and out of focus. Thus, one is not always a woman in the same degree; in some contexts, one's womanhood figures centrally in the set of descriptions under which one acts; in others, it is peripheral or latent. Finally, it is not the case that people's social identities are constructed once and for all and definitively fixed. Rather, they alter over time, shifting with shifts in agent's practices and affiliations. (1992, p. 178; also see Frye, 1996, p. 997)<sup>383</sup>

This does not mean that women cannot unite in the political projects of feminism. According to Fraser, “the point is that the formation of social groups proceeds by struggles over social discourse” (1992, p. 179). These struggles allow for fluid, non-dominating relationships and alliances between people caught in networks of power (Bailey, 1993, p. 114; Brook, 1999, p. 107; Frye, 1996, pp. 1002, 1005). The crisscrossing of different, fractured identities and the changing nature of each woman's identity, means that alliances may be more effective, and sites of resistance may occur because of personal, as well as group, effects. The disabled woman, pursuing a feminist cause of access for her own empowerment through sporting participation, may campaign with the disabled man (Ransom, 1993, p. 125). In Foucault's terms, resistance will become more immediate, more partial and more fragmented (Grosz, 1990b, p. 88; Bailey, 1993, p. 107). This politics not only encourages difference, but also encourages discourse between differently identified groups. In di Stefano's terms:

If gender has been the original impetus for this skepticism (of universal claims), then it may also be the case that it is time to give up the comforts and closures of the concept for a more radical and decentred attention to multiple differences, none of which merit theoretical privileging over others. (1990, p. 75)

Elizabeth Grosz suggests that patriarchal power will be more effectively transformed by these “...strategically located strikes at power's most vulnerable places” (1990b, p. 92). These strikes occur at a variety of places each with a small, resistant group of subjects, motivated by personal experiences of, and resistances to, a normalising structure. A Foucauldian feminist would stress this variety of local power relations over the more global descriptions of male domination, as it is at the local level that various resistances are made possible. This type of feminism would not reject the data of radical feminism, but would endeavour to show “...the productive power, the normalising tendencies as well as the possibilities that it produces in the social field” (Sawicki, 1991, p. 172).

The practical problem with such a proposal to feminists is obvious. The question should be posed: ‘Is the promise of liberation in a post-rationalist feminism worth the attendant risks of giving up the solidarity of feminist sisterhood?’ The more sinister

question also posed by some feminists is why should this theoretical shift to local resistances and fractured identities occur at the very time that women have begun to speak of their subjectivities and create practical and powerful resistance to the effects of patriarchy? Will the partial, fractured narratives of postmodernism inspire confidence in the sustainability and success of the political side to feminism (Hartsock, 1990, p. 163; hooks, 1990, p. 28 both cited by Brook, 1999, p. 9; Sykes, 1996, p. 462)? As di Stefano remarks:

Pluralism...reduces us to being as other among others: it is not a recognition, but a reduction to [sic] difference, to absolute indifference, equivalence, interchangeability (Owens,p53)... It is as if postmodernism has returned us to the falsely innocent indifference of the very humanism to which it stands opposed; a rerun, in updated garb, of the modernist case of the incredible shrinking woman. (1990, p. 77)

She concludes by suggesting it would be stupid to get rid of the feminine gender identity before removing patriarchal power. The alternative seems to be between giving up feminism in postmodernism for something which may not be as powerful, or losing some female and non-female support for feminism, by remaining in anti-rationalism.

A related criticism of Foucault made by Fraser (1989, pp. 28-33, 56), is that the notions that power is everywhere, and that it is exercised rather than possessed, has the effect that Foucault's theory is normatively neutral. Foucault doesn't have the resources to explain why resistance is preferable to domination (Fraser, 1989, p. 29). Without normative frameworks, Foucault has no way of distinguishing between good and bad expressions of power-knowledge. What Foucault must fall back on is an implicit acceptance of Enlightenment concepts of freedom, justice and liberation, concepts that Foucault had as targets for critique in his earlier positions (McLaren, 1997, pp. 121, 122; Grimshaw, 1993, p. 55). What this means is that Foucault's ideas may be useful in deconstructing the position of females in contemporary patriarchal society, but they offer no conceptual resources with which to reconstruct that society (Grimshaw, 1993, p. 55).

Grimshaw (1993, p. 56) replies to this criticism by suggesting that, for Foucault, the clear distinction between deconstruction and reconstruction is not useful. One of targets of Foucault's deconstructions has been the ways that liberating theories of humanity have

been blind to their own tendencies towards domination and discipline. Sawicki (1991, cited in Grimshaw, 1993, p. 56) suggests two uses of this 'deconstruction' for feminist theories. Firstly, feminist theories have often been blind to the ways that women may engage in practices of domination, and so utopian visions of liberating a pure female spirit may not be aware of the power relations that are in effect in such decisions. Secondly, feminist theories themselves have engaged in practices of division, discipline and control. A Foucauldian approach to power, that deconstructs the basis for these dominating tendencies in feminism, may offer a reconstructed feminism. As Grimshaw suggests, Foucault's deconstruction does support destability, ambiguity and ambivalence precisely because it is opposed to those theories, whether feminist or not, that do not. Hence, the reconstruction of society offered by Foucauldian feminists is to "rule some... views out as ethically and politically undesirable" because of their participation in strategies of domination (1993, p. 58). In Aladjem's terms, it is the neutrality that gives Foucault his critical edge, because in presenting knowledge without taking sides, Foucault acts as "an obstinate prism" that reveals something about all presentations that do take sides, including those from the first wave of Foucauldian feminists (1991, p. 2). The political target for Foucauldian analysis is not "error, illusion, alienated consciousness or ideology" (Foucault, 1980, p. 133 cited by Aladjem, 1991, p. 3), but the politics of contesting current 'truths' and producing new ones. This target does not escape power, but produces new relations of power (Aladjem, 1991, p. 3).

Deveaux (1994, p. 6; also see Ransom, 1993, p. 135) also responds by suggesting that such criticisms of Foucault are mis-readings of the purpose of his work. Foucault does critique the existence of an originary subject as a tool that permits the disciplining of subjects in modern society, but his later works also suggest the importance of freedom from domination for any specific subject. His work continually engages with occasions of domination in the various institutions and non-institutional spaces in contemporary societies, and such domination may potentially stem from the reification of Enlightenment concepts (Foucault, 1986a). Aladjem (1991, p. 6) agrees, and suggests that if Foucault, as charged by Fraser (1989, pp. 55-66), smuggles back into his theory liberal-humanist concepts of 'freedom', 'autonomy', 'dignity' and 'human rights', then he does so in a way

that tests those same ideals. Foucault displays the emergence of these ideals, to both challenge their dominating effects, whilst revealing their inspiration. So Foucault may be accused of reconfiguring a rights discourse without liberal-humanism foundations (Foucault, 1986a, pp. 44-50; Aladjem, 1991, p. 7). As Grimshaw explains:

Foucault described himself as a pessimist. But this ‘pessimism’ is better seen not as a belief that no change is possible, but as a caution against the potential dangers and deceptions involved in certain kinds of Utopian optimism.... Sawicki argues that Foucault’s ‘negative freedom’ does not deny us the option of using a discourse of rights, liberties and justice; he just points out its potential dangers. But there is nothing in Foucault which stops us having positive strategies as well –provided that we recognise their dangers (1993, p. 59).

It is important that Foucault's treatment of fractured subjectivities and pockets of resistance are not underestimated by feminism. Feminist critiques of post-rationalism suggest that there will always be some item of ‘difference’ that will shatter any coherencies. Cultural generalisations will always be ruled out, and what will remain is a universe composed of particularities (Bordo, 1988, p. 629; Bradiotti, 1986, p. 54). From a Foucauldian viewpoint this particularity is something to embrace and nourish. Foucault would suggest that difference would only shatter those discourses, whether patriarchal, feminist, or other, which have become congealed (Bradiotti, 1986, p. 54). Foucauldian feminism allows for alliances to be formed and broken, depending on the specific nature of the resistance in the emerging discourse. That is, political identities would form for pragmatic reasons, rather than around some essential sense of ‘natural’ identity (Sykes, 1996, p. 462). In Haraway’s terms, “identities seem contradictory, partial and strategic” (1990, p. 197 cited by Wheaton and Tomlinson, 1998, p. 264). The crisscrossing of these alliances permits a practical coherence amongst the attacks of the various social groups, without the normalising and disciplinary effects of one discourse speaking for all people, or one identity ‘unifying’ all resistance, but excluding all ‘others’ (Bailey, 1993, p. 115; Ransom, 1993, p. 125; Ramazanoglu and Holland, 1993, p. 249; Cole, 1993, p. 81; Ahmed, 1996, p. 75). Denise Riley (1988, p. 112 cited by Sykes, 1996, p. 465) suggests that the belief that any ‘natural’ category of women does not exist, is not incompatible with “a

politics ‘of as if they existed,’ [for pragmatic reasons]<sup>384</sup> since the world behaves as if they unambiguously did.”

In opposing any essentialist or foundational view of subjectivity, such as that of liberal and radical theories of feminism, poststructuralist feminism offers a view of subjectivity that is complex, changing, local and non-essential (Sykes, 1996, p. 461). Foucault's discourse theory attempts to reveal the inadequacy of static or ahistorical views of identity. Dewar suggests that the problem with using identity politics to challenge sexism and patriarchy is that in producing the identity, feminists “have tried to develop unidimensional notions or categories of oppression, even though our identities and experiences of oppression are complex and multidimensional” (1993, p. 212).<sup>385</sup> A removal of the generalisation of oppositions in radical feminism, may reduce the alienating violence of this theory which attempts to speak for all women at all times (Grosz, 1990b, p. 93; Ahmed, 1996, p. 75).

Iris Young explains this alienation. She suggests:

Deconstruction... shows that a desire for unity or wholeness in discourse generates borders, dichotomies and exclusions....A woman in a feminist group that seeks to affirm mutual identification will feel and be doubly excluded if, by virtue of her being different in race, class, culture or sexuality, she does not identify with the others nor they with her (1990b, p. 301).<sup>386</sup>

One alternative to a totalising theory of gender is a politics celebrating difference. A politics of difference will lay down “...institutional and ideological means for recognizing and affirming differently identified groups” (Young, 1990b, p. 319). This affirmation will occur in two ways; the basic provision of political representation to these different group interests, and, more significantly for a Foucauldian feminist, the celebration of distinctive cultures, practices and characteristics of different individuals and groups. According to Young: “Radical politics, moreover, must develop discourse and institutions for differently identified groups together without suppressing or subsuming their differences” (1990b, p. 320). The acceptance of such difference is a strategic political resistance against a politics of identity (Ahmed, 1996, p. 75).

Deveaux’s extension of Foucault’s agonistic model of power is to suggest that feminists who use this model must, as with the feminists of the first wave of Foucauldian

appropriations, be aware that “it obscures many important experiences of power specific to women” (1994, p. 6). In Foucault’s understanding, modern power is distinguished from violence, force and domination, in that the object of such power has the possibility of resisting. As Deveaux explains:

This does not mean that domination is altogether antithetical to power. Rather, domination is the result of trajectories of force and power relations, culminating in a greater or lesser state of subordination.... Yet power and domination remain different phenomena for Foucault. (1994, p. 7)

The problem with this is that these notions of power and domination may not tie in with women’s experiences of freedom and subordination. Foucault acknowledges that the subject is an active agent mediating different force relations. He also accepts the possibility of domination occurring. What feminists can add to the Foucauldian notion is an investigation of the effects of structural inequality and male violence on the experience of female freedom in society (Deveaux, 1994, p. 7; MacCannell and MacCannell, 1993, p. 210). Ramazanoglu and Holland argue that, regardless of the fragile and shifting nature of the control held by men over women, the grip of this control is tenacious. There is a prevailing episteme of male domination and female subordination within which relations of power and resistance has effects. For the authors, it is important that feminist uses of Foucault recognise a ‘middle-ground’ between a micropolitics of power and resistance and the entrenchment of the systemic privilege of men over women (1993, pp. 242, 243).

The shift towards the actively resistant subject in the late Foucault brought a further criticism from some feminists. Soper (1993, pp. 34, 36) and Grimshaw (1993, pp. 65-70) both suggest that the resistant subject creates a new focus on the self that is predominantly aesthetic<sup>387</sup> and individualistic.<sup>388</sup> As with Rorty’s position, Foucault is described as presenting feminists with a view of political intervention that relies on the isolated, recalcitrant individual to produce change. The collective political change may itself be normalising and subjectifying. Grimshaw (1993, p. 66) goes on to suggest a major contradiction in Foucault’s later shift. Foucault’s earlier work dealt with, and undermined, the notion of the self-monitoring subject as subjected to disciplinary forms of power. Yet, in his later ethical works, he returns to this self-monitoring and self-disciplining subject as engaging in practices that constitute autonomy. So the question that remains unanswered

by Foucault is “*when* forms of self-discipline or self-surveillance can with any justification be seen as exercises of autonomy or self-creation, or when they should be seen, rather, as forms of discipline” (Grimshaw, 1993, p. 66; also see Bordo, 1993, pp. 195, 196).<sup>389</sup> Bordo’s argument is that, in supporting the notion of resistance in the late Foucault, second wave feminists may have ignored how insidious effects of patriarchal power are in producing normalisation. It is important to recognise the potential for empowerment where it had been previously ignored. But it is also important to also see the politics of normalisation that acts to displace or accommodate resistance, as well as to frame normalising practices as liberating. The rhetoric of resistance that surrounds certain acts must not be confused with acts of self-fashioning that challenge norms of femininity (Bordo, 1993, p. 198). Attempts to reframe either anorexia or hysteria as liberating feminist resistance ignore that the female bodies/subjectivities that are produced are “reproducing in a caricatured form the very conditions they protest” (Bordo, 1989 cited by Miller and Penz, 1991, p. 149).

### **Third Wave uses of Constructed Gender Identities**<sup>390</sup>

According to Deveaux (1994, p. 1), the third wave of feminists who used Foucauldian theory utilised the idea that the contemporary categories of sexual identity were the result of the subjectifying and dividing discourses on sexuality and the body that proliferated with modern regimes of power. Postmodern feminists have expanded on this idea to include the ways that gender identity is limited and controlled within modern discourses. According to Ransom:

Foucault brings essentialist assumptions about women’s bodies into question by querying the body’s status as something given in nature and existing outside the operations of power. In his view the body is not helpfully regarded as ‘natural’ but becomes thoroughly socialised. The coherence of any distinction between nature as fixed and culture as variable, sex as biological and gender as social, is undermined. For Foucault, the categories with which we think about the body... are seen to be fundamentally culturally embedded and imbued with the workings of power (1993, p. 126).

Whilst feminism may have preceded Foucault in its discussion of the social construction of male power and norms of gender identity, Foucault deepened and extended the challenge

to male supremacy by deconstructing the naturalness of both the body and sexuality. The third wave of feminist appropriations of Foucault used the idea that sex, selves and bodies are all social constructions, rather than simply material objects. This allowed for the possibility of multiple and changing, rather than unitary and fixed, identities and bodies (Ramanazoglu, 1993, p. 6; Soper, 1993, p. 31; Bailey, 1993, pp. 99, 100). As Bordo explains;

...the body, far from being some fundamentally stable, acultural constant to which we must *contrast* all culturally relative and institutional forms, is constantly 'in the grip', as Foucault puts it, of cultural practices. Not that it is a matter of cultural *repression* of the instinctual or natural body. Rather, there is no 'natural' body. Cultural practices... are already and always inscribed, as Foucault has emphasised, 'on our bodies and their materiality, their forces, energies, sensations and pleasures.' (1988, p. 90 cited by Soper, 1993, pp. 31, 32)

Some insight may be gained into the effects of the construction of dichotomous, hierarchical and natural sex categories by considering the historical development of such categories in modernity. Hood-Williams (1995, pp. 297-300) describes the emergence during the Enlightenment of the scientific techniques used to support the discourse of dichotomous sex categories. Prior to the Enlightenment, no one bothered to search for the scientific evidence to support the social differentiation of men and women. Women were merely considered to be an inferior version of the one perfect sex, men. Sex was monomorphic. Yet gender was a clear and fixed categorisation which remained dichotomous because women were considered inferior versions of humanity. Hence discrimination did not require biological legitimisation in the form of dichotomous sex categories. It could be sustained socially within a one-sex model (Hood-Williams, 1995, pp. 297, 298; Balsamo, 1996, p. 25).

The scientific discovery/production of dichotomous sexual categories was preceded by a change in political discourse about the expanding/changing opportunities that should be available to women. Early feminists were questioning social discrimination based on gender. If liberalism opened up freedoms for men, shouldn't it also open them up for women? The period of the Enlightenment extended certain freedoms to women. So, as part of the modern regime of power that categorised and produced subjectivities, but which also

had the effect of binding women to certain traditional responsibilities and positions in the newly enlightened world, the categories of biological sex were necessitated. Hood-Williams explains that the development of the two-sex paradigm was a political response to struggles that were occurring in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries over rights to access to the public world and responsibilities within the private world. Modern scientists developed the concern to find the 'true sex' of individuals in order "to [continue to] differentiate" between males and females. This 'true sex' required a two-sex model, with people produced with a stable and fixed 'natural' sexuality (1995, p. 297; also see Verbrugge, 1997, pp. 280, 281; Balsamo, 1996, p. 25). But the development of the two-sex model was a political decision, and not a decision that lay "immanent within a body" (1995, p. 298). As Hood-Williams concludes, "... writers from within the tradition of the sex/gender problematic have acted as if the body possesses a peculiar ability to generate the true meaning of sex. But sex does not simply stand like a base beneath the superstructure of gender because the existence of sex itself is an object of the discourse of gender" (1995, p. 299).<sup>391</sup>

These categories of sex have persisted, and, according to Bailey (1993, p. 101), they act to circumscribe the range of possibilities for different feminist interpretations of the body. For if the body is sexed in some pre-discursive, natural way, then the differences and similarities described by biology become permanent. Sex and gender will remain as systems of differentiation between people, reformable to some degree, but never replaceable. Feminist political action will be limited to reforms within natural, dichotomous categories of sex, categories that position the male as dominant (Bailey, 1993, p. 101; Jagger, 1988, p. 99; Balsamo, 1996, p. 10; Lorber, 2000, p. 80).

The essential biological 'identities' of phallogocentric logic may be utilised minimally in feminist struggles around the politics of abortion, rape, pornography, maternity and health.<sup>392</sup> But they limit the types of resistances and alliances that can be formed in other fields of female endeavour (Bailey, 1993, p. 116).<sup>393</sup> As suggested in the second wave appropriations of Foucault, difference should not be seen as undermining political identity, but as a force that should be celebrated as a politically powerful resource. Sawicki suggests, "Difference...enables us to multiply the sources of resistance to the myriad of

relations of domination” (1988, p. 187 cited in Bailey, 1993, p. 118; also see Lorber, 2000, p. 80).

One site of resistance that has been recently challenged by feminist writers is the objectivity of these biological categories. These writers have revealed the large amount of political work that is required in order to maintain these categories as natural and dichotomous. Judith Butler expands on the theories of Foucault to investigate the ways technologies are used in modern society to produce gender (and sexual) identities and bodies, and how the revelation of this cultural work can undermine the boundaries around those identities and bodies. Following Foucault, Butler suggests that the category of ‘sex’ is a normative ideal that “produces the bodies it governs,” through a regulation, monitoring and demarcation of the practices of the body it controls (1999b, p. 235; also see Balsamo, 1996, pp. 2, 3). Gender is materially and discursively produced “through repetitive performances of words, acts, gestures and desire” such that they “produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being” (Butler, 1991, pp. 31,32,33,136,147 cited in Deveaux, 1994, p. 9). There is no ‘naturally sexed’ body, on which the costumes of gender are hung. The sexed body is made in a repetitive and stylised series of interactions between bodies and discourses, such that the series of interactions eventually becomes naturalised (Brook, 1999, p. 14; Hughes and Witz, 1997, pp. 52, 53; Balsamo, 1996, pp. 2, 3). As Nelson explains:

Butler draws upon Foucauldian understandings of how juridical forms of power produce the subjects that they subsequently come to represent, in a manner that disavows their productive role. Analyses that take these juridical foundations as given, such as the matrix of heterosexual desire, naturalize these exclusions and render them outside the realm of the political and into the realm of the ‘natural’ and pre-discursive (1999, p. 6)

Judith Butler (1999b, p. 416) has suggested that the notion of separate sex categories is discursively produced, and that any sexual subjectivity is inscribed on, rather than inherent in, the human body. As Butler explains, “... words, acts, gestures, and desires produce the effect of an internal core or substance, but produce this *on the surface* of the body.... In other words, acts and gestures, articulated and enacted desires create the illusion of an interior and organizing gender core” (1999b, p. 417). The origin of these

repetitive acts and gestures is localised in 'the self.' The reality of gender is reproduced by the utilisation of the originary subject. The discourses of humanism displace the social and political production of gender onto a psychological core of the subject, and, in so doing, the disciplinary techniques and political regulations that produce docile, gendered individuals are ignored (Butler, 1999b, p. 417). As Butler concludes:

If the inner truth of gender is a fabrication and if a true gender is a fantasy instituted and inscribed on the surface of bodies, then it seems that genders can be neither true nor false, but are only produced as the truth effects of a discourse of primary and stable identity (1999b, p. 417).

Notions of essential femaleness or maleness are deconstructed as constructed discourses that sex the individual in certain prescribed ways, that punish the individual who acts in proscribed ways, and that deploy their 'truths' to the benefit of specific interests (Bailey, 1993, p. 102; Butler, 1999b, p. 420; Brook, 1999, p. 14). As Balsamo (1996, pp. 2-4) states, feminists no longer simply engage with textual or media representations of gender, but must now challenge the ways that cultural practices make "the body gendered." Being a female now becomes a way of acting, rather than an essential, ontological category: it is, in Sykes terms, a mask "...that can be worn and changed" (1996, p. 464). Gender is thereby thought of as a set of truth effects produced by modern regimes of power-knowledge that result in disciplined, ritualised, stylised and necessarily repetitive ways of acting (Balsamo, 1996, p. 3). When gender becomes a way of performing, rather than a state of being, the desire for a stable identity requires that there is a continual need to keep repeating the performance (Nelson, 1999, p. 2; Sykes, 1996, p. 464).

Butler suggests that something can be called performative "in the sense that it constitutes as an effect the very subject that it appears to express." Gender is performative, rather than simply performance, because in repeating the acts and practices, gender itself is constituted as a thing (cited in Price and Shildrick, 1999, p. 414; also see Balsamo, 1996, p. 10; Brook, 1999, p. 14).<sup>394</sup> In answer to those critics who interpreted this position as suggesting that gender is something hung on the body like a costume, Butler argues that "performativity must be understood not as a singular or deliberate 'act', but, rather, as the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names"

(1993, p. 1 cited by Brook, 1999, pp. 113, 114). Bodies are brought into being through the performativity of gender (and race, sexuality etc.) (Brook, 1999, p. 116). The ritualised performativity of gender also has the effect of legitimating its reality. As Butler suggests, the “action is a public action” that produces gender (1999b, p. 420; Brook, 1999, p. 113). The performativity of gender suggests both that the gendered body has no ontological status that precedes these acts, and that the fabrication of gender as an interior, organising reality is produced through these repetitive acts and is a political act of control (Price and Shildrick, 1999, p. 414; Nelson, 1999, p. 5; Hughes and Witz, 1997, p. 53). Bailey explains that,

Foucault’s genealogy of sexuality will fiction a truth of bodies as products of time, space and force, will attempt to construct bodies as foci in power-knowledge-truth struggles... There will not be a transhistorical female body left as a reference for these arguments; instead, what is called ‘the body’ will be a site and expression of different, interested power relations in various times and places. This... can offer better resistance to the fragmented and diffuse, but undeniably interlocking, specific structures of masculinist power, than it can to the primordial monolith of ‘patriarchy’. (1993, p. 106; also see Balsamo, 1996, p. 25)

The feminist political issue shifts from an epistemological account of identity (What do ‘I’ need?) to exposing the rules of signification/repetition in a particular community that produces gender (How is ‘I’ produced in such a way, by such a community?). As Davies argues, the poststructural perspective sees the individual and the collective as discursively constructed in interlocking ways such that,

One can only ever be what the various discourses make possible, and one’s being shifts with the various discourses through which one is spoken into existence. The individual or heroic “I” is understood as a discursive construction... from the subject position made available to her/him (1991, p. 43 cited by Sykes, 1996, p. 466).

The first two waves of feminist appropriations of Foucault come together at the site of the body; the ritualised and stylised acts of gender are often produced through surveillance and self-surveillance, but the recognition of the instability of the performativity means that resistance is possible (Price and Shildrick, 1999, p. 413). The ‘forcible’ repetition of gender norms reveals that the effects of the ‘truth’ of gender can

never be imposed completely (Butler, 1999a, p. 236). Butler suggests that this type of understanding opens up radical possibilities for resistance. She states:

That gender reality is created through sustained social performances means that the very notions of an essential sex and a true or abiding masculinity or femininity are also constituted as part of the strategy that conceals gender's performative character and the performative possibilities for proliferating gender configurations outside the restricting frames of masculinist domination and compulsory heterosexuality

Genders can be neither true nor false, neither real nor apparent, neither original nor derived. As credible bearers of those attributes, however, genders can also be rendered thoroughly and radically *incredible* (1999b, p. 421; also see Balsamo, 1996, pp. 19, 20; Lorber, 2000, p. 81).

Feminist resistance involves the recognition of the instability of gender identity to open up new possibilities for different, discontinuous, and previously subjugated subjectivities (Deveaux, 1994, p. 9; Bailey, 1993, p. 107).<sup>395</sup> It is the incoherence of these subjugated subjectivities that exposes gender as a fictive norm, which regulates the field it is meant to describe 'truthfully' (Butler, 1999b, p. 417; Nelson, 1999, p. 7). This discursive production has the effect of "a false stabilization of gender," where the coherence that is produced between gender, sex and sexuality hides discontinuities where "gender does not follow from sex, and desire" (Butler, 1999b, p. 416). These discontinuities, evident in heterosexual, bisexual, and gay and lesbian contexts reveal that none of the three dimensions of sex, gender and sexuality must necessarily follow from the others (Butler, 1999b, pp. 416, 417; Brook, 1999, p. 14). The docile body is the site of imprinting the relatively recent history of sex. But it is a surface that is politically relevant, because it is also the surface of resistance to heterosexuality and to gender inscription. The 'truth' of the body is never complete because it struggles with other partial 'truths' (Bailey, 1993, pp. 108, 115; Butler, 1999a, p. 236). Feminism, by revealing these subjugated bodies/subjectivities, can disrupt the power/knowledge disciplines that construct and reify differences as natural. As Bailey suggests, "Bodies, women's bodies, with partial interested truths... allow for fragmented identities, partial strategies and specific, interested resistances" (1993, p. 107). Or, in Browning's terms, "Sexual identity... can be nothing but a construction- therefore let us construct ours strategically" (1997, p. 3). Tying this notion together with the idea that even the docile body may express a resistance, the female

athletic body may resist certain aspects of her containment, even during practices that categorise her as feminine.<sup>396</sup> Only via repetition of resistance does a subversion become possible. The task of feminism is to participate in the discursive practices of repetition, which constitute a many resistant identity. Through repetition of resistant descriptions, the original repetitions that allowed the humanist, and sexed, “I” are disrupted (Bailey, 1993, p. 108; Butler, 1999b, p. 421).

The female body is the locus of social control of female (Bailey, 1993, p. 102). The idea that we have biological categories of male and female is constructed by particular discursive practices in medicine, law, religion and other areas within culture. These discursive practices not only produce official knowledge about gender, but also institutionalise social relations and reproduce the knowledge through the education of professionals (Bailey, 1993, p. 107; Balsamo, 1996, p. 34). But these discursive practices also produce resistance. As Balsamo argues:

... the female body functions as a border case; it is at once defined as part of a natural order *and* as an intensely fascinating and yet threatening object of cultural control. Its excessiveness strains the cultural authority of medical knowledge. As such it is a site of potential transgression against the boundaries of social order, at once constituted within the dominant discourses of science and medicine but threatening to the epistemological certainty of that discourse (1996, pp. 27, 28).

It is at the site of bodies that the naturalistic fiction (of sex, and sexuality) can be disrupted through such bodies/subjectivities as the doubly sexed body, lesbian sex, transsexual dressing, the hairy woman, the surgically ‘enhanced’ body, and the bodybuilder (Bailey, 1993, p. 107).<sup>397</sup> The cross-dresser denaturalises sex, gender and heterosexuality by means of a non-disciplined performance which avows the distinctiveness of the three dimensions whilst also displaying how the unity is culturally fabricated. This displacement demonstrates the fluidity of gender identities that suggests “an openness to resignification and recontextualization” in a non-hegemonic way (Butler, 1999b, p. 418). In Browning’s terms, “I manipulate my body in the world, like a prosthesis,” an addition to my self (1997, p. 3).

But there is a danger to this type of resistance. As Bailey states, there is a “pleasure of uncovering the ‘truth’ of self” and living the identity attached to the name (1993, p.

109). Foucault demonstrates the complicity that goes with this pleasure of naming and living, as one where the co-operation with the 'truth' of the body, or sex, circumscribes the possibilities for human lives (Bailey, 1993, p. 116). As Butler argues, coherence is desired, and it is this desire that produces a repetitive set of gender acts (1999b, p. 417).<sup>398</sup> And Balsamo adds that even the now de-essentialised biological identity of woman acted once as a foundation for the collective political action of feminists (1996, p. 31; also see Brook, 1999, p. 8; Lorber, 2000, pp. 83, 86).<sup>399</sup>

This desirability for stability is a particularly disabling political issue, according to Haraway. The search for an essential biological identity that unites women is a utopian quest that may prevent the formation of political alliances and coalitions around issues that affect the material lives of females. The plan of action that Haraway supports is to accept the partial and constructed identities that a non-essentialised view of woman produces, and to transform the various cultural discourses that limit the freedom of women and other groups (1985, cited by Balsamo, 1996, p. 34).

The partial identity that Haraway particularly discusses is the cyborg identity.<sup>400</sup> Haraway uses the notion of a cyborg body to describe the contemporary conjunction of the body and technology, such that the body is technologically transformed. As explained by Balsamo, Haraway's notion of cyborg bodies is that they are,

... constructed by communication networks and other hybrid discourses such as biotechnology, biopolitics, and female bodybuilding. Various used as a symbol of antitechnological sentiments or of the possibilities of "better living through chemistry," cyborgs are a product of fears and desires that run deep within our cultural imaginary. Through the use of technology as a means or context for human hybridization, cyborgs come to represent unfamiliar "otherness," one that challenges the denotative stability of human identity.... Cyborgs offer a particularly appropriate emblem of postmodern identity, since cyborg identity is predicated on transgressed boundaries.... Formed through a radical disruption of otherness, cyborg identity foregrounds the constructedness of otherness. Cyborgs alert us to the way in which identity depends on notions of "the other" that are arbitrary, shifting, and ultimately unstable (1996, pp. 32, 33).

The cyborg's disruption of the boundary between human and machine also calls into question a number of other boundaries (man/woman, culture/nature, reality/appearance, truth/illusion, theory/politics) that sustain the dualisms that help to produce the domination

of women and other groups in society, and which may be disrupted in other ways (Balsamo, 1996, pp. 33, 39).

Within the dualist logic of body and mind as separate entities, the body has been considered as outside of culture, as allied to 'the abject'. The abject is that which reduces culture to chaos. As Brook explains, "it is shapeless, monstrous, damp and slimy, boundless and beyond the outer limits. It is a realm associated primarily with the adult female body in its perceived fluidity and capacity to change, to bleed, to reproduce" (1999, pp. 14, 15). The overcoming of the material body is a mark of transcendence in phallogentric logic. But women have been/are most associated with the abject material body, and are therefore least capable of the transcendence that marks humanity. Butler suggests that it is politically important for feminists to determine why the materiality of the body is so threatening to phallogentric logic (and hence, patriarchy) that it must be viewed as abject. In other words, for Butler, "What challenge does the excluded and abjected realm produce to the symbolic hegemony that might force a radical rearticulation of what qualifies as bodies that matter?" (1993, p. 16 cited by Brook, 1999, p. 15). Or, how does the construction of the female body as abject maintain the political identities that ensure male dominance in society?

But, Kristeva (cited by Brook, 1999, p. 45; also see Balsamo, 1996, p. 28)<sup>401</sup> suggests that feminists can also reappropriate the positioning of female bodies and subjectivities as abject, as a position of strong political action. The abject body, as with the cyborg body, continuously evades containment by the regulations and rituals with which cultures position abject bodies as other. The pregnant body, the lactating body and the menstruating body<sup>402</sup> all endanger the boundaries that are set up between the self and other, the inside and outside, form and formlessness, and the absolute 'otherness' of females, more than other female bodies. As Brook comments, "abjection is most apparent at extreme, *visually evident*, moments of the body's changes" (1999, p. 45).<sup>403</sup> Hence the rituals and regulations that contain these abject bodies are most apparent (Brook, 1999, p. 45). The position that will be explained in the final section of this chapter is that the female athletic body is also sometimes produced and contained as that which is abject. The reason is that the female athletic body appears as fluid and changing, and hence, in need of

containment. Following from the third wave of Foucauldian feminists, it may be that the recognition that the athletic female body is produced as abject, and forced into containment, that may open up spaces for resistance of/by female athletic bodies.

### **Applications in Sport**

Throughout this thesis, a number of mechanisms have been suggested to facilitate women athletes gaining authority in sport. The common theme of these ideas has been to investigate the various ways that an oppressed group can gain authority, or be denied authority, by the dominant sports community. It has been suggested that the oppressed group may use the tools of using redistributive legislation in an expanded way, or of telling sentimental stories that convey the pain of their oppression, or of parodying dominant beliefs to undermine the strength of the hold that such thoughts have over the community, to be able to gain a space to assert their authority in sport. But such assertion is often strongly opposed by the more dominant group because this assertion threatens their very position of dominance (Griffiths, 1995).<sup>404</sup>

The contention dealt with in this section of this chapter is that another possible way of gaining authority in sport is via the production of excellent performance. In most high profile sports, women do not have the authority that comes from excellence, as it has been phallogcentrically understood in modern times.<sup>405</sup> As outlined in the previous chapter, female athletes must rely on other mechanisms for gaining authority; possibly charisma, heterosexual attractiveness, and/or nationalist sentimentality. The contention of this section is that the use of performance enhancing drugs could open the door to excellent performance for some women who *choose* to pursue this way of gaining authority in sport. This is a suggestion of possibility; a possibility which might have the potential to partly threaten the dominance of male authority in sport, and a possibility which men who want to maintain this authority have an active need to resist. Far from being central to the breakdown of patriarchy, following from Foucault (1982, p. 232), this 'local' intervention should be considered as merely one of the many possible ways that women may choose to oppose the specific and particular oppressions they feel in a male-dominated practice such

as sport. And such resistance may help in a breakdown of male dominance in the wider society.

Whilst there are many women who individually resist their containment within the category of female, through their skillful (understood in male terms) performance, participation in masculine sports, or their development of masculine body-types, these “deviant-mutants”, as described by Kane (1995, p. 209), are reined in through a variety of scientific and social techniques within the institution of sport.<sup>406</sup> The deviant-mutant “becomes a dangerous, suspicious outlier” (Birrell & Cole, 1990; Messner, 1988 both cited in Kane, 1995, p. 209) to the natural categories of sex, and suffers harassment and stigmatisation for challenging such essential and natural categories. As Hall suggests, “... transgression or excess is always pulled back through compliance to the “norms” of femininity (1996, p. 61). As Bolin (in press cited by Hall, 1996, p. 61) observes, whereas the “beast” challenges male privilege, the “beauty” sustains it.” And so, the threat to traditional power differentials is contained.

The most obvious form of scientific containment is the notion of sex-testing and sex differences; the use of genetic testing to ostensibly keep any person who is categorised as a man from participating in female sports, which maintains the idea that these sports are made up of inferior (female) athletes in need of protection from more skilled men (Verbrugge, 1997, p. 275). But there are other more subtle mechanisms used in various sports to maintain the socially constructed categories of sex that reinforce men’s power in sports. The most interesting cases of mythmaking to support dichotomous sex categories occur when females enter sports that have traditionally been gendered male. Sharon Stoll’s description of the limits placed on female basketball (of no more than three dribbles) for fear that the players’ “insides” would fall out (1994, p. 77), would now be viewed as ridiculous, except that similar prescriptions still occur today. As described in Chapter Four of this thesis, in 1998, the Equal Opportunities Board of Victoria maintains this discourse of different physical capacities between the genders (Sikora, 1998, p. 13; also see Sharpe, 1997, pp. 40, 41).

### **Resistant Bodies and Resistant Subjectivities**

Miller and Penz (1991, p. 148) explain that there are females athletes, such as bodybuilders, who develop new images of women's bodies that resist containment. The female body has been perceived by members of society as either a passive site for medical intervention or a site of sexual spectacle. These two ways of viewing the female body seemingly "exhaust all of the body's symbolic possibilities," and foreclose any more positive readings of the female body (Miller and Penz, 1991, p. 148). However, the technologies of power that attempt to produce docile bodies, either objectified by medicine or sexualised by patriarchy, also create pockets of resistance and opposition towards official knowledges. Sawicki suggests that as the females defy these normalising discourses, they also "destabilize feminine bodily identity and confuse gender" (1991, p. 165). Miller and Penz argue that bodybuilding offers one such disparity in discourse, which has allowed females to claim some sense of power in a previously male-dominated sport. This power goes beyond participation and incorporation into the dominant discourse, either as a token replication of the Benchmark Man<sup>407</sup> or as positioned by the dominant discourse as inferior (Miller and Penz, 1991, p. 159). It involves the development of an alternative discourse created by the accidental instability of an exclusively male discourse. The authors suggest that female bodybuilders have asserted their ownership of the sport "... by destabilising the entrenched meanings that formerly secured it as "self-evidently" and "naturally" masculine." (1991, p. 149) This instability occurs at the contradiction between the dominant masculine, acting "sport of strength" and the previously repressed (by male bodybuilders) feminine part of bodybuilding as a "sport of appearance." Female bodybuilders felt no discomfort in reading bodybuilding as a sport of appearance, and by stating this reading, female bodybuilders were able to appropriate a position within the world of bodybuilding (Miller and Penz, 1991, p. 153).

This destabilisation affects discourses about females throughout society. The discourse of feminine bodywork in the service of male desire is narrowly pitched and threatens to present the effects of female bodywork as only restrictive and pathological. This argument, that bodywork has been the exclusive domain of females, has traditionally been used by males to exclude females from, or confine females to, certain positions in

society. The built body has the potential to reframe bodywork in a way that captures its liberating potentials, and so, to challenge dominant beliefs about females. Hence “bodywork is not necessarily (that is, naturally) in the service of male interests,” it can provide areas for female freedom, mastery and control (Miller and Penz, 1991, pp. 152, 158). The bodybuilders reclaim power by the use of the dominant discourse in new and transgressive ways (Miller and Penz, 1991, p. 152). The authors argue:

Their efforts to feminize the sport are further solidified by their ability to use a traditional feminine characteristic- namely, their culturally derived expertise in “bodywork”, the management of appearance- in a distinctly non-traditional way. The outcome is that the entrenched meanings of both the sport and the female body are not reaffirmed, but expanded. (1991, p. 150)

Contrary to Miller and Penz, Obel (1996; also see Mansfield and McGinn, 1993, p. 50), via ethnographic work, finds that bodybuilding is still a gendering activity for females. The view of bodybuilding as necessarily transgressive and resistant bodywork overlooks the ways that female bodybuilders take up the docile subjectivities that are presented as desirable for them, that make their bodies safe for social, cultural and economic consumption (Mansfield and McGinn, 1993, p. 54; Balsamo, 1996, pp. 12, 13). Obel states:

That rather than a threatening femininity being openly produced, women bodybuilders actually resist being interpreted as threatening. Or put in another way, the sport of bodybuilding is normalised by women taking it up, rather than by men.

Readings of bodybuilding which suggest confusion and a threat to a gender order do not take into account the experiences of bodybuilders nor the language and practices of competitive bodybuilding which have attempted to resolve such ambiguity (1996, pp. 187, 188).

According to Harvey and Sparkes:

In the case of female body-building idealized femininity and sexuality are *prior to* and become *more significant* than muscularity and athleticism... illustrated by the International Federation’s guideline for ‘assessing the female physique’: “the judge must bear in mind that he or she is judging a women’s body-building competition and is looking for the ideal *feminine* physique. Therefore, the most important aspect is shape, a feminine shape (1991, p. 169; also see Ndalians, 1995, p. 15; Hargreaves, 1994, p. 169).<sup>408</sup>

The methods of containment also include the knowledge produced in the discipline of medicine about female bodybuilding<sup>409</sup> and the endeavours made by the female athletes to promote themselves as safely feminine (Obel, 1996, p. 192). Even steroid use by females is criticised in the bodybuilding literature, not for health reasons, but for the side effects that confuse the gender of the taker, rather than for the life-threatening side effects of prolonged use (Coles, 1999, p. 450; Mansfield and McGinn, 1993, p. 60; Vertinsky, 1999, p. 14; Balsamo, 1996, pp. 43-45).<sup>410</sup> The socially determined notion of ‘appropriate femininity’ is used to discipline and control or capture competitive women bodybuilders (Balsamo, 1996, pp. 54, 55). This notion of appropriate gender is embraced and practiced by the bodybuilders so as to make their sport, their bodies and their identities acceptable in mainstream culture (Obel, 1996, p. 192). Whilst the bodies and performances of female bodybuilders present a contradictory notion of femininity to the dominant one, this contradiction and ambiguity is negotiated by the athletes themselves through the sexualisation and objectification of their potentially resistant body (Markula, 1995, p. 427). Obel’s study of what bodybuilders say about their bodies and identities, and how they compete and act, suggests that female bodybuilding reinforces traditional notions of femininity and gender hierarchy (1996, p. 192). The athletes do their gender in an exaggerated way; the threat posed by their bodies requires an even greater effort of docility and a ‘louder’ expression of gender (Coles, 1999, p. 447; Mansfield and McGinn, 1993, p. 64).<sup>411</sup> As Balsamo explains,

despite appearing as a form of resistance, these technological body transgressions rearticulate the power relations of a dominant social order. That is to say that when female bodies participate in bodybuilding activities or other athletic events that are traditionally understood to be the domain of male bodies, the meanings of those bodies ... reveal, instead, how culture processes transgressive bodies in such a way to keep each body in its place- that is, subjected to its “other.”... A closer study of the popular culture of female bodybuilding reveals the *artificiality* of attributes of “natural” gender identity and the *malleability* of cultural ideals of gender identity, yet it also announces quite loudly the *persistence* with which gender and race hierarchies structure technological practices, thereby limiting the disruptive possibilities of technological transgressions (1996, pp. 54, 55).

According to Hall, the desire of many female bodybuilders, contained by both the demands of the sport and the market, are to present femininity and musculature as compatible. Rather than reveal the normalising control that the 'truth' of femininity exerts over females, the bodybuilder often understands their transgressive body within this 'truth' by pulling their bodies back toward the normalising regime. As Hall explains about bodybuilders generally, "Their heterosexuality and heterosexual desirability are secured, their muscle is rephrased as "flex appeal" and shows only when "pumped up," and their bodies are positioned as the site of heterosexual pleasure, romance, youth, fun, and beauty" (1996, p. 61; also see Theberge, 1991a, p. 130). The case of Bev Francis is, according to Hall (1996, pp. 60, 61), indicative of the success that men have had in "taming" resistant female bodybuilders. Through make-up, long fingernails, spandex bikinis, peroxided hair, feminine-appropriate muscles, the strong and powerful athlete is sexed as female, and different to the male bodybuilder. She is reined in as a heterosexually attractive, desirable and practicing female. Her muscles become tools for attracting men, her body is the "site of heterosexual pleasure, romance, youth, fun, and beauty" (Hall, 1996, p. 61; Ian, 1991 cited by Brook, 1999, pp. 120, 121; Wheaton and Tomlinson, 1998, p. 271, n.9).

A most obvious example of how natural categories of gender are maintained by the institutions that control bodybuilding is that the female breast implant is the only type of implant that is allowable in competitive bodybuilding (Obel, 1996, p. 194; Coles, 1999, p. 447).<sup>412</sup> This allowance satisfies two criteria simultaneously. It allows the female competitor to present herself as attractive to men. The rigors of training have not destroyed her 'natural' femininity. As Obel comments, "female bodybuilders emphasise that bodybuilding enables them to be attractive and feminine" (1996, p. 194). Secondly, it also permits the sport to present itself as more naturally suited to the male competitor. The male athlete's body is presented as the standard for the sport, and a standard that no woman could ever approach without artifice. As Leslie Heywood explains (1997, pp. 182, 183 cited by Vertinsky, 1999, p. 1):

... the female body is sexualized in such a way that it is trivialized, containable within a conventional male, heterosexual gaze, still reflecting a 'lack' from which the male body can be differentiated and hence found sufficient. Perhaps more than any other sport, current representations in bodybuilding situate the

spectacle of vanishing masculinity that tries to contain its fading through a re-inscription of the conventional femininity on which it depends.

So, in contrast to Miller and Penz, Obel suggests that female bodybuilding is not necessarily a sport of transgression, but can be read as a sport of transgression when the ambiguities about the female body and gender are emphasised as potential sites for the development of new identities and social practices. In Obel's view it is a mistake to see bodybuilding as a site at which individual females either accept or resist a dominant understanding of femininity, that is, a site for sovereign control or individual freedom. This presents the agent as the site of resistance. Instead, bodybuilding should be viewed as a site where knowledge about gender is collectively produced through the interplay of resistance and power, such that there is instability produced about what 'femininity' is (1996, pp. 185, 186, 198).

Fen Coles suggests that the attempts made by female bodybuilders and bodybuilding organisations to dress female muscles up as feminine, demonstrates the ways that gender is performative and unstable. She argues that patriarchy relies on the 'natural' packaging of gender, sex and sexuality. A person who is born female, is required by patriarchy to naturally be both feminine and attracted to men (1999, p. 445). And Coles agrees with Obel that individual female bodybuilders, and the bodybuilding media, conflate heterosexuality and muscles through a variety of techniques. According to Klein (1986, p. 115, cited in Obel, 1996, p. 192), "To come closer to the mainstream culture, three values are heavily projected to the public via the leading [bodybuilding] publications: health, heterosexuality and rugged individualism." The bodybuilder engages in repetitious acts and practices of beauty, dress, cosmetic surgery, storytelling and parading, that are all designed to dress up the bodybuilder and dress down her musculature. All these practices are designed to demonstrate that "these muscles are a difference that won't make a difference" to either femininity or heterosexual attractiveness (Schulze, 1990 cited by Coles, 1999, p. 446).<sup>413</sup>

It is here that Foucault's ideas about webs of power that exist relatively independently of the agent's intentions offers an advantage over both liberal and radical feminist claims. For many female bodybuilders do not express active resistance toward the

norms of femininity. Some bodybuilders actively cover their bodies in loose clothing when outside of competition (Mansfield and McGinn, 1993, p. 59; Francis, 1989, p. 134 cited in Obel, 1996, p. 191). Others express the need to not give any hints about their bodybuilding in their homes (Mansfield and McGinn, 1993, p. 59). But resistance still appears, regardless of the intentions of the actor, in the ambiguity that the built body produces. The female bodybuilder remains as a challenge to hegemonic femininity and heterosexuality (Coles, 1999, p. 445). The mechanisms of containment merely expose the cultural work that is done to maintain femininity and heterosexuality. As Saltman explains, “The cosmetics that all female bodybuilders wear and the silicone breasts that many implant chafe against the intense masculinization they have undergone” (1998, p. 53). The built body reveals that the body, gender, sex and sexuality are not natural phenomena. The attempts to rein in the performance of the bodybuilder reveal that what has been perceived as natural is the “effect of a compulsory system” of gender and heterosexuality (Butler, 1991 cited by Coles, 1999, p. 451; Saltman, 1998, p. 49; Ndalianis, 1995, pp. 13, 19; Obel, 1996, p. 187). So resistance is embodied even in the apparently docile body (Bordo, 1993, p. 193; Saltman, 1998, p. 55; Brook, 1999, p. 122; Vertinsky, 1999, p. 13). The docile bodybuilder resists the naturalisation theses that try to contain her, even as she practices the effects of these theses. But, it is the exaggeration of the effects produced in her containment that demonstrates fully the artifice of gender. The female bodybuilder, muscle bound but wearing lavish trimmings of femininity as markers, appears as a male female impersonator (Coles, 1999, p. 451; Ndalianis, 1995, p. 13). Even the breast implants that sexualise the female bodybuilder, allow for the recognition of the prosthetic nature of women’s lives. The ‘necessity’ of implants, prosthetics for women who have not lost any limbs, reveals the habitual need for all women to address their bodies as surfaces that require add-ons (Browning, 1997, p. 8). And so bodybuilding can again be read as a site of resistance, regardless of the docility of the bodybuilder. As Saltman argues, “There is gender subversion always already in bodybuilding, a built-in contradictoriness that needs to be made apparent rather than seeing the phenomenon as wholly on the side of oppression or liberation” (1998, p. 57).<sup>414</sup>

Moreso, according to Coles (1999, pp. 450, 451), the resistance goes even further. Men and masculinity have been produced as natural and authentic categories, and male power has been seen as an automatic result of occupying these natural categories. In contrast, women are seen as artificial or 'made up'. But when the naturalness of these categories are broken down, either through surgical intervention, drag acts, or resistant body types, faith in all these natural categories, and the power differentials that result from them, is undermined. The privilege of men, both inside and outside of the sport, which relied on natural categories of gender, has been undermined by the revelation that gender is performative, and that women can 'dress up' as a man.<sup>415</sup> But the transgression surpasses that of the drag king in one way in that the female bodybuilder cannot shed her dress up after the performance. She may cover up her masculinity, but she cannot lose it (Coles, 1999, p. 451). As Saltman explains:

Bodybuilding constantly ruptures itself, revealing its not so straight inside. Men become women, women become men. While it in many ways reinforces popular notions of the "real man" and "real woman," an examination of bodybuilding culture reveals that the "real man" and "real woman" are only possible through the most extreme of artifices; this artifice challenges the naturalness of gender upon which normative heterosexuality rests. Bodybuilding also expands objectification, unsettling dominant power relations, by reversing the gaze (1998, p. 49; also see Brook, 1999, p. 119; Ndalianis, 1995, p. 13; Obel, 1996, p. 187).<sup>416</sup>

As Grosz (1994 cited by Brook, 1999, p. 119; also see Mansfield and McGinn, 1993, p. 56) observes, the demonstration of the malleability of the body transgresses the idea of the 'natural body'. The process of manufacturing a 'built body' reaffirms the plasticity of the body that is worked on. Whereas this concept has been read by some as suggesting a 'real' body that will appear after the present one has been worked on, Grosz suggests that there is no natural form that exists independently of discourse. There are, in her terms, "only cultural forms of the body, which do or do not conform to social norms" (1994, cited by Brook, 1999, p. 119). So, in Holmlund's terms (1993, p. 218 cited by Vertinsky, 1999, p. 15), "the ultimate threat of the masquerade may be that under the mask there is nothing, and it is this nothingness of masculinity that bodybuilding both reveals and conceals."

Some female bodybuilders also express resistance to the mechanisms of dressing down their muscles.<sup>417</sup> Coles reports that whilst some competitors accept and embody the requirements imposed by judging panels in female bodybuilding contests, there is a growing number of competitors who actively resist the conventions about female size, and enjoy the confusion that their muscular female body produces. These resistant women refuse the expertise of male judging committees to determine the feminine package.<sup>418</sup> As one bodybuilder said, “We are saying, who are you to tell us what we should look like? We’re saying it with our bodies” (Coles, 1999, p. 449; Ndalianis, 1995, p. 16).<sup>419</sup> Despite the many efforts to contain the bodybuilder’s musculature, the expanding number and profile of female bodybuilders makes containment impossible.<sup>420</sup> As Drorbaugh (1993 cited by Coles, 1999, p. 449) suggests, the destruction of ‘natural’ gender by the female bodybuilder means that she “clamours harder to be looked at, to be evaluated and to be discussed.” And moreso, the package of the female bodybuilder takes up more space than is usual for the woman. Docility (or resistance) in bodybuilding does not produce the shrunken woman, expressed most vividly in the anorectic, but produces the transgressive occupation of space (Mansfield and McGinn, 1993, p. 65). How far is the ambiguity and transgression in bodybuilding indicative of other sites of resistance in female sports?

Theberge suggests that other sports of appearance, such as gymnastics and synchronised swimming, indicate not an uncontroversial site of resistance, but the problem of mixed messages in sport for females. She states: “By their emphasis on beauty, form and appearance, these sports provide symbolic confirmation of the special nature of women’s sport.... [They]<sup>421</sup> reaffirm the stigma associated with women’s sport participation” (1991b, p. 390; also see Hargreaves, 1994, pp. 159-161).<sup>422</sup> As Hargreaves argues:

Body presentation which makes more visible the form and sexuality of the female body has become increasingly noticeable in particular female sports. Those which emphasize balance, co-ordination, flexibility and grace... are characterized as ‘feminine- appropriate’ because they affirm a popular image of femininity.... Not surprisingly, these are the sports which have been most visibly and systematically sexualized: the performers conform to the female norm of heterosexuality; the routines contain “Ultra-feminine’ postures and gestures, sensuous symbolism, sexually suggestive movements, and even sometimes provocative poses bordering on the erotic (1994, p. 159).

Brunt suggests that the correlate of this discourse, the frailty of female bodies, has also been embraced. He argues: “In... synchronised swimming and figure skating, for example-women’s attempts to look like athletes rather than “chorus girls” have been opposed by members of the predominantly male sports establishment” (1986 cited by Lenskyj, 1990, p. 239). Following from Grimshaw, it becomes difficult within Foucauldian analysis to discern the differences between acts which are transgressive and autonomous and those which are self-disciplining and self-monitoring (1993, p. 67). Does either the female bodybuilder or the female synchronised swimmer, engage in acts that transgress or reaffirm norms of femininity? Or do they do both at the same time? As Brook suggests:

Women in performance... are, by definition, drawing attention to their bodies: a question for feminism is, how far can they do this and also have autonomy? To become and remain subjects they must negotiate not only the regulatory conventions of performance but also the ways in which the disciplining male gaze attempts to reduce them to no more than the docile (hetero)sexualised object of desire (1999, p. 112).

Whilst the public athletic body is always a transgression of the discourse of the domestic and private body, the extent of that transgression is related to the ways that the female athlete can evade or subvert the discipline of the male gaze (Brook, 1999, pp. 111, 112). Where women are supposedly equal to men in the workplace, the dress and bodily regulations that she must submit to for entry into the public practice are such to submerge female difference, and agree to the standard of the male. Resistance here, in the form of different styles of dress and performance, may be economically dangerous (Brook, 1999, p. 113). However, in sport, where the male is considered superior, the opposite occurs, and the female is required to act and dress in a way that emphasises her difference, read as her inferiority. The discipline of the male gaze acts to contain the possibility for a transgressive ‘equality’ for female athletes (Sharpe, 1997, pp. 40, 41).

But the athlete, even when performing ‘feminine-appropriate’ sports, remains difficult to contain (Wheaton and Tomlinson, 1998, p. 259). Peta Tait, in an exploration of late nineteenth-century aerial acrobats, comments that it was the female acrobats who “demarcated a site of Imaginary freedoms” (1996, p. 29 cited by Brook, 1999, p. 127) because of the extreme contrast that was made with the discourse of female restraint and

passivity, that was not available to male performers. In a similar way, the female gymnast, contained by dress, gesture and size, transgresses these containments through performance. The paradox is embodied between the posing and the performing athlete. In contrast to Hargreaves (1994, p. 159) view of performance sports as disempowering for females, Brook explains in terms of the aerialists that, “the extent of her skills was emphasised by the extreme contrast between her use of feminine gestures at the beginning and end of her act, the feminine costume, and the sight of her body in apparent free fall, over which she had sole control” (1999, pp. 127, 128). This contrast applies also to the gymnast, the bodybuilder, the female boxer and many other athletes.<sup>423</sup> As Markula explains about female aerobicizers, whilst “they struggle to obtain the ideal body... they also find their battles ridiculous” (1995, p. 424). And it is the voicing of this realisation that transforms what looks like oppression and docility, into resistant and subversive forms of private knowledge that may be personally empowering (Markula, 1995, pp. 428, 429).

Gwen Chapman (1997, pp. 205-223) demonstrates the development of the Foucauldian agonistic model of power at the site of the gendered body in terms of the weight-reducing techniques taken up by lightweight rowers, but also practiced by a number of other athletes in sports that are not judged aesthetically. As explained previously, the Foucauldian notion of power is seen as dispersed through society as a web of discourses, practices and institutional and non-institutional relations of power that organise, control and discipline the time and labour extracted from individual’s bodies. This disciplinary power encourages individuals to engage in practices of self-monitoring and confession, whilst ignoring the ways that the dispersed disciplinary power controls or limits their options (Foucault, 1979, 1980 cited in Chapman, 1997, p. 206).

The biomedical sports apparatus produces a discourse of weight control in lightweight rowing (and other sports). These discourses may produce problematic practices of weight control amongst the rowers. But even if they don’t, the discourses do incite the rowers to engage in practices of self-surveillance and self-control over their food intake and body weight, as part of the context of rowing. According to Chapman, the effects of these discourses were that the rowers were continually “judging their actions against standards of shared norms. They... told stories of the guilt they felt when they ate foods

they were not supposed to be eating,” and this shame was often made public in a confession to teammates or coach (1997, pp. 211, 212).

These practices of weight-making function to individualise the problems and difficulties associated with the practices of weight making. The rowers, encouraged by a rhetoric of individual responsibility, accept the discourses of, and exercise the strategies of, making weight on themselves, monitored mostly by themselves and their teammates (Chapman, 1997, p. 212). But this rhetoric excuses, by ignoring, the way that the structure of the sporting system produces the discourse of weight management (Chapman, 1997, pp. 209, 221).<sup>424</sup> The disciplinary nature of the process is obscured by the apparent ‘freedom’ with which the individual takes it up. As with Duncan’s fitness trainers, lightweight rowers weight making practices were produced in a discourse that emphasised a relationship between health, performance, weight and lifestyle, that encouraged the docile, and apparently individual, acceptance of the discourse (Chapman, 1997, pp. 212, 213).<sup>425</sup>

The practices of making weight also serve to train rowers to participate in the technologies of femininity. Making weight is a common theme of female life. The discourse of femininity stresses the importance of bodywork, directed toward the attraction of the body. This discourse of appearance and size of the female body produces the female subject as competent and healthy, or lazy and unhealthy. Both producing oneself as an athlete and a woman involves practices of disciplinary control (Chapman, 1997, p. 219). As Chapman (1997, p. 221) suggests, “... women can be recruited into participation in the “technologies of femininity” through their involvement with the sport [of lightweight rowing]<sup>426</sup>.” Most females perceive a nexus between body size and heterosexual attractiveness, which requires constant self-monitoring and control (Brook, 1999, p. 66).

But this subjectification was never completely contained by the prescriptions of the discourse of femininity. The individual also engages in ‘practices of freedom’ in the ways that they constitute themselves in terms of the various contexts and discourses they are subjected (Chapman, 1997, p. 208). Following from Bordo’s work on the anorexic body, Chapman suggests that there is an interplay of power and resistance that takes place at the site of the female rower’s body (1997, p. 207). This notion of self-constitution has been utilised by Chapman to explain the ways that the practices of weight management and

control engaged in by lightweight rowers should not be seen as simply mechanisms of oppressive power, but also reveal actions of subjectification in the ways that the athletes take up and use the practices (1997, p. 208). The female rowers also engaged in bodywork that transgressed the technologies of femininity, where the rowers exercised some form of “freedom, albeit within the confines of the rules and techniques made available to them by their culture” (Chapman, 1997, p. 216). The rowers were able to utilise different regimes of truth available to them in their world, to undermine some of the disciplinary discourses in lightweight rowing. The rowers who participated in summer regattas saw themselves as attractive, but also as strong and confident. Strength and power were seen as attractive qualities for the female/feminine athlete to possess, and so they transgressed the discourse that associates femininity with passivity or fragility (Chapman, 1997, pp. 216, 220, 221). But even here, the transgression may be minor, as the new notion of femininity is still directed by the force of heterosexual attractiveness (Chapman, 1997, p. 220).<sup>427</sup> For Chapman, in light of the second wave appropriation of Foucauldian work by feminists, the practices of making weight allowed rowers to both transgress and reinforce discourses of femininity and weight control. According to Chapman:

... Their self descriptions suggest that they were able to use different regimes of truth to oppose certain aspects of the discourse: They used the acknowledgement and encouragement of women’s strength from sports discourse to oppose traditional images of the feminine as weak, and they used biomedical discourse definitions of extreme dieting as pathogenic to oppose the discipline of dieting practices. However, the intersection of gender and sports discourses appeared to reinforce the importance of creating an idealized physical body and thus the rowers continued to struggle with the role of their physical bodies in their relationships with themselves.

... At the same time that sport offers women discursive tools to oppose oppressive power relations, it also further enmeshes them in normalizing discourses that limit their vision of who and what they can be. (1997, p. 221)

What of subjectivities that appear to be resistant to heterosexual femininity in sport? Lenskyj, in a series of interviews with lesbian athletes in elite sport, argued that this “...sexuality attacked the patriarchal hierarchical relationship of the sexes at a central point” (1990, p. 230). It displayed a refusal to accept the dominant discourse of female subjectivity, sexuality, and reliance on males, which has existed throughout the religious,

medical, legal and human science disciplines in history. This opposition is itself opposed by the widespread discrimination against lesbians; it is contained as a deviant, abnormal form of sexuality. The lesbian athlete is "... made to appear ridiculous, as amazons, defamed, as physically ill, regressive persons with phallus fixations, and perverts" (1990, p. 230). Yet their excess is never completely contained and Lenskyj suggests that it is important for all sportswomen to declare solidarity with lesbian athletes, if they are to resist the types of containments that limit all female athletes' authority. These athletes oppose the "degrading" and reliant forms of femininity in sport and in society. They attempt to open up new and less oppressive relationships of power in sport and society by challenging the naturalness of the dominant heterosexist, patriarchal discourses which currently exist (1990, p. 230; also see Brook, 1999, p. 69).<sup>428</sup>

A Foucauldian ethical view sees these sports and subjectivities as emerging pockets of resistance, for individuals to counter the enforced subjectivities contained in the 'true' discourse of sport, sexuality and gender in modern society. A Foucauldian analysis of sport also offers possibilities for alliances of 'difference athletes' and other members of society, as argued for by Lenskyj (1990). The crisscrossing of resistance in various sports, with pockets of resistance in other fields may create a different language of sport, where one of the effects of this discourse is to produce authoritative positions for females. In the final part of this chapter, the drugged athlete will be investigated as a site of possible resistance to the mechanisms of gender that have limited the female's appropriation of authoritative sites in sport.

### **Drugs and Feminist Resistance**

This part of the thesis will expand on the idea of the performativity of the gendered athletic body to investigate the ban on drugs as a specific site of containment of feminist resistance. It will argue that the pervasive dislike of athletes using drugs is not explained entirely by the 'good' practice of sport and fairness, and that it also has something to do with the fear of transgressing socially constructed, gender boundaries. Simon, citing the American College of Sports Medicine, lists as one of the serious side-effects of steroid use, the "...masculinization of females" (1984, p. 6). Whilst this is not a premise of Simon's

argument supporting the ban on drugs, an argument based on fairness and respect, it is nonetheless interesting that this ‘serious’ side-effect is listed as a problem for drug-taking female athletes. Why is this a serious side-effect? Masculinisation and feminisation are social constructions, and not biological categories (Duncan, 1990, p. 25). Therefore, the serious side-effect of masculinisation must be that females no longer fit the category which has been socially constructed as suitable for their sex.

Brown makes this point about the importance of social constructions of persons by stating:

I believe that the curious issue of performance-enhancing drugs is one such case. It is curious because we are so prone to approach the core issue obliquely, as if it were exhausted by comparisons of synthetic compounds and naturally metabolised ones, of the naturalness of Mark Spitz’s hyperextensive knees or Joan Samuelson’s arthroscopically repaired ones. The issue is rather about us: Who are we and what are we to become? We don’t know the answers to these questions, though they are as much a matter of what we decide as what we discover. (1990, p. 71)

Brown could have gone even further, given the explanations of the instability of the body offered by Foucault and feminists. The sporting community operating within a vacuum will not answer these questions about who we are and what we are to become. The solutions to these questions will be affected by the wider social constructions of what it means to be male and female, and not just what it means to be a person, in society.

This part of the thesis will commence with the Foucauldian-like position that the search for a so-called ‘rational’ grounding for the fear of drug use in sport can be understood as the desire to give the community’s position about the gender order a legitimacy that is social and not rational or natural in any transhistorical sense. It also suggests that attempts to find the rational, understood as grounded in something ahistorical, produce some violence. This violence will be related to an overarching concern to maintain dichotomous gender groups in sport, and in society, a concern which threatens the capacity to listen to the stories of the female athletes whose body shape and/or sporting excellence suggests that they use drugs. Put more generally, intolerance toward female drug-takers may be indicative of a society deaf to the stories of all females who do not fit within the gender categories constructed for them. Birrell and Cole suggest that “women players can

be read within a... context of anxiety, suspicion, and surveillance....growing anxiety about changes in women's social positions and participation in traditional masculine practices such as sport have intensified suspicion of women" (1994, pp. 224, 225).

It will attempt to show that who we want our athletes to be and become is strongly influenced by prescribed and proscribed gender-specific traits based on dominant community beliefs of what males and females should be. This position will be an extension of Fairchild's argument concerning the abjection of athletes who use drugs (1989).

Whereas Fairchild suggests that the legislation banning drug use is driven by our, that is, the sport community's, revulsion of the drug user's *athletic* body, it will be suggested that at least part of the force behind the drug ban is due to our abhorrence of the drug user's *gendered* body. And this suggestion will be used to tie back to feminist theories of the abject for it is the abject female body, often expressed as "women's leaky bodies", that has most commonly been used, in sport and outside of sport, to tie women to limiting notions of their biology (Brook, 1999, p. xiii).

Concerns about drug use partly arise from information concerning the effects of drugs on athletes as gendered beings. Such information, especially as presented in the popular press and anti-drug campaigns, is often generalised and stereotypical. Davis and Delano (1992) reviewed a number of these anti-drug media texts and campaigns. The purpose of their study was to illustrate the problematic and naturalistic arguments put forward in many of these campaigns which are designed to generate an aversion to drug use amongst athletes. The authors suggest that the campaigns play on a number of unexamined western cultural assumptions such as: that bodies fit into unambiguous natural categories; that drugs are artificial substances which disrupt this gender dichotomisation; and that the present (and appropriate?) gender order in sport and society is produced by these differential gender characteristics. They argue that "sport is a site where notions of physical gender dichotomization are reaffirmed, and it serves an important role in securing consent for the present gender order" (1992, p. 1). A number of the media texts supporting the ban on drugs in various sporting contexts not only rely heavily on this dichotomy of sexes, but reaffirm the separateness of the sexes in terms of physical appearance. They

thereby influence what is considered appropriate in and for certain sports (Davis and Delano, 1992, pp. 1, 2).

Davis and Delano question the three assumptions encouraged by the media campaigns arguing that there are no natural bipolar categories of gender. Social theorists, including those discussed in the third wave of feminist appropriations of Foucault, have revealed how the body is inscribed with meaning. Human bodies are socially and culturally constructed such that certain presentations of the body are favored over others. To assume a 'naturalness' to body construction obscures the powerful social and political forces that create the body and its practices. This elevates to the status of essential and unavoidable 'truth' what is at most a contingent social construction. In addition, the campaigns assume and promote the idea that drugs are artificial. Again, this assumption obscures the question about who is to decide whether a technique is artificial (e.g. drugs, genetic engineering) or natural (e.g. training, diet). Who has the power to convince the sport community of the 'obviousness' or 'truth' of this distinction?

Finally, Davis and Delano examine the assumption of physical gender dichotomisation included in many of the texts. They argue: "Certain characteristics, which many men and women possess without drug use, but which are violations of notions of gender dichotomization, are presented as abnormal and disgusting in the campaign rhetoric" (1992, p. 7). The characteristics include the commonly observable breasts on men, and facial hair and deep voices in women. In addition, impotency is seen as unmasculine and aggression as unfeminine. Such texts imply that any person who falls outside these bipolar categories, whether as a result of having taken steroids or not, is not really a person because they can be neither 'truly' male nor female. These socially constructed characteristics and categories of male and female, as produced and supported by the discourse of such media texts are mutually exclusive. Yet, and as Davis and Delano (1992, p. 7) argue, there is a significant overlap between the sexes on these characteristics. Some real men do have observable breasts. Some real women do have hairy faces.<sup>429</sup>

Fairchild (1989) seems mistaken in his suggestion that the extreme revulsion felt towards steroid injecting athletes, such as Ben Johnson, can be fully explained as a response to the transgression of the body's inner/outer boundary. He argues that our

perception of Johnson's body moved from that of body beautiful to one of abjectified non-person as a consequence of his transgression of the inner/outer boundary of the body when he injected anabolic steroids. Revulsion was felt toward Johnson; the severity of his penalty revealed both the depth of that revulsion and the hope that he be extinguished from the record books. By extinguishing his records, Johnson is also extinguished as a person who competed in those races. According to Fairchild, we must extinguish the drugged athlete because, once exposed as a user, we can no longer glory in the athlete as we once did: as representing our never-to-be-realised possibilities (1989, p. 81). Fairchild states: "The abjectified other must be so completely rejected that she loses any possibility of reminding me that I might have been like her" (1989, p. 83).

However, there remains some curious inconsistencies which collectively suggest that something other than, or at least additional to, abjectification due to transgression of the inner/outer boundary may be operating here. First how could Johnson re-qualify as a athlete/person in time for the 1992 Olympics? Does abjectification wear off over time, and the inner/outer boundary of the body gets re-established? Additionally, how is it that professional cyclists can receive penalties of only three months for drug-abuse in their sport? Would not the abhorrence associated with abjectification be as severe in every case where the athlete has transgressed the inner/outer boundary of the body? Also, why don't we feel similar revulsion for the numerous actresses and models who have silicon breast implants? They, too, have seemingly transgressed the inner/outer boundary of the body, yet they are vicariously admired as the body-beautiful. Why are they admired? Perhaps by emphasising those characteristics which are perceived as exclusive and central to their gender category, they, like Johnson, have reaffirmed, rather than challenged, the dichotomous gender boundaries.

The additional transgression is the violation of gender categories, which sometimes results from the use of drugs. Some banned substances do not affect gender categories; for example, many stimulants such as caffeine. But neither is the same revulsion felt toward those players who transgress only the rules (i.e. use stimulants) as is directed toward those who transgress both the rules and the 'natural' gender categories. For example, at the same Olympic Games that Ben Johnson was revealed as a steroid user, the Australian

pentathlete, Alex Watson, was banned for having a higher than allowed level of caffeine. His defense that he had drunk too many cups of coffee was, unlike Johnson's confessions, more laughable than the source of revulsion.<sup>430</sup> A remaining curiosity is that if this view is correct and Johnson did not violate gender categories, what is to explain the depth of revulsion felt toward him? It may have been produced by a number of compounding factors: the standing of the rival he defeated; his early claims of innocence; the excitement and anticipation his event generated; and the failure of all other members of his national team to win a gold medal at the Seoul Olympics. However, it does not seem that we were revolted by any discordance between Johnson's sporting body and his social body, a factor that may help to explain why the revulsion towards him appears to have dissipated.

The sporting community can appreciate, and even idolise, male athletes, "... when the physiological requirements of a particular sport necessitate abnormal physical development..." (Fairchild, 1989, p. 76). However, the same generosity is not given to exemplary female athletes. Zheng Haixia, disparagingly referred to as 'Baby Huey,' the giant Chinese female basketballer who is very muscular and nearly seven foot tall, has proven to be one of the ideal body-types for the game of basketball. She was the main reason for the Chinese team gaining the silver medal at the 1994 World Championships and was voted Most Valuable Player of the tournament. However, she is not considered a body-beautiful, even within a sporting context or language. Perhaps it is because she does not fit normal views of what it is to be athletic. Wolff refers to her as "...the slowest low-post player on earth"(1995). Fairchild (1989, p. 76) argues that we can appreciate athletic bodily refinements as exemplary even though these developments are considered abnormal in normal life. This is because we can demarcate sporting bodies from social bodies. But such demarcations are less likely with respect to female athletes, because athleticism, especially female athleticism, must be understood in the wider context of socially constructed gender categories, which include ambiguity about the relationship between femininity and athleticism. Martina Navratilova's muscular, athletic body transgressed the gender boundaries of the time and was not identified with positively. She was athletic but not feminine. It was only the longevity of her success, and the grace and excitement of her play, that allowed even the minimal appreciation of Martina as a 'normal' person. Martina

did a lot to redefine the appreciation of athleticism and femininity for women athletes in terms and images that were more useful to sport.

Any consensual exclusion of certain athletes, and the limitation of their freedoms, must be based on some community's feelings of 'otherness' towards these athletes. Brown states, "...the American swimmer, Shirley Babashoff, fresh from the country club pools of Southern California, disdainfully referred to the muscular Kornelia Ender of East Germany as the product of regimented socialism and weight lifting" (1990, p. 21).<sup>431</sup> Even before Ender revealed her drug use, she represented 'the other' for swimmers of the time; her muscular, powerful, unfeminine body was sufficient. Her transgression, at the time of Babashoff's condemnation, was of gender boundaries, and not drug laws.

There is much in Fairchild's article that remains relevant to this description of the persistent disapproval of drug use. The athlete who takes drugs forces members of the sporting community to question the permanency of the "rationally structured meaning" (1989, p. 82) of the social and gender order. This apparent permanence of structure and role in sporting contexts is questioned neither with ease nor pleasure. The drugged athlete, especially the one who challenges gender boundaries, threatens to disturb the order, identity and system of sport. Such an athlete threatens the self-understanding and prevailing ideals of sport and persons (1989, p. 83). When so threatened, the path of least resistance is not to consider reforms to the belief system but to attempt to eliminate the problem by extinguishing the drugged athlete from contemplations. But this elimination becomes more pressing when both the sporting order and the gender order is threatened.

What effect does this differential identification of athletes by gender have on gender roles in the wider society? Davis and Delano (1992, pp. 1, 2, 12) suggest that this gender dichotomisation legitimates the gender order in society. Wittig states:

The ideology of sexual difference functions as censorship in our culture by masking, on the grounds of nature, the social opposition between men and women. Masculine/feminine, male/female are the categories which serve to conceal the fact that social differences always belong to an economic, political, ideological order. (1982 cited by Davis and Delano, 1992, p. 12)

Sport remains an important area in western society for males to assert their traditional masculinity. Women's excellence in sport threatens the boundaries that are produced by

the dominance of men. Therefore, muscularity, power, aggression and violence are described as natural for men, but as either abhorrent or eccentrically humorous in women athletes<sup>432</sup> (Davis and Delano, 1992, pp. 12, 13).

Is this a dangerous or cruel description? In several ways it is. Women in sport are placed in the ambiguous position of participating in an activity which is “perceived as gender inappropriate” (Davis and Delano, 1992, p. 14). They may do several things to make it more appropriate, most of which seem to add to the problem of gender dichotomisation. As previously stated in this thesis, female athletes might, for example, wear inappropriate and uncomfortable uniforms (body suits in basketball, skirts in hockey and netball), or flirt with the judges (ice-skating, synchronised swimming), or wear make-up (synchronised swimming, bodybuilding), or perhaps produce ‘girlie’ calendars (golf, athletics, women’s soccer). Davis and Delano also suggest that the acceptance of sex testing by female athletes is an attempt to reinforce their femininity in the eyes of the public (1992, p. 14). It is the ‘pleasure’ gained, or, at least, the discomfort avoided, from being seen as gender-appropriate, which conditions women athletes to accept these practices in their sport. But such acceptance helps to sustain a description of males and females, which not only restricts options within bipolar categories, but which may be cruel to those in and out of sport that don’t fit either.

But there is another cruelty perpetuated by these descriptions. Davis and Delano argue: “All of these texts imply that any person who takes steroids, or who happens to have any of the above listed characteristics [i.e. facial hair, deep voices, small breasts, and large muscles for women; large breasts, small genitals, and baldness for men]<sup>433</sup> without taking steroids, is outside the categories of male and female and thus not fully human” (1992, p. 9). Thus, those who do not fit the dichotomous gender categories are rendered “invisible” (Davis and Delano, 1992, p. 11). It is this cruelty that needs to be discussed in terms of the importance of being male in some societies, and in some social practices such as sport. What these females must not do is challenge the dichotomous construction of society by suggesting that the imposition of drug bans may be a patriarchal defense strategy. They must, in order to have a voice, say only that which the powerful in their sports community

want to hear. This is another cruelty perpetuated by these descriptions, in that it serves to split women as a political group.

The point being made here is that gender transgression is not equally acceptable, because of power effects in society, which are very evident, and may even be exaggerated in sport. The powerful is an exclusive set; it is powerful both over, and in contrast to, the subordinate. Men who, through surgery, appearance, sexual preference or drugs, become more female-like, threaten neither the exclusivity nor the contrast-effect of the powerful. They may actually enhance exclusivity by reducing the size of the class. However, women who, through surgery, appearance, sexual preference or drugs, become more male-like, threaten both the exclusivity of the male class and the differences between the sexes. As the effects of steroid use are more visible in females than males, an ironic and gendered twist may be operating within the dominant response to the use of such drugs; a twist which has been discussed in terms of Johnson who, at least overtly, appeared to become more male. Drugged female athletes, however, also became more male, less female. Through their appearance they may have threatened the exclusivity of the men's club. In sum, there may be good reasons why gender transgressions generally, and drug use specifically, does not cut both ways equally.<sup>434</sup> One transgression, male to female, contributes to the exclusivity of the powerful elite, whilst the reverse threatens this exclusivity and contrast. The male athlete becomes more masculine; the female athlete becomes monstrous (Coles, 1999, p. 450; Lenskyj, 1986, pp. 89, 90; Balsamo, 1996, p. 44).

Rather than merely using poststructural views of the body to reveal and deconstruct oppression, these views of the social construction of gendered bodies can also be used to create new resistances and reconstruct sport. When bodies are understood as culturally produced and sexed by, amongst many other things, drug laws<sup>435</sup>, then many of the discourses supporting a ban on drugs can be called into question. Females who wish to participate in sports, and at levels, which have previously been denied to them because of 'limitations' (on a male sporting scale) within their genetic bodies, may now see the drug ban as another way of reinforcing such limitations and the power differentials, which go with them. Hence, drug usage becomes a feminist issue; an issue of revealing the

oppression caused by a strict adherence to these dichotomous sex categories. Some might refute this by suggesting that the ban on drugs applies to both sexes. But feminists would respond by suggesting that applying the ban to both sexes makes it easier to convince females that the ban is a 'rational' limitation, rather than a patriarchal one.<sup>436</sup> And so the threat to dichotomous sex categories is again contained, and women gain solitude in being included in the category of rational humans, provided they look pretty and don't speak up.

Catherine MacKinnon summarises this type of patriarchal containment eloquently. It is worth repeating a quote that was used previously in this thesis. MacKinnon states that these types of arguments are about the maintenance of power by men:

In this approach, an equality question is a question of the distribution of power. Gender is also a question of power, specifically of male supremacy and female subordination... Here, on the first day that matters, dominance was achieved, probably by force. By the second day, division along the same lines had to be relatively firmly in place. On the third day, if not sooner, differences were demarcated, together with social systems to exaggerate them in perception and in fact, *because* the systematically differential delivery of benefits and deprivations required making no mistake about who was who... (1987, p. 40)

The current ban on drugs can be viewed as one of the many mechanisms used by male-dominated sporting communities to maintain their dominance over females. Elizabeth Grosz (1994), amongst others, has recognised that the person's body is a 'volatile body' which is constructed, and can be reconstructed, within/by a number of intersecting discourses. The drug ban precludes one form of reconstruction for all athletes, but the effects of the drug ban are more extreme for women, who are sexed as weaker than men.

Bodies are socially constructed as one of two sexes, and recognition of this point may be useful for females who wish to oppose the drug ban. This point is not intended to suggest that bodies are socially constructed without reference to their matter. It is obvious that men and women are made up of, for want of a better term, some different material parts. But the extent of these differences, the valuation of these differences, and the opportunity to reduce these differences through the use of drugs are what makes arguments concerning the drug legislation a political and feminist issue.

In modern sports, much effort appears to go into maintaining the idea that women and men are two separate categories. Separate competitions are run in sports such as pistol

shooting when there is no physiological reason why separate competitions are needed. Drugs may produce an opportunity for female athletes to challenge this categorisation. Whether, in the future, there will be a female champion in sports that have been traditionally played by men cannot be predicted with surety.<sup>437</sup> Resisting the containment of dichotomous sex categories may produce space for females to play levels of these exclusively male sports, with men of similar ability, and demonstrate the overlapping continuums of performance between the sexes.<sup>438</sup> This may further breakdown the surety with which most people understand their world as made up of members who occupy two sex categories that are dichotomous and hierarchical. And if this resistance helps to break down the dominance of male authority in these sports, females may experience new freedom, authority and experiences that were not previously available to them.

### **Conclusions**

This chapter has produced a detailed account of the effectiveness of Foucauldian and poststructural feminist accounts of the body to the provision of space for authoritative female storytelling, both symbolic through participation and, by extension, voiced through commentary, in sport. The starting point to this chapter, as with the previous five, has been to work within the narrow and phallogocentric definitions of sporting excellence. Within this bounded area, the purpose has again been to devise innovative strategies for female athletes to appropriate authoritative spaces by the utilisation of ideas from Foucauldian and poststructural feminist theories.

The early section of the chapter explained Foucault's understanding of the relationship between knowledge, power, subjectivity and resistance. These four concepts should not be thought of as separable entities. Both powerful and resistant subjectivities are produced in decisions about what is to count as knowledge, or more appropriately, who is to count as a reliable source of knowledge. Relations of power and resistance are coincident with questions of knowledge. In this respect, Foucault shares a great deal of common ground with the feminist standpoint theorists of the previous chapter.

According to McHoul and Grace, Foucault sees the modern era as characterised by an understanding of power as a set of "*relations* built constantly into the flows and

practices of everyday life” (McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 7), that situates both dominant and subordinate subjectivities. This situation of subjectivities occurs through the production of discourse about bodies, sexualities, the family, kinship, technology, punishment and so on. Discursive ‘truth’ about these topics is produced through the dispersal of otherness. In this way, the mechanisms of power that produce discourse also produce ‘normal’ and ‘other’ subjectivities. Panoptic and confessional technologies of power both produced and ranked subjectivities and bodies.

The aspect of Foucault’s work that this chapter of the thesis was particularly concerned with was the ways that Foucault and poststructural feminists had applied these ideas to the sustenance of resistance toward the normal gendering of bodies. For Foucault, political resistance involved the local oppositions to official forms of subjectification and knowledge, such that the rules and conditions of subjectification and knowledge formation are appropriated. This is made possible because of the agonistic relation between power and resistance which allows for the reversal of relations of power, and the production of ‘other’ forms of subjectivity.

The second section of this chapter investigated the ways that Foucault’s theories of the body and subjectivity (and hence, also knowledge and power) have been appropriated by feminist theorists. The first wave of appropriation involved the utilisation of Foucault’s view that the docile subject is produced by/in official knowledge about the body, and may reproduce their own docility through practices that they view as pleasurable and liberating. Hence, power produces the docile and contented subject in a way that such acts of docility are shrouded as sites of self-control and pleasure (Theberge, 1991a, p. 125). The feminist appropriation of this idea expanded on Foucault by explaining that patriarchy, as well as capitalism, acts as a set of force relations that extract activity from the female body. This understanding of power as both productive and constraining has allowed feminists to produce interesting counter-descriptions of women’s exercise and athletics, that allows for the recognition of individual pleasure and apparent ‘agency’ whilst also recognising the ways that such agency is controlled by forces over which the individual has little control. Whilst the criticism of this appropriation of Foucault is that in detailing panoptic and confessional mechanisms of power as crucial to the production of female (athletic)

subjectivities, there is little opportunity for resistance to docility on behalf of females. The focus on panoptic and confessional techniques, without a coincidental reflection on the agonistic relationship between power and resistance, gave the appearance of there being no space for females to escape the constraining forces of patriarchy.

The second and third waves of feminist appropriations of Foucault were viewed as more useful to the production of resistant female bodies, and resistant female voices, in sport. The agonistic view of the relation between power and resistance allowed for the idea that relations of force are fluid and reversible. Hence, even the apparently docile athletic body, containing a happily docile 'agent', may be resistant to official discourses of subjectification. The female athlete dressed up and made up to exemplify her 'otherness' to the male athlete, and happy in her display of that otherness, may still exemplify resistance to discourses about female passivity and weakness. In accord with the discussion about equal opportunities for female athletes in Chapter Four of this thesis, in many contemporary sports, participation for females may break down the discourses that suggest a 'biological' incapacity to play certain sports, even when the female athlete agrees to some sense of a biological incapacity to play these sports as well as men.

But moreso, the dressing up and making up of the 'other' demonstrates the continuous performativity that is needed to produce gender. The third wave of appropriations of Foucault by poststructural feminists involves a deconstruction of the view of bodies and gender as natural. The athletic body, even when apparently contained and docile, leaks. The description of the acts of containment reveals the political/discursive work that is done to produce the gendered body. Hence, this description denaturalises the gendered body. And this revelation allows for a different and strategic construction of gendered bodies, and will prompt a coincidental production of new discourses of containment. The final section of this chapter used these ideas to produce a counter-discourse about drug laws in sport. Drug laws were viewed as one of the mechanisms of containment of bodies to hierarchical gender categories. It was suggested that the feminist athlete could investigate the possibility of refusing this containment, and in so doing, appropriating possible authoritative spaces through the production of excellent sporting performances on a male standard. This fits in with the overall purpose of this thesis to

produce innovative sites for authoritative female speech within the narrow definitions of excellence that the contemporary sporting world has.<sup>439</sup>

Although the majority of this chapter has accepted and used Foucault, and the waves of Foucauldian feminists, relatively uncritically, the concluding remarks will speculate on some of the extensions of Foucault provided by a number of feminists. Elizabeth Grosz (1994) argues that Foucault can be included as one of a number of ‘wayward’ male philosophers (which also include Spinoza, Leibniz and Nietzsche) who oppose the dualistic separation of mind and body that is apparent in most Western philosophy.<sup>440</sup> Foucault’s body is unified, rather than one element of a duality.<sup>441</sup> The gendered accounts of subjectivities that follow from the social construction of bodies allow the feminist to take seriously both the ideas of sexual difference, and of male power. Sex differences apply both to minds and bodies, produced in specific and power-laden contexts.<sup>442</sup> The necessarily embodied knowledge produced by the different ideas of the male and female body means that ethical and epistemological judgements can no longer purport to be universal or perspectiveless. The authority that such judgements command depends partly on the gender of the body from which they emanate (Gatens, 1988, p. 67). As Lloyd concludes:

On this way of looking at sex differences, there is no sexless soul, waiting to be extricated from socially imposed sex roles. But nor is there any authentic male or female identity, existing independently of social power. With gender there are no facts of the matter, other than those produced through the shifting play of powers and pleasures of socialised, embodied, sexed human beings (Lloyd, 1989, p. 21)

According to Grosz, this allows for a corporeal feminism that recognises that “social, economic, psychical and moral relations... are not just experienced by subjects, but are, in order to be experienced, integrally recorded or corporeally inscribed” (1987, p. 7 cited by Marshall, 1996, p. 255). With the importance of the social construction of gendered bodies in mind, the female body can then be used to undermine or reinforce relations of patriarchal power that are the result of such inscriptions.

For Grosz, the important advance of feminist theorists over these wayward male philosophers is that members of the former group insist that “there is no monolithic

category 'the body.' There are only particular kinds of bodies" (1987, p. 9 cited by Marshall, 1996, p. 255). In more explicit terms, Moira Gatens explains:

... there is no neutral body, there are at least two kinds of bodies; the male body and the female body. If we locate social practices and behaviours as embedded in the subject... rather than "in consciousness" or "in the body" then this has important repercussions for the subject is always a *sexed* subject. If one accepts the notion of the sexually specific subject, that is, the male or female subject, then one must dismiss the notion that patriarchy can be characterised as a system of social organization that valorizes the masculine *gender* over the feminine gender. Gender is not the issue, sexual difference is. The very same behaviours... have quite different personal and social significances when acted out by the male subject... and the female subject... Identical social 'training', attitudes or, if you will, conditioning, acquire different significances when applied to male and female subjects (Gatens, 1983, p. 148; also see Brook, 1999, p. 2).<sup>443</sup>

Historically, the male body and the female body signify themselves in different ways, and have had different social values attached to them. Resocialisation, or recorporalisation, does not act on a passive, neutral body or mind. It acts on the situated body; the specific, historical, sexed body that has been produced in a society organised in terms of sexual dominance (Gatens, 1983, p. 150). But also, signification of practices performed by each gender occurs in a contrastive and relational way. Masculine activity is understood as that which is not feminine passivity (Gatens, 1983, p. 150).

It is for these reasons that the suggested postfeminist opposition to drug laws, and the anticipated oppositions to limits on genetic manipulation, will be difficult to sustain. To explain this point, the final section of this chapter will utilise some of the feminist theory that has been developed about cyberspace. According to O'Brien: "Current research, science fiction, and wishful thinking suggest that cyberspace will be a realm in which physical markers such as sex, race, age, body type, and size will eventually lose their salience as a basis for categorization of self/other" (1997, p. 1; also see Browning, 1997, p. 2; Brook, 1999, p. 137; Clough, 1997, p. 1; Balsamo, 1996, p. 123). The identity markings of race and sex appear to break down in the cyberworld (Browning, 1997, pp. 1, 2). This logic suggests that because such features are not necessarily discernible in cyberspace, they may be circumvented in the structure of relationships. As Vertinsky comments, "Gender transgression and disruptive excess are far less easy to bring into check when they occur

through the support of the internet, a space where authority is levelled, policing is difficult and bodies are continuously being reinvented as monsters, goddesses and cyborgs” (1999, p. 16). In the terms of this thesis, the woman who seeks an authoritative position to discuss sport from may find one in cyberspace, where participation and authority are no longer embodied.

But O’Brien (1997, p. 2) asks, “just how elastic is the institution of gender?” Are such interactions able to be carried out in a world without gender? Or does an ungendered world simply mean that anyone is permitted to be “just like one of the [white] guys” (O’Brien, 1997, p. 2)?<sup>444</sup> That is, if the ideal of cyberspace is that it offers the possibility for any body/subject to experience a wider range of interactions, then what becomes the site for interpretation of these interactions? Does the disembodiment of cyberspace merely tie subjects more closely to a gendered pattern of interaction? As Brook suggests, the idyllic world of cyberspace is disputed by technosceptics who suggest that “the same old categories still struggle for dominance” at these sites (1999, p. 137; also see Balsamo, 1996, p. 10). In Balsamo’s terms, whilst the ‘techno-body’ of cosmetic surgery, virtual reality and technical enhancement becomes a boundary figure that belongs simultaneously to the previously incompatible categories of ‘natural’ and ‘technological’, revealing the constructed nature of the body, no such transgression of systems of meaning is permitted in terms of gender. She states:

Gender, like the body, is a boundary concept. It is at once related to physiological sexual characteristics of the human body (the natural order of the body) and to the cultural context within which that body “makes sense.” The widespread technological refashioning of the “natural” human body suggests that gender too would be ripe for reconstruction.... [But} As is often the case when seemingly stable boundaries are displaced by technological innovation (human/artificial, life/death, nature/culture), other boundaries are more vigilantly guarded. Indeed, the gendered boundary between male and female is one border that remains heavily guarded despite new technologized ways to rewrite the physical body in the flesh. So while it appears the body has been recoded within discourses of biotechnology and medicine as belonging to an order of culture rather than nature, gender remains a naturalized marker of human identity.

...In this sense, an apparatus of gender organizes the power relations manifest in the various engagements between bodies and technologies.... Gender, in this schema, is *both* a determining cultural condition and a social consequence of technological deployment.... [C]ontemporary discourses of

technology rely on a logic of binary gender-identity as an underlying organizational framework. This underlying framework both enables and constrains our engagement with new technologies. In many cases, the *primary* effect of this technological engagement is the reproduction of a traditional logic of binary gender-identity which significantly limits the revisionary potential of new technologies (1996, pp. 9, 10).

For O'Brien, all interaction is governed by "symbolic cues that derive largely from face to face interaction" (1997, p. 3). And where the person/body is not present, it is conjured up, and such conjuring is decidedly gendered. In the terms used earlier in this thesis, gender is the strong strand of a web that helps us to make sense of interactions, where sense could not be made without the presence of gender. The 'reality' of gender allows order and meaning to be imposed on interactions (Haraway, 1991 cited by O'Brien, 1997, p. 3). Gender is being transported into the faceless site of cyberspace, as an ordering system to reconstruct identities, so that the idyllic genderless fictions of cyberspace are becoming progressively embodied, gendered and 'real' (O'Brien, 1997, p. 4; Browning, 1997, p. 2; Brook, 1999, p. 140; Balsamo, 1996, pp. 15, 29). Indicative of this is that the failure or reluctance to reveal gender in online communications is viewed with suspicion. Gender crossing is permissible online, because interactional order can still be imposed by gender. But the elimination of gender creates outrage, rather than confusion (O'Brien, 1997, p. 4; Browning, 1997, p. 6). Whilst gender crossing does occur online, there is also gender policing, not in terms of trying to identify the 'true' gender identity of any person, but in terms of ensuring that interactions between gendered subjects proceed in 'normal' ways (O'Brien, 1997, p. 5). As Balsamo argues about all forms of potentially transgressive technologies, of which drug use in sport may be considered one,

The role of the gendered body in this boundary setting process is significant; it serves as the site where anxieties about the "proper order of things" erupt and are eventually managed ideologically. Investigating the interaction between material bodies and new technologies illuminates the work of ideology-in-progress, where new technologies are invested with cultural significance in ways that augment dominant cultural narratives (1996, p. 10).

The difference that exists between the 'gender crossing' online, and the 'gender crossing' that occurs with drugs and genetic engineering/manipulation, is that the latter is

an embodied form of transgression. O'Brien suggests that gender crossing online may not receive the impetus for radical transgression that comes when one is marked as the inferior 'other' with hostility. Electronic and disembodied crossings do not produce the emotional reactions in the 'other' that underpin a comprehension of the imposing hierarchy of gender (1997, p. 7). In contrast, the hostile reaction towards the transgressive and embodied 'gender crossing' of the female athlete may result in an empathetic consideration of the effects of the imposition of gender. And such empathy may result in a bending of the gender code, so that multiple gender renderings can exist within a single body, so that a space is sustainable for the crossing of previously rigid gender codes by future female athletes. As with Haraway's (1991 cited by Brook, 1999, p. 139) claim for the appropriation of cyborg bodies for females, the use of these mechanisms "may be a necessity rather than a choice" for future female athletes wishing to undermine male authority in sport. As with all members of the category of cyborg bodies, the drugged female athlete and the genetically modified one may, according to Balsamo (1996, p. 39),

... raise the issue of possible new form(s) of gendered embodiment. Their recrafted bodies defy the natural givenness of physical gender identity.... It is important that feminist approaches to "the body" resist the easy dissolution or dematerialization of the body offered by postmodernist theorists. The cyborg image works well to foreground the radical materiality of the body, which cannot be written out of any feminist account. Whatever its fate, "the body" in feminist theory has never been simply a blank slate (or screen) upon which or about which to write. From a feminist perspective, attempts to write about the relationship between the contemporary social order and the body are ill-fated endeavours if they do not begin with a consideration of gender, or more explicitly, with a consideration of the gendering of bodies.

The transgressive, female athletic body offers the opportunity to deconstruct categorisations of the body that have left the female athlete, and by association commentator, in a position of powerlessness relative to the male. When bodies are understood as culturally produced and sexed, such transgressions become a feminist political issue; an issue of revealing the oppression felt by females, and the lack of authoritative spaces available to females, caused by any type of strict adherence to the disciplined gendering of bodies.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### CONCUSIONS AND FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

In a description of her analysis of the gendering of different bodies, Anne Balsamo explains the relationship between discourses, material practices, relations of power, institutions and representations. She states:

In studying the interactions between bodies and technologies, I take on the task of analyzing an emergent cultural formation that manifests itself in dissimilar (discursive) forms.... I offer interpretations not only of texts and stories, but also of social relations, institutional arrangements, popular cultural images, and systems of logic. These are all part of the cultural apparatus that constructs gendered bodies. The final point is to demonstrate how a discursive framework of analysis can elaborate the historically specific production of material bodies. On this note, I implicitly address an ongoing project... of developing a framework for the analysis of the relationship between discursive studies of cultural forms and the material conditions of women's lives (1996, p. 16).

At a later stage of her analysis, Balsamo goes on to suggest that the technologies and apparatuses, understood in a Foucauldian sense, that gender the body overlap and interact in such a way that they appear borderless. In her investigations of specific sites of gendering in cosmetic surgery, reproductive technology, virtual reality and sport, each site suggests the need to investigate other sites (1996, p. 159).

This thesis has dealt with one specific site where the female body is gendered. And this thesis has described a number of mechanisms through which the female is gendered, including relations between history, legislation, media discourses and images, standpoints and athletic bodies. The abstraction of this site from the web of cultural practices that produces such gendering, whilst reductive, is suggested as an important addition to the political project of feminism. So, again following from Balsamo (1996, p. 162), whilst there is a web of cultural practices that reproduce gendered bodies, the point of this thesis has been to see sport as a site for "immediate political intervention and social change." Sport may be a site where the reproduction of the hierarchical relations of gender can be disrupted.

This thesis is a celebration and utilisation of some bodies of feminist theory as offering potential projects of disruption that can be applied to sport. The overriding

purpose of the thesis has been to use feminist theory to produce spaces in which female athletes can speak authoritatively. The introductory chapter provided a brief overview of the major theoretical orientations that would be touched on throughout this thesis; Rortian pragmatism, and liberal, standpoint, Foucauldian and poststructural feminism. Chapter Two demonstrated the usefulness of a feminist-reformed Rortian pragmatism as a foundation for the study of female participation in sport. The foundation that arises from Rortian pragmatism is that individuals can use the antifoundational view of truth, discourse and the body to create new structures and practices in sport that are more liberating for them. Rortian pragmatism, as with feminist standpoint theory and poststructural feminism, endeavours to ensure this opportunity to speak is given to as many people in an ideal liberal society as possible in the creation of these 'new' sporting discourses. The feminist conversation (and Fraser (1991, p. 262) would suggest, conversion) of Rortian pragmatism is to recognise that structural and embodied inequity exists in society and in sport for the use of this pragmatic space to produce different, and more liberating, discourses. Women in society, and especially in sport, are structurally dominated to the point where opportunities to produce metaphoric change are not as easy to use as for men. But the conclusion of this chapter was that, whilst regard for the structural dominance of men in sport and society is important, the embrace of antifoundationalism, interventional storytelling, and pragmatic tools to assist in the public consumption of these stories will assist in the production of authoritative spaces for females.

In light of this foundation, the remaining chapters of this thesis borrowed extensively from the ethnographic, historical, fictional and critical work of feminist scholars and sport scholars as the data for this study. The originality of the study was related to how this data can be re-worked using various feminist frameworks to open up potentially new opportunities for female speech in sport and society. Chapter Three of this thesis provided a brief counter-history of women's position in politics and sport. Both groups of females, political feminists and female athletes, suffered similar forms of resistance and containment towards their respective innovations of society. Medical and scientific pronouncements denounced female participation in both sport and politics. Cultural commentators impugned the reputations and practices of both types of female

innovators. But, at the same time as this condemnation, it is also apparent that these resistant innovators forced the patriarchal community to modify its oppressive and disciplining discourses. The feminist counter-history would suggest that any attempts to dismiss the history of feminism as one of women's incorporation into the dominant patriarchal view of society does not do justice to the courageous individuals and the female collectivities who, whilst suffering personally, redescribed and reformed society in such a way as to open up freedoms for women. The first waves of athletic and political feminism presented an embodied resistance point to the ideology of male power and female subordination (Edwards, 1999, p. 2). So whilst the prevailing episteme of male dominance was strongly defended, females were still able to experience greater opportunities in their sporting and political lives.

But the discourse of male superiority remained firmly in place, and continues to influence the laws, practices, structures and discourses that limit female sporting participation and authority. Chapter Four of this thesis used feminist critiques of equal opportunities laws to reveal the maleness of sporting reason that continues to limit the application of these laws in sport. Liberal equality endorses the way men are, validates what men do and think and ignores the threats imposed by the maleness of public space for female athletes. But additionally, equal opportunity laws emphasise the average differences in physiological and anatomical characteristics between men and women that reinforces the notion of dichotomous and hierarchical gender categories, and appropriate sporting interests for each group. The shift that was suggested in this chapter was to embrace equality of opportunity, but reject the maleness of sporting reason, dichotomous gender categories and gendered sport typing. For females to gain authoritative spaces in sport, it was suggested that they must break down the exclusivity of those sports that have traditionally been played only by men. As a symbolic language, female participation in these sports would demonstrate both the notion of overlapping continuums of performance between men and women, and provide the space for innovative sporting practice and speech about these sports by women. At the very least, participation would allow women to learn a different embodied script that may be useful in certain situations in which they

might find themselves. So equal opportunities legislation applied more broadly can allow for the development of privately produced female stories of sporting participation.

But the next site of containment of these innovative stories may be a male-controlled sports media. The fifth chapter of this thesis investigated the utility of feminist standpoint positions in opposing the maleness of the sporting media. The first section of the chapter revealed the various ways that the sporting media has contained the challenge that female athletes pose to the male standard of excellence in sport, through the mechanisms of numerical dominance of males in the profession, and the cultural annihilation, stereotyping, trivialisation of performance, and sexualisation of the female athlete. Largely, the female athlete has been either ignored or distorted to serve male tastes and interests by the sporting media.

This chapter then went on to suggest a number of mechanisms that could be useful in resisting this positioning of the female athlete, and of female journalists, in the sports media. Equal opportunities feminism could be useful in both expanding the number of females who are allowed to speak in the sporting media, and providing female journalists with the comfort and financial security that is important for them to be able to engage in some playful experimentation with the dominant phallogocentric discourse of mediated sport. Equal opportunities feminism may also allow participating female athletes to embody authority through their sporting performance, and so appropriate commentary positions through some of the 'old-boy' mechanisms that male athletes have access to. In addition, the pragmatic tools of sentimental and comic manipulation may be important in expanding the community's capacity to listen to the different stories of the 'other'. The story of Lisa Olson may help people to recognise the pain and suffering that female reporters endure to complete the job that they see as important, and empathise with both Olson's pain and anger at the violent maleness of parts of the sporting community. And this empathy may provide a space for Olson to tell her stories about male and female sport. Comedy, such as that provided by Elle McFeast, may be a more comfortable means of expanding the members and contents of the sporting discourse. McFeast, and her female co-hosts, were able to use and reverse the stereotypes of females in sport performance, spectatorship and journalism through a comic exaggeration of these stereotypes.

McFeast's exhibition of an exaggerated sporting gender demonstrated the performativity of gender embodiments. Chapter Six of this thesis investigated the idea that authority in sport is related to gendered embodiment. By using Foucauldian and poststructural feminist viewpoints about the body, space was suggested for the development and maintenance of resistant female athletic bodies and commentary. The aspect of work that this chapter of the thesis was particularly concerned with was the ways that Foucault and poststructural feminists had applied their ideas to the sustenance of resistance toward the normalised gendering of bodies. Poststructural feminists of the body deconstructed the view that both bodies and gender are naturally produced. Instead, they suggest that the acts of gender containment reveal the political/discursive work that is done to produce or construct the gendered body. Hence, this denaturalises the gendered body, and allows for the production of strategically more useful bodies. The final section of this chapter used these ideas to produce a feminist counter-discourse about drug laws in sport. Drug laws were redescribed as part of the discourse that contains female bodies to the hierarchical gender categories that are necessary to the maintenance of male dominance of sport. As authority in sport is partially granted on the basis of 'objective' sporting performance, females should view the drug ban as potentially a piece of phallogentric legislation designed to maintain male power. In contrast to the patriarchal (or liberal) discourse on drugs, it was suggested that women athletes could look at the use of drugs as a mechanism that allows them to approach the narrowly defined (by men) participation standards of male athletes. This explanation automatically throws up other sites for investigation of future technologies. Other case studies that could be investigated at a later date are the suspicions about genetic engineering and virtual reality 'sport', and the distaste for female athletes aborting before sporting performance. Are these suspicions and distaste mechanisms of the control of the female athlete's performance which females should oppose? It was suggested that the feminist athlete could investigate the possibility of refusing these containments, and in so doing, appropriating possible authoritative spaces through the production of excellent sporting performances on a male standard. But in so doing, the feminist must call into question many of the ethical and ontological foundations of philosophy of sport.

Feminist theory offers a number of challenges to the epistemological, ontological and ethical claims, and the relationships between these claims, made in both philosophy and philosophy of sport. Questions of justice and fairness are reframed by feminists as questions about whose desires take precedence in contesting and deciding claims of justice and fairness. Beliefs about expertise and knowledge are deconstructed by feminists as political claims that solidify the position of males in society and in sport. Ontological questions about human nature and the natural human body are reconfigured by poststructural and corporeal feminists as mechanisms for the control of possible female excess. And the relationships between claims of justice, claims of expertise, claims of naturalness and the gendering of the bodies that make such claims are also placed at the forefront of the feminist imagination. A further purpose of this brief final chapter is to suggest that these claims by feminists are vividly apparent in the sporting world, and that this thesis has demonstrated that sport is a rich area for investigation and political intervention by feminists. Sport as an overt bodily activity may offer some potentials and obstacles that are not as obviously present in feminist concerns with theoretical activities like education, the law and politics. This is not to imply a dualism, but simply to suggest that sport, like dance and theatre, is an activity where the body's movements and actions are more obviously symbolically communicative.

In the conclusion of her paper on self-defense as a form of physical feminism, Martha McCaughey states: "Self-defense enables us to see gender ideology operating not just at the level of ideas, social interaction, and relationships... but at the level of the body as well" (1998, p. 14). Whilst this thesis has ostensibly been about the production of authoritative spaces for female athletes, it has also been about how reflections on female sport can inform feminist philosophical theory. Sport may be a most salient site to expose the relationship between ontological claims, epistemological claims and ethical claims. The position of this thesis has been that claims to expertise and justice in sport are embodied claims, made mostly by men. That is, the discourse of sport that naturalises narrow and patriarchal definitions of sporting excellence and ties those definitions to authoritative positions permits men the opportunity to embody excellence and occupy authoritative positions. And from these positions, men are able to make moral and legislative

judgements that further limit the opportunity for women to speak authoritatively about sport. Sport is a discursive site that, in its current and historical forms, is an embodied demonstration of male dominance.

But, as stated in the introduction to Chapter Three, women's presence in sport makes sport an example of 'leaky hegemony' (Cole and Birrell, 1986 cited in Theberge, 1998, p. 2). These leaks occur when women participate at sites, in ways, and in bodies, that have historically been the exclusive domain of men. Whilst historically, the division of power between men and women in sport has been maintained by either the exclusion of women from sport, or a mediated inclusion in sport as either add-ons, eccentrics or inferior athletes to men, there has also been a number of sites of resistance to these subject positions for women (either intentional or accidental). This thesis has described the historical forms of resistance to exclusion and containment that were practiced by some early sportswomen. It has also suggested that novel uses of equal opportunities legislation, comedy and sentimentality in the media, and poststructural views of the body, could produce other sites of resistance to the maleness of sporting bodies, excellence and commentary in the future.

The future also may lie in acknowledging and using other strands of feminism to develop further sites for transgression and resistance by female athletes. This thesis has only touched on the important ideas of sexism and phallogentrism in formalised sporting organisations (McKay, 1997), the gendered division of sport-sustaining work in the family (Thompson, 1988; 1999) and in institutional sport (Staurowsky, 1995), and the effects of race (Edwards, 1999; Wolff, 1995), religion (Morgan, 1998; 1999) and age (Landers and Fine, 1996; Young, 1980; Johns, 1998; Renold, 1997, Skelton, 2000) on opportunities for females in sport. For example, the need to maintain the dichotomous categories of gender in sport may be specific to Western countries, where other mechanisms of gender hierarchy have broken down. Future research could investigate whether, in non-Western countries, women in sport experience more equity and respectful treatment. And, in terms of this thesis, this may make sports in these countries important sites for practicing a feminist politics and philosophy.

Additionally, it has worked to produce authoritative spaces for female speech within the boundaries set by male definitions of sport and excellence. So, the method of attacking patriarchal definitions is to occupy authoritative spaces and produce change from within. In no way should this indicate that other feminist attacks on patriarchal sport that deal with the production of transgressive discourse by developing new sports and new definitions that are better suited to the production of authoritative spaces for females (for example, see Birrell and Richter, 1987; Watson, 1993), are a misguided way of producing change. Both strategies can occur concurrently in the production of authoritative spaces for females to speak about sport.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> There has been a neglect of feminist philosophical traditions within the discipline area of philosophy of sport. This dissertation introduces and uses only a few of the many traditions of thought that could be considered feminist. The author acknowledges, but does not apologise for the length of the dissertation (and thanks the examiners for their patience). The length of the thesis is due to the extent of feminist literature that has been neglected by the philosophy of sport literature.

<sup>2</sup> I acknowledge that this treats male sport as the standard by which females are judged. I hope that the rest of the dissertation will demonstrate that singular standards of judgement are narrow and discriminatory, and that ‘moving up’ is one strategy amongst many for females in sport. The argument here is that the justification for women being prevented from playing in men’s competition should not be allowed to be their gender, a justification which is commonly used in the misapplication of equal opportunities laws. This misapplication will be discussed in Chapter Four of this dissertation.

<sup>3</sup> Jennifer Hargreaves cites several examples of the reduction in differences between male and female sporting records in sports such as marathon running, ‘ultra’ running, triathlon, long-distance swimming and cycling (1994, pp. 283-286). It is my contention that such ‘catching up’ is crucially important in providing female athletes access to an authoritative voice within the current group of practices called sports. But it is only one mechanism for gaining authority, and the achievement of it may be limited by an attachment to discourses about the body, sex and knowledge that make the achievement more difficult than it might otherwise be. This argument will be particularly discussed in the final section of Chapter Six, although it will inform many other sections of the thesis.

<sup>4</sup> I do not mean to suggest that the original or subsequent formulations of the rules of these games were deliberately produced to mark differences between men and women. On the contrary, I would suggest that decisions about the rules of these games were made to mark differences between male players, and the question of females never entered the frame.

<sup>5</sup> This is not meant to suggest that Theberge supports this position. Theberge’s work, as cited extensively throughout this thesis, is about breaking down the idea that the authority that men have in sport is natural or essential, and revealing the various political practices engaged in by men to maintain the ‘naturalness’ of that authority.

<sup>6</sup> There has been a neglect of feminist philosophical traditions within the discipline area of philosophy of sport. This dissertation introduces and uses only a few of the many traditions of thought that could be considered feminist. The author acknowledges, but does not apologise for the length of the dissertation (and thanks the examiners for their patience). The length of the dissertation is due to the extent of feminist literature that has been neglected by the philosophy of sport literature.

<sup>7</sup> Ann Hall made this call in regards to the inclusion of feminist theory in sport sociology (1996, p. 50). It is pleasing to report that sport sociology has a large amount of research which incorporates mainstream feminist theorising, as will be exemplified by its use in this thesis. My feeling is that philosophical research concerning sport has been less concerned with feminism.

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<sup>8</sup> A number of other feminists mention sport in passing. Among them, Nicholson, Moulton and Addelson have all contributed articles on sport to Postow's collection, *Women, Philosophy and Sport: A Collection of New Essays* (1983) and Kate Millett has a small section of her book, *Sexual Politics* (1969) devoted to the persistence of patriarchal power through exclusive men's sporting clubs. Barbara Brook also notes that there are few writers who are active as feminists and physical performers. She names Anne Bolin, an anthropologist and bodybuilder, and Philipa Rothfield, a philosopher and dancer (1999, p. 122).

<sup>9</sup> McKay and Huber in research on the relations between the genders in 12 metre yacht racing found that the marginalisation and incorporation of females occurred not through the enunciation of sexual difference but via the valorisation and universalisation of the male body and experience. Hence, the authors felt that it was important to regender, rather than degender, resistant sporting discourses (1992 cited in Hall, 1996, p. 42). This does not contradict Lorber's claim (2000, p. 80) that a progressive feminist political movement should be working towards degendering society. McKay and Huber's claim, as with the early chapters of this thesis, involves an explanation of the forms of degendering that take place in patriarchal and phallogocentric sport, and that allow for male athleticism to be enshrined as a human standard of excellence. But Chapter Six of this thesis will utilise Foucauldian and poststructural theories of the body to contest the hierarchical and binary categories of gender, as Lorber suggests. The difference in the two types of degendering, patriarchal and feminist, is the political project that each is undertaking. Patriarchal degendering obscures the politics that produces male authority in sport. Feminist degendering is used to undermine one mechanism, the naturalness of gendered bodies, which maintains the authority of men in sport.

<sup>10</sup> It will be argued in Chapter Three that the early history of female participation in sport includes examples of female control over the practice/discourse of their games. But the dominant patriarchal community quickly incorporated such control when its incidence began to become public. This incorporation makes clear the difficulty in moving from an authoritative position in a private or separatist practice, to becoming an authoritative speaker in a public, political practice, a shift that is discussed in both Chapter Five, in terms of sport commentary, and in Chapter Six, in terms of excellent sporting bodies.

<sup>11</sup> Epistemic authority will be discussed in both Chapter Two of the thesis, in terms of antifoundational notions of truth, and Chapters Five and Six of the thesis, in terms of the relationship between authority and embodiment.

<sup>12</sup> As Rorty suggests, those who are physically or economically insecure may have "little else than pride in not being what they are not with which to sustain their self-respect" (1993a, p. 13). The homophobe takes pride in the idea that he/she is better than the gay, the man passionately requires the belief that he is better than the woman, and the poor white Southerner may feel good about little other than his superiority to Blacks. The idea is captured superbly in Lisa Alther's novel *Original Sin* where a black Southern college student called Lou relates the following story:

I always thought I was just about the hottest thing on two legs. We were rich, and all my playmates were poor. They were dirty. I was sparkling clean.... It was the shock of my life one day when I was playing house with these trashy

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white kids and they made me be the maid.... Hell, my mama had a maid, and none of theirs did. (1981, p. 240)

<sup>13</sup> It should be noted that Roberts has suggested that sporting practice is a “language-without-words” communication (1997). As with any language, there are dominant methods of playing sport, which are oppressive for ‘other’ sporting participants. As women often occupy the ‘other’ position in sport, the breaking down of these dominant methods may free up space for women to play their games with the freedom of any poet.

<sup>14</sup> My insertion.

<sup>15</sup> My insertion.

<sup>16</sup> Young’s research on 60 women athletes engaged in the sports of rugby, rockclimbing, wrestling, ice-hockey and martial arts, revealed three common strategies in denying that their sporting participation was feminist in orientation. Firstly, one group responded that their athleticism was positioned according to stereotypical notions of femininity (e.g. make-up, dress) which were antithetical to feminism. A second strategy was to suggest that feminism was out of place in the sports world, as this world was about athletes, and not men and women. A final strategy was to espouse all the arguments of the radical and postmodern feminist, but quickly add that these arguments don’t mean that the speaker is a feminist. Young concluded that the third strategy was the most liberating for women, as it was a reaction against the stereotypes, and not the ideology, of feminism (1997, p. 302). Hall’s (1996, p. 81) and McKay’s (1997, pp. 85-89) interviews with females in sporting organisations both indicated a reluctance for their organisations to have more feminists. The underlying sentiment, explained by many of the respondents, was that feminists carried a stigma of ‘lesbianism’, or at least ‘unfemininity’, which female sporting organisations were trying to disassociate themselves from.

<sup>17</sup> Rorty (1991c, p. 209) uses this metaphor to reflect a willingness to judge the ‘truth’ of knowledges in terms of their utility in helping the person to adapt to any concern that confronts them, and not in terms of its fit with some pre-existing reality. So the person selects the knowledge which is useful for them in any particular situation. Harding (1989) explains that depending on the different programs of oppression faced by females, it will be necessary to attack oppression using feminist empiricism or deconstruction, feminist standpoint theory and postmodern feminism. No single paradigm will be most useful for all problems that women face.

<sup>18</sup> Rorty would argue that the ‘fault’ could only be identified by recognising that prior languages suppressed past potentialities, when compared with contemporary languages. But it is difficult to assign moral blame for this suppression, because the producers of this historical language did not have the words and phrases available to them that contemporary feminists do (1991a, p. 8). This is why I have placed the word *fault* in parentheses.

<sup>19</sup> It will seem strange to many that in this chapter I describe Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Jane Addams as liberal feminists. I acknowledge that much of their theories are radical and pragmatic, but what I am suggesting is that at this point of feminist history, liberalism included radical aspects of theory production.

<sup>20</sup> Rorty (1993a) also discusses this in a later paper in terms of the crises in Serbia. He states as a criticism of those who suggest that the atrocities performed in the crises are crimes against ‘human rights’, that:

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Outside the circle of post-Enlightenment European culture, the circle of relatively safe and secure people who have been manipulating one another's sentiments for two hundred years, most people are simply unable to understand why membership in a biological species is supposed to suffice for membership in a moral community. This is not because they are insufficiently rational. It is typically, because they live in a world in which it would be just too risky- indeed, would often be insanely dangerous- to let one's sense of moral community stretch beyond one's family, clan, or tribe. (1993a, p. 12)

<sup>21</sup> In Chapter Five of the thesis, Catherine MacKinnon's (1987) position that stereotypes become embodied so that what women do not do becomes what they cannot do will be explained. If most women do not participate in male sports because the stereotypes associated with such participation are negative, then eventually this lack of participation is taken as evidence that women cannot do these sports. So there is a shift from the sports that women may properly do, a political decision, to the sports that women can possibly do, a quasi-biological edict.

<sup>22</sup> My insertion

<sup>23</sup> The differences and similarities between Foucault and Rorty will hopefully become apparent during Chapter Six. At this point it will be sufficient to summarise the major difference as, in Rorty's terms, that he is optimistic that a commitment to liberal society, democracy and social hope will be capable of sustaining ironic change whilst Foucault is not so optimistic (1993a, p. 17; 1991d; also see Schultz, 1999, p. 3). This difference may be more applicable to the earlier, rather than the latter, works of Foucault. Finally, it will be acknowledged that Foucault's position may be closer to the feminist standpoint positions of MacKinnon (1987) and Fraser (1989; 1990; 1991), than Rorty is, because of Foucault's attention to the structural forces that limit individuals' autonomous relationship to themselves.

<sup>24</sup> Throughout this thesis, I will use the original publication date for Foucault's books, rather than the transcribed publication date. The full bibliographic details of Foucault's books in the bibliography section includes both the year in which the books were first published, and the year of publication for the translated copies that I used.

<sup>25</sup> I acknowledge and agree with the call by Messner and Sabo to analyse the relationships between various grids of domination in society, including racial, class-based, gendered and sexual forms. Unfortunately, the study of the relationship of gender domination to these other forms would make this dissertation too long. An interesting case study by Leanne Stedman (1997) looks at how the postmodernisation process, understood as Jameson's late capitalism, has produced a shift in the surf media towards misogyny and intolerance. The incorporation of surfing lifestyles and products as mainstream consumable items has meant that, in a desire to maintain their depiction as counter-cultural, the surf media has become anti-feminist and homophobic. Late capitalism has produced intolerance of other genders and sexualities (1997). Kolnes has argued that the needs of capitalism and patriarchy come together in the commodification of the female athlete as a sexual image in modern advertising and promotion (1995, p. 67). Cole and Hribar (1995, pp. 347-369) and Lafrance (1998, pp. 117-139) look at the commodification of popular feminist creeds of the 1980s and 1990s by *Nike* about female empowerment, in order to seduce female

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consumers to buy their products, at the same time as third world, mostly female, workers are exploited. The commodification of such popular feminist creeds in late capitalism links in with the romantic liberal individualism and neo-conservatism of post-Reagan Western capitalist societies such that any suggestion of structural oppression suffered by groups has been said to have been overcome. What is left for non-authoritative members of society is simply the need to try harder and 'Just Do It.' The authors have labelled this commodification 'post-feminist', a reflection of both female success stories and the opposition to feminism in society, although the link to feminism is confusing. Post-feminists do not embrace many of the beliefs shared by most other feminisms. Eskes, Duncan and Miller (1998, pp. 317-344) and Willis (1991 cited by Real, 1999, pp. 140-143) both discuss the commodification of feminist concerns with empowerment and autonomy in women's aerobics classes, such that these feminist concerns are privatised and individualised. Hence, the focus in such classes is not the collective improvement of women's position in society, a concern of feminism, but the desire to address individual shortcomings in the belief that women already live in an egalitarian society, a postfeminist rhetoric (Eskes *et. al.*, 1998, p. 321).

<sup>26</sup> I use the term 'force' at this introductory stage of the thesis to describe a phenomenon of change which is far more subtle than the description conveys. In this thesis, I will describe the relationship between empathy with other people's suffering, and the necessity imposed on the person empathising to change the words and phrases he/she previously used, so that the other person no longer suffers. It is a force that the pragmatist sees as impossible to oppose, because the empathy can only exist when the injustice of previous descriptions is revealed by contrast to new descriptions.

<sup>27</sup> It is interesting to note how the dominant white male controls black athletes. If these positions of power are related to a perceived knowledge of the game, and such knowledge is related to results, but blacks outperform whites, how do whites maintain their dominance over these positions. By the description that blacks are 'naturally' suited to certain sports. This destroys the link between knowledge and results. Yet, rarely is it suggested that white men are 'naturally' suited to most sports more than women. This second suggestion would reduce the power of white men.

<sup>28</sup> Foucault will occupy a central position in the ideas developed throughout this whole thesis. Foucault's central concern with the historical development of subjectivities and resistance to subjectification will be the main theme for Chapters Three to Seven.

<sup>29</sup> Marchiano's portrayal in the film may have been 'too realistic' for the safety of members of her own sex (although it is difficult to condemn her for this because her choice was limited by the threat of death). After the release of the film, there were increasing reports of throat rape in emergency rooms. There were reports of women dying through suffocation caused by throat rape. One woman wrote after Marchiano's bibliography was published that she hoped that Marchiano's book and civil rights testimony would "undo some of the terrible damage" that the film had caused. This damage included marital break-up caused by wives not enjoying what Linda convincingly portrayed as enjoyable, nervous breakdowns and tranquilizer addiction caused by women hoping to keep up with Linda for fear of losing their husbands, young girls being convinced by men that this was

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normal, if not enjoyable, and even one business fail because the male owner became obsessed with this type of sex (MacKinnon, 1987, p. 286 n. 65).

Jeff Benedict presents a dangerous twist of this credibility issue in his insights about the crimes of male athletes against women. The [media orchestrated] appeal by Mike Tyson against his conviction for the rape of Desiree Washington utilised the idea that because athletes constantly have access to groupies, then all women *appear* to consent to athletes, whether they say so or not (1997, p. 160).

<sup>30</sup> MacKinnon (1987, pp. 165-166) goes further by suggesting that the maleness of the law is maintained by turning substantive issues into abstractions. Such a change means that the substantive absence of women from certain practices in society becomes treated under the more general rubric of discrimination against individuals. So the substantive treatment of women by the law is made invisible by the law's treatment of women as ungendered humans.

Marilyn Frye discusses the case of Lorena Bobbitt and the severing of her husband's penis after he had battered and raped her, in light of the gender 'neutrality' of the law. Bobbitt escaped punishment on the basis of temporary insanity. Frye suggested that some feminists were upset at the verdict because, in their view, females cannot claim rights to full humanity and citizenship, whilst relinquishing their responsibility for their acts. Whilst agreeing that it is unfortunate that Bobbitt had to claim to be insane at the time of her assault, Frye goes on to suggest that to call for Bobbitt to take responsibility for her act would force her to make "significant things about her and her act insignificant." These things included that she was a battered woman and an Ecuadorian immigrant. These things become insignificant when the legal/liberal force of gender neutrality is imposed (1996, pp. 991, 992).

<sup>31</sup> I recognise that the idea of censorship of pornography is still a debated issue within feminism. Opponents of MacKinnon, such as Brown (cited by Lumby, 1997, p. 108) have suggested that MacKinnon's position "freezes pornography into a rigid text in which men are always dominant and women are always submissive." This reduces the diversity of possible readings to the singular one that MacKinnon is trying to oppose. So, through censorship, MacKinnon has managed to successfully maintain dominant readings of sexuality, whilst silencing other possible readings.

This debate is not especially important to this thesis. The purpose of using MacKinnon's argument against pornography is to demonstrate the inadequacy of de-sexed human rights legislation. The inadequacy is that such legislation ignores the importance of sex in the production of authoritative speaking voices. However, in answer to Brown, it may be useful to consider pornography from a Foucauldian sense, where the intentions of the agent are not as important as the capillaries of power. Hence, individual females may 'read' pornography in ways that are different to MacKinnon's dominant view, but this dominant reading still has a greater affect on the types of female sexual subjectivities that are produced.

<sup>32</sup> I use this term that Terence Roberts used (1995, p. 96) to, as he states, remind us that any language is a redescription of a redescription, and so on. From now on, I will not continue with this term, and instead merely refer to proposed changes to discourses as redescriptions.

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<sup>33</sup> It is important here to recognise the two different meanings of the term ‘sex’ which MacKinnon (1987) is using. Linda’s treatment, as with many rape and sexual harassment victims, has been considered nonviolent because the acts that she was forced to perform were considered sexual. But MacKinnon does not want to ignore or trivialise the sex of the victim. MacKinnon wants to emphasise that the sex of the victim, female, is crucial in understanding that the violence of the act is made greater because it affects all females.

<sup>34</sup> Again, this is not meant to suggest that any example of pornography transmits a single message to all people. It is meant to suggest that there is dominant messages that is conveyed which is that women are less powerful than men. This dominant image is conveyed equally in the objectification and sexualisation of the female person, and the fantasy and parody of images of the female-in-control of the sexual act (sado-masochism). So, the female is viewed as powerless even when apparently in control.

<sup>35</sup> My insertion.

<sup>36</sup> Rorty acknowledges that this type of statement will result in charges of relativism being laid against him by more metaphysically minded philosophers. His response is that relativism exists as a charge only for those philosophers who believe that there is something other than solidarity that grounds beliefs. But if we consider that “new metaphors are causes, but not reasons, for changes in belief” (1989, p. 50): that is, that there is nothing which can justify the selection of a particular language game from outside of that language game, then the charge of relativism drifts away.

With reference to the current Western democracies, Rorty suggests:

The ritual invocation of the “need to avoid relativism” is most comprehensible as an expression of the need to preserve certain habits of contemporary European life. These are the habits nurtured by the Enlightenment, and justified by it in terms of an appeal to Reason.... So the real question about relativism is whether these same habits of intellectual, social, and political life can be justified by a conception of rationality as criterionless muddling through, and by a pragmatist conception of the truth.

I think that the answer to this question is that the pragmatist cannot justify these habits without circularity.... It is exemplified by Winston Churchill’s defense of democracy as the worst form of government imaginable, except for all the others which have been tried so far. Such justification is not by reference to a criterion, but by reference to various detailed practical advantages. (1985b, pp. 11-12)

<sup>37</sup> Isaiah Berlin... quoting Joseph Schumpeter... said “To realise the relative validity of one’s convictions and yet stand for them unflinchingly, is what distinguishes a civilized man from a barbarian.” Berlin comments, “To demand more than this is perhaps a deep and incurable metaphysical need; but to allow it to determine one’s practice is a symptom of an equally deep, and more dangerous, moral and political immaturity” (cited in Rorty, 1989, p. 46).

<sup>38</sup> My insertions.

<sup>39</sup> Rorty explains this: “He [Jefferson] thought it enough to privatize religion, to view it as irrelevant to social order but relevant to, and possibly essential for, individual perfection. Citizens of a Jeffersonian democracy can be as religious or irreligious as they please as

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long as they are not “fanatical” (1988, p. 257). And further on, Rorty explains that in order to decide between which private beliefs are respectable and which are fanatical, we will place that judgement in the local and ethnocentric hands of the community (1988, p. 259). Rawls political conception of justice tries to protect these local, ethnocentric traditions of judgement.

<sup>40</sup> The ‘web’ is an important metaphor for Rorty (1985a, p. 217) and needs some explanation. The web is used to describe how any person, or any practice, is a set of intersecting and interacting beliefs and ideas that has no centre. Some of the set of beliefs and ideas may be strongly felt and effect a great many other beliefs and ideas. Others may not be so strongly felt. The web is centreless in the sense that there is no human subject or God that determines what beliefs the human must have. The web is unstable in the sense that, because all beliefs and ideas are not so determined, they may be changed. And change to any belief or idea will effect changes to other intersecting ones.

<sup>41</sup> From a feminist perspective, it is apparent that one sex has had greater opportunity to create a change in vocabulary than the other has. And this may be especially so in sport. This difference between the genders in the opportunities to produce change is a major criticism of Rorty that is to be discussed later in the chapter.

<sup>42</sup> Rorty has dealt with this antifoundational view of truth in a more recent paper (1998). He argues that when confronted with the problem of whether a statement is true or not, the best the person can do is look at how it can be justified. Therefore, “once you understand all about the justification of actions, including the justification of assertions, you understand all there *is* to understand about goodness, rightness, and truth” (1998, p. 21). To paraphrase Rorty (1998, p. 19) as the pursuit of truth beyond the notion of justification has no effect on what we would do in practice, then it should have nothing to do with what we believe.

<sup>43</sup> The suggestion that a belief can be ‘performed’ ties in with Roberts (1997) view of sport as one type of a ‘language-without-words’ game. This is to be discussed in a later section of this chapter.

<sup>44</sup> My insertion.

<sup>45</sup> As Roberts explains, “Since *we* only have varying degrees of justification, and cannot climb out of either our beliefs or our skins, there is no accessible privileged position beyond *us*, beyond our presently justified beliefs that constitute *us*.” (1998b, p. 7)

<sup>46</sup> Rawls historicity of justice merely becomes the idea that through storytelling many different types of concrete others have become part of our common community whose private interests must be protected; that “history keeps producing new sorts of ‘concrete others’ whom one might turn out to be” (Rorty, 1991a, p. 11 n. 8).

<sup>47</sup> A particularly relevant form of pain, which Rorty refers to, is the inability to have your description of something acknowledged by others (1989, pp. 89, 90). For example, it is painful for a child whose life is ordered around a particular children’s television show, to have such importance trivialised by an adult. But children do not exclusively feel such pain. It is felt when, for example, a woman cannot get a police officer or a judge to acknowledge rape in marriage.

<sup>48</sup> Roberts explains that:

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...the chief instrument of cultural change... is the “talent for speaking differently” rather than the talent for arguing well within a predetermined language (CIS,p7). The task becomes “to redescribe lots and lots of things in new ways, until you have created a pattern of linguistic behaviour which will tempt the rising generation to adopt it” (CIS,p9) if a significant redescription does catch hold, the world and what is possible and important within it will be remade (1995, p. 96).

<sup>49</sup> McGuinness criticises this characterisation of Rorty for a number of reasons, which all relate to the charges of relativism laid against antifoundationalists. She suggests that the political theorist engages in the act of judging which of a variety of contingent descriptions is better. She also suggests that “Even if we are happy to accept that we can never find the ‘truth’ or the ‘right’ solution, we will have to do something, and it cannot be the case that all solutions are as good as each other. Some actions must be judged morally better than others” (1997, pp. 35, 36). This ignores Rorty’s position that we must make judgments according to our own lights; that we cannot step out of our own language to judge another. The political theorist may make decisions, but they are no less ethnocentric than anyone else’s. He/She judges according to the standards that he/she accepts.

The second criticism that McGuinness suggests is that there are literary forms that do not promote tolerance and empathy. Rorty would no doubt agree (political philosophy may be one form of literature he would point to), but this would be how Rorty would differentiate between good and bad literature, working by his own ethnocentric ideas. But unlike some, Rorty would see it as his liberal duty to listen to, and not ignore, such literature for what he might learn about himself, the author and their communities.

<sup>50</sup> In a speech given to a group of supporters of Rushdie on the third anniversary of the Islamic *fatwa* imposed on him, Stoppard said:

What this occasion is not, I hope, is the one thing it appears to be; a gathering of Western Liberals to deplore attitudes uncongenial to Western liberalism. That particular circularity won’t roll anywhere anymore.... The least ingratiating interpretation of this occasion would be that we are writers closing ranks for literature.... Literature, the freedom of expression... is categorically invalid in this argument.... The right to freedom of expression is not fundamental.... To a theist, free expression can never be fundamental. God never said let there be freedom of thought and word. (Fraser-Cook, 1992)

Stoppard goes on to argue that claims made to the Muslim fundamentalists that they should simply change their treatment of Rushdie because such treatment is barbaric are as inconceivable for Muslims as it is for we Westerners to consider anything written in a novel to be a reason for wanting the author killed. But he suggests that there are still some things we can do, and argued, in line with Rorty, that what we as supporters of Rushdie must do, is to reveal Rushdie’s pain to his oppressors, the Muslims.

<sup>51</sup> Rorty also recognises the tension that exists between the traditionalists and the eccentrics. Changes are never smooth and universally accepted. As Rorty states:

Those who speak the old language and have no wish to change, those who regard it as a hallmark of rationality or morality to speak just that language, will regard as altogether *irrational* the appeal of the new metaphors- the new

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language games which the radicals, the youth, or the avant-garde are playing. The popularity of the new ways of speaking will be viewed as a matter of “fashion” or “the need to rebel” or “decadence”....Conversely, from the point of view of those who are trying to use the new language, to literalize the new metaphors, those who cling to the old language will be viewed as irrational- as victims of passion, prejudice, superstition, the dead hand of the past, and so on.(1989, p. 48)

<sup>52</sup> Strong poets may not always be aware about the contingency of truth. They may fervently believe that they are producing a set of universal and ahistorical final truths. But such a mistake does not prevent the person from producing strong poetry. It may however, restrict the opportunity for others to produce strong poetry if the person’s set of truth statements is publicly accepted as ‘final’ truths.

<sup>53</sup> My insertion.

<sup>54</sup> According to Rorty, “... feminist separatism may indeed, as Rich says, have little to do with sexual preference or with civil rights and a lot to do with making things easier for women of the future to define themselves in terms not presently available” (1991a, p. 9). Frye explains that lesbian separatism allows females to collectively gain semantic authority, but also resists the backlash against such authority by “controlling concrete access to us” and thereby “enforce on those who are not-us our definitions of ourselves, hence force on them *the fact of our existence* and thence open up the *possibility* of our having semantic authority with them” (1983, p106n, cited in Rorty, 1991a, p. 9).

<sup>55</sup> It will be a position of this thesis that the one of the dominant strands of the web of sport sees progress in terms of ‘objective’ recorded comparisons of excellence in performance, and profit in institutions. Authority is also granted in terms of these things. This strand strongly effects what most people in the sports community see as entertaining, athletic, aesthetically pleasing and legal. Feminists may need to produce a different reality of sport by disturbing the dominance of this strand.

<sup>56</sup> A recent criticism of Robert’s Rortian-inspired treatments of sport by William Morgan (1999) challenges Robert’s viewpoint that sport are ideally thought of as spaces for “private experiments in individual perfection” (Morgan, 1999, p. 1), where controlling bodies and practice communities should be more circumspect in their criticism of abnormal discourse. In contrast, Morgan (1999, pp. 12-26) suggests that sporting practice communities are actually associational groups who share a conceptualisation of the goods that inform their practice. Hence the associational group cannot stand idly as individual eccentrics challenge the very goods which bind the association, because the association will break apart.

My reformation of Roberts applies equally to Morgan. Neither author deals with the relative degrees of authoritative power that the different genders possess, either as individual strong poets, or as members of an association. An association is made up of a set of individuals with differing access to decision making about the goals of the association. In most sports, men have greater power to influence these decisions than women.

<sup>57</sup> To suggest that feminists ‘borrow’ from pragmatism is probably an inaccurate characterisation. Many feminists, including Wollstonecraft, Gilman and De Beauvoir, developed ideas concurrently with pragmatism, and contemporary feminists did not need to

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read Rorty to understand antifoundationalism, abnormal discourse, courage, and the importance of storytelling linked to female experiences. It is interesting that Fraser's (1991, p. 260) initial response to Rorty is that his offer that pragmatism does a lot of the 'housework' of deconstruction, so that feminists can concentrate on redescription, smacks of placing feminists on a pedestal. She suggests that it may produce the result of having others (that is, men) speak and fight for women.

In most cases throughout this thesis, I will try to give voice to the feminist construction and use of these things, rather than the Rortian one, although I acknowledge similarities between the two constructions. The rationale behind this is to give a non-patronising account of the influence that feminists could have in sports philosophy if utilised to the degree that male theorists have been taken up.

<sup>58</sup> Rorty comments about the possibilities of using a rationalist discourse for females. He suggests that "Although practical politics will doubtless often require feminists to speak with the universalist vulgar, I think that they might profit from thinking with the pragmatists" (1991a, p. 5). But for MacKinnon, women have to be particularly careful that the attachment to this universalist vulgar does not reproduce women's passivity and subhuman status. She talks about the 'protection' that the special benefits rule accords women, in keeping them out of the armed forces, off the football field, and out of hazardous jobs. But what if women want to participate in these activities. They are precluded from them by this 'protection'. She comments:

{The irony is that} We also get protected out of jobs because of our fertility. The reason is that the job has health hazards, and somebody who might be a real person some day and therefore could sue- that is, a fetus- might be hurt if women, who apparently are not real persons and therefore cannot sue either for the hazard to our health or for the lost employment opportunity, are given jobs that subject our bodies to possible harm. Excluding a woman is always an option if equality feels in tension with the pursuit itself (MacKinnon, 1987, p. 38).

<sup>59</sup> It is difficult to convey this idea in a way that does not suggest a chronological sequence of deconstruction, and then redescription. What I mean to suggest is that the innovative redescription, when publicly accepted, also effects the deconstruction of past discourses. For example, the participation of women in active and competitive sports effected the deconstruction of women as passive and incapable of participation in such sports.

<sup>60</sup> Roberts explains 'strong poetry' as the ability to create new and different standards by which your participation in a practice is judged (1995, pp. 94-95).

<sup>61</sup> My insertion.

<sup>62</sup> Dewey states about female exclusion from the field of philosophy

Women have as yet made little contribution to philosophy, but when women who are not mere students of other persons' philosophy set out to write it, we cannot conceive that it will be the same in viewpoint or tenor as that composed from the standpoint of the different masculine experience of things... As far as what is loosely called reality figures in philosophies, we may be sure that it signifies those selected aspects of the world which are chosen because they

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lend themselves to the support of men's judgement of the worth-while life...  
(cited in Rorty, 1991a, p. 7)

Rorty continues by suggesting that if we follow MacKinnon and believe that liberal humanism merely expresses and defends the wants and desires of men, whilst enslaving females in satisfying those wants and desires, then it is important that females, so enslaved, do not engage with males using the concepts that have been so useful in enslaving them. For Rorty: "This permits us to read Dewey as saying: if you find yourself a slave, do not accept your masters' descriptions of the real; do not work within the boundaries of their moral universe; instead, try to invent a reality of your own by selecting aspects of the world which lend themselves to the support of *your* judgement of the worth-while life" (1991a, p. 7).

<sup>63</sup> MacKinnon explains that "if you *are* the tree falling in the epistemological forest, your demise doesn't make a sound if no-one is listening" (1987, p. 169). So women don't report rapes and sexual harassment because they are not 'credible'. But as she rightly reminds the reader, silence doesn't mean consent or imagination. Because there was no complaint doesn't mean the act was not oppressive, nor does it mean that the female was a willing actor (1987, p. 170).

<sup>64</sup> Poststructural feminists would be as wary of an elite group of female authors producing an ideal society, as they are of an elite group of males doing it. The emphasis here on the 'extraordinary individuals' being male is meant to reflect a political sense that males normally have a greater opportunity to be 'extraordinary individuals' because someone else is minding the children and keeping the house.

<sup>65</sup> Rorty replies to the differences between he and Fraser by suggesting, "I suspect my differences with Fraser are concrete and political rather than abstract and philosophical" (1991a, p. 11 n. 15). I would suggest that Fraser would agree that some of her criticisms of Rorty are concrete and political, such as the view that consciousness-raising is probably more useful for social change than separatism. But in other ways, there are philosophical differences. The partition process and the individualist poet are philosophical problems for her. As Fraser states: "... my difference with Rorty boils down to my wanting to put a more sociological, institutional, and collective spin on these [antifoundationalist] ideas and to divest his account of its individualistic, aestheticizing, and depoliticizing residue" (1991, p. 263, my insertion).

<sup>66</sup> Jagger goes on to argue that the paradox of this separatism is that the small group, which can produce liberated thinking about dominant discourses, may simultaneously operate to limit critical thinking about their newly produced discourses. The small community, offering safety and peace to its oppressed members, can use the threat of expulsion to limit its members (1998, pp. 7, 8).

<sup>67</sup> Griffiths actually accuses Rorty [I would suggest, the early Rorty of *Contingency, Irony, Solidarity* (1989)] of speaking from the perspective of the master. Hence, when he suggests that there is no voice of the oppressed, and that the pursuit of justice is in the hands of the master, this would suggest that the woman's movement should disband and wait for good liberal men to rescue them. But this ignores the strong and persuasive political voices already developed in the women's movement (1995, pp. 126, 127, 166).

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<sup>68</sup> A number of authors (Bartky, 1988, p. 80; Ramazanoglu, 1993, p. 13; Bailey, 1993) have also leveled this criticism at the later works of Foucault. The ethical program of Foucault does not take into account the impact that a gendered embodiment has on the potential for resistance to discourse.

<sup>69</sup> Frye's (1983) metaphor of the 'caged' existence of women will be discussed in Chapter Five. This is similar to the feminist appropriation of Rorty's web suggested here, although Frye's metaphor involves a more confining and persistent structure.

<sup>70</sup> My insertion.

<sup>71</sup> My insertions.

<sup>72</sup> Following MacKinnon's argument, whilst racism and sexism may be reversed abstractly with laws of racial vilification, sexual harassment and equal opportunities, in substantive practices racism and sexism will still exist. White, male supremacy dictates who gets access to what, and who has power in each practice. To reveal this as a *system* of inequality is to suggest that "...every time you score one for white supremacy in one place, it is strengthened every place else" (1987, pp. 164, 165). This reveals the power of MacKinnon's belief that equal opportunity laws have been useful for men in getting access to what were traditionally women's domains. Score another for male supremacy. Now men are experts in raising children as indicated by the success of male authors in this area.

<sup>73</sup> MacKinnon explains the determination of some females to deny gender in dialogues about power and powerlessness. During a speech at Buffalo Law School, a feminist lawyer, Mary Dunlap, rose to her feet and said:

I am speaking out of turn. I am also standing, which I am told by some is a male thing to do. But I am still a woman- standing. I am not subordinate to any man!... And I have been told by Kitty MacKinnon that women have never *not* been subordinate to men. So I stand here an exception and invite all other women here to be an exception and stand... (cited in MacKinnon, 1987)

MacKinnon explains the problem with this type of statement; it "turns a critique of a structural condition into a statement of individual inevitability, an indictment of oppression into a reason for passivity and despair" (1987, p. 306 n. 6). Under the existing conditions of society, such a statement causes two problems. Firstly, it suggests a break in any solidarity that women have, by asking women who do not feel oppressed by men to disidentify with other women. Secondly, it opposes an empirical claim about the structure of society, with a utopian vision of the future. These two things should not be opposed.

Thirdly, there is a danger of identifying powerful and successful women within the current system as the spokespeople for the female gender. These token women may not be able to identify the structural oppression of women because of their success. The contrast that is important for these women may not be men with women, but may be women with less successful women. The soft-porn calendars that female athletes have produced may be indicative of this point (Lenskyj, 1996, 1998; Mikosza and Phillips, 1999). These attractive women have benefited financially from the objectification of women in all forms of life (including pornography) and so may not be particularly supportive of attempts to challenge the structural oppression that occurs with the sexualisation of all females. This point will be further discussed in Chapter Five of this thesis.

<sup>74</sup> Or as Bickford suggests:

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We, too, are children of the Enlightenment.

Or perhaps a better characterization is "stepchildren," for women do have a fundamentally different relationship to that conversation than do men. We have been both silenced and spoken about. The voices that we have developed often sound very different and are not heard in the same way as are men's.... Thus women may need to change the structures of liberal society in a fundamentally different way. These activities do not require that we see ourselves as somehow outside of history and culture. Rather they require that we understand the ways in which we are products of our cultural histories. (1993, p. 114)

Gayatri Spivak gives a wonderful example of this when discussing the Indian cultural practice where widows immolate themselves on their husband's funeral pyre. Both British colonial descriptions of these women as victims, and Indian men's descriptions of these women as heroes to their country's cultural traditions, make the women's subjectivities invisible. The women remain mute because they "cannot know or speak the text of female exploitation" (1988, p. 288 cited in Jagger, 1998, p. 5). Why can't they know this language? According to the Indian feminist, Uma Narayan, these women have been trained since childhood for household tasks and child rearing, married at puberty, and socialised into accepting economic dependency on men. What miseries they felt are seen as personal, and not structural, problems. So there is no language to conceptualise the injustice which she suffers (1989 cited in Jagger, 1998, p. 5). This may be indicative of what is to happen to Western women living in the post-feminist age, where any personal pain is experienced as an individual shortcoming rather than an effect of a structurally inegalitarian society (LaFrance, 1998; Cole and Hribar, 1995).

<sup>75</sup> My insertion.

<sup>76</sup> My insertion.

<sup>77</sup> My insertion.

<sup>78</sup> The author has already produced two papers that deal with the utility of pragmatic feminism for females in sport. The first, co-authored by Terence Roberts, dealt with the issue of Chinese swimmers taking drugs in sport. It suggested that, as with Rorty's madman, we should listen to the Chinese stories because such listening may move us to change our evaluation of their morality, and our own life story. We may remake ourselves in the light of such listening (Burke and Roberts, 1997). The second, which will be published shortly deals with the methods that are available to female journalists who wish to make comments about male sport. It offers suggestions to females who feel oppressed by that exclusionary statement (and I argue, sexist statement as it is rarely applied to males but generally applied to females), 'What can she know? She has never played the game of football/ baseball/ male tennis etc.?' Margaret Carlisle Duncan (1998), in a recent presidential address to the *North American Sociology of Sport Society* uses Rorty's ideas about storytelling as the 'motor' to discourse change to reflect on what is learnt from a number of stories of her life. She uses these stories to demonstrate various layers of oppression that different people feel.

<sup>79</sup> It should be noted that Roberts does not describe these truths as masculine. I have done so because it indicates the systematic control that males have over female sport.

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<sup>80</sup> Marcel Oriard, in an unpublished presentation to the *North American Society for Sport History* Convention in 1986 discusses the recent comic parodies of the male athlete produced by female authors writing fiction. He goes on to discuss the novel by Jenifer Levin, entitled *Water Dancer*, which produces a feminist redescription of the sport of marathon swimming, whilst deconstructing many of the boundaries between male and female understandings of sport. Oriard satisfies the need to deconstruct dominant truths as well as redescrbing practices in newer and ‘better’ ways (1986).

<sup>81</sup>In an investigation of the way that female viewers can undermine male commentary on football, Duncan and Brummett (1993, pp. 57-70) found that these viewers empowered themselves by using irony, parody and sarcasm to “refuse preferred (patriarchal) readings of the text.” The female demonstrates her epistemic authority as a commentary on the preferred reading of the text, by using the resources given to her by that preferred reading. So football commentary, like all discourse production, is a site of struggle, with women often occupying positions subversive to masculine dominance. As the authors argue:

... female spectators tended to make comments that were ironic, interspersed with rhetorical questions whose function seemed more to keep the social interaction going than to impress or enlighten.... By remarking on the awkwardness, arrogance, and stupidity of football players, the women symbolically reduced the game to an absurd, comical spectacle, an event unworthy of great seriousness. (1993, p. 69)

This comic playfulness resists the positioning of the female as an uncritical observer of men’s sport. She becomes an autonomous, authoritative, critic of it. The last section of Chapter Five will look at mechanisms for translating this private power into public and political commentary about sport.

<sup>82</sup> It has been revealed that the athlete falling pregnant, and aborting the fetus some time before competition improves female athletic performance. Whilst feminist strategies might also involve a deconstruction of the relationship between sporting excellence, objective performance and athlete authority, it is interesting to consider what stands in the way of female athletes using the knowledge about pregnancy for their own benefit.

<sup>83</sup> The point of this section of the thesis is to show the ‘strong poetry’ of feminists from four different periods. In no way is this an exhaustion of the large number of feminist writers. The book *Feminist Theories* (Edited by Dale Spender) covers 21 prolific feminist authors, and apologises for its omissions (1983a, p. 6).

<sup>84</sup> The compilation of stories about feminists throughout history by Dale Spender (1983a) contains a remarkable theme of the ways that men silenced any woman who spoke with authority. Many feminists, such as Wollstonecraft, Gilman, Fuller and Pankhurst were criticised for an eccentric private life. And so males and females alike ignored their important and innovative theories about women’s situation in society. Others had their ideas ‘stolen’ by men. Some feminists faced violence and harassment by men. The overriding theme was that women who produced knowledge were not feminine. The underlying sentiment was that women who produced abnormal discourse, threatened male privilege, and so must be silenced before such a threat became widespread. So the history of feminist writing is one of lost and silenced authority. Contemporary writers may have

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felt more assured of their beliefs, if they could have pointed to historical figures that shared those beliefs.

<sup>85</sup> Foucault's archaeology will be more substantially explained in Chapter Six.

<sup>86</sup> This ties in with Foucault's task of seeing a contemporary problem and investigating its historical descent (Sawicki, 1991, p. 168).

<sup>87</sup> It would be politically dangerous for feminists to regard this change as the replacement of one concern (economic) with another (cultural). As Anne Phillips suggests, there is no need to treat these concerns as mutually exclusive. There will be times when a redistribution of resources is necessary, at other times a recognition of difference is the primary goal required by females. The danger for many contemporary radical and postmodern feminists is that the emphasis on the assertion of authority in cultural matters has made them insensitive to economic matters, with the result that this feminism does not capture the sympathy of many females. The solution, for Phillips, is to be aware of the particular, and most pressing, oppressions felt by different females (1997, pp. 145-149).

<sup>88</sup> My insertion.

<sup>89</sup> This term is borrowed from Joan Kinnaird who refers to the seventeenth century feminists as proto-feminists (1983, p. 37).

<sup>90</sup> It should be noted that Wollstonecraft did not share the theories of her contemporaries. She is chosen for this section because of her 'strong poetry'; that is, her ability to redescribe commonly understood ideas in new and liberating fashions. It was this radical tinge, as well as her personal life that made Wollstonecraft an enemy of both feminists and conservatives of the time. (Brody, 1983, p. 58)

<sup>91</sup> Miriam Brody suggests that it was the personal life of Wollstonecraft, including an unhappy marriage, a long love affair, and desperate suicide attempts, revealed by her cuckolded husband shortly after her death which made Wollstonecraft a danger to both conservative and feminist politics. "[F]eminists abandoned Wollstonecraft so as to not bring down on their own heads the opprobrium of being thought sexually wanton" (Brody, 1983, p. 41). So, much of Wollstonecraft's writings, including *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, produced scathing criticism towards the author, rather than the writing (Brody, 1983, p. 40).

<sup>92</sup> My insertions.

<sup>93</sup> The author goes on to explain the form of this oppression. She states:

As, for Mill, the subjection of women has its origin in the relative weakness of their bodies, this growing unimportance of physical strength leads to the second characteristic of progress, which is '... a nearer approach to equality in the condition of the sexes.' (1970, p. 73) One of the problems with this explanation is that Mill overlooks... that power now becomes associated with wealth and property. Given that, in a patriarchal society, women are restrained by the demands of the private sphere and often disadvantaged by the rules of patriarchal inheritance, they actually have *less* power than previously... However, in that neither (Mill nor Taylor)... directly question the bases of capitalist property relations, the supportive role that women and their labour in the domestic sphere play in these relations, they end by positing little more than an ideal that women can never actualize...

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In their attempt to emancipate women they produce a model of human excellence that is, inherently, masculine... It is quite obvious in de Beauvoir's writings that for women to become truly human they must aspire to masculine qualities. Much feminist writing has, albeit unconsciously, accepted this equation at face value (Gatens, 1991, pp. 45, 46).

<sup>94</sup> Jane Upin discusses the comparison between Charlotte Perkins Gilman and John Dewey, the eminent pragmatic philosopher of the early twentieth century. She states:

As advocates of social change, they had a prominent public presence in the society at large. They both challenged uncritical submission to the authority of the past, opposed laissez-faire political doctrines, supported the suffrage and labor movements, championed sweeping changes in education and called for economic reform.

Unlike Dewey, however, Gilman never had the opportunity for graduate study at a major university. She never earned a Ph D. She never became a university professor. As a woman, she was outside the academic intellectual mainstream of her day. (Upin, 1993, pp. 38,39)

In 1895, Mary Whiton Calkins completed all the requirements with distinction to be awarded a Ph D. from Harvard University. However Harvard did not award doctorates to women until 1963. This was despite William James assertion that "Calkins had passed her Ph. D. examination more brilliantly than any other graduate student" (Siegfried, 1993, p. 231). Calkins response was to later become the first woman president of both the American Psychological Association (1905) and the American Philosophical Association (1918). But it certainly was done the hard way. So both by exclusion from academia, and exclusion within academia, women's experiences were silenced.

<sup>95</sup> I am aware that Gilman claimed to be a humanist-socialist, and at times dissociated herself from "female feminism". In Lane's opinion, Gilman endeavoured to marry socialism and feminism (1983, p. 209). Gilman states:

The Human Feminist holds that woman's grave injury is that she has been debarred from ... human development: that she has been so preoccupied with being a woman... that she has failed to notice her painful deficiencies as a human being. The Female Feminist, on the other hand, holds that woman is pre-eminently and valuably a female... (1914 cited in Upin, 1993, p. 56)

I would suggest that contemporary radical and pragmatic feminists can still find some ideas in Gilman which are useful for their own contemporary traditions including her denunciation of phallogocentric and patriarchal views of the female, and her rejection of the virtues of femininity as espoused by the patriarchal discourses which she opposed. Spender (1982, p. 516) suggests she, as a radical feminist, has no problem identifying with Gilman.

<sup>96</sup> Vertinsky celebrates Gilman's contribution in the following way:

Gilman became a major intellectual force in America. As a result of her prolific writing and lecturing on the theory of the evolution of gender relations and women's need to become socially useful in the larger world of production, she became known world-wide as a feminist theorist and iconoclastic social critic...

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...Feminist historians and literary critics have begun interpreting her actions and writings as paradigmatic of critical tensions between the sexes at the turn of the century, especially female struggles for creative fulfillment and physical autonomy... Gilman's writings have been interpreted as a parable of female literary confinement, and as a dramatic illustration of the potential sexual violence of both the Victorian familial bedroom and the male doctor's relationship with his female clients. They also reflect her substantial life-long preoccupation with physical fitness... (1989, p. 6).

<sup>97</sup> It is interesting to ponder how many links can be made between these ideas and contemporary feminist ideas. Grosz (1992, 1994) and Gatens (1983, 1988) both comment on the relationship between psychological/social role and the body's performance. If women are told that they are passive or fragile, then they will become so. Feminists through the second wave have demonstrated the ways that social and psychological roles for women have maintained the public and private dominance of men (Bartky 1990; Frye, 1983). To experience freedom and authority, the woman must initially break free from these prescriptive roles. This is a theme in the writings of both Wollstonecraft and Gilman, as well as many others.

<sup>98</sup> Jennifer Hargreaves suggests similar reformers in the English school system. A Miss Beale, submitted the following as a criticism of the 1868 Inquiry Commission on the Education of Girls:

...If the professors of calisthenics would devise some games which would do for girls what cricket and football do for boys they would render a public service. For the habit of playing with zest... is not without an important reflex effect on the intellectual work. It is because girls do not play with sufficient abandon and self-forgetfulness, that their lessons are apt to be done in a superficial way. (1868, cited in Hargreaves, 1994, p. 57)

Later on, Hargreaves refers to the redoubtable Madame Osterberg, who produced a national system for gymnastics instruction in England. Whilst creating feminist interventions in society, it is likely that her 'feminism' resulted from a form of nationalism, enlightened by Social Darwinism. Whilst she supported the development of a "freer, sounder and more responsible womanhood", she did so for the production of strong mothers, and a strong nation. Victorian familism was one of the guiding philosophies in all of Osterberg's training colleges (1994, pp. 73-79). In this way she was a liberal feminist, not unlike Mill and Taylor.

<sup>99</sup> Yet Gilman, like Wollstonecraft, Mill and Taylor, could not completely free herself from the constraining forces of Victorian patriarchal society. Whilst she recorded her pleasure in the physical training she was doing, she was, at the same time, miserable and shameful about her efforts as a wife and mother (Vertinsky, 1989, p. 10). She could not understand how such a strong, athletic woman could collapse so completely when faced with motherhood and domestic chores.

<sup>100</sup> As stated by Hargreaves (1994, p. 47), the treatment prescribed by Mitchell was prescribed for an increasing number of social anomalies that were described by medicine in physiological terms. Many forms of male and female sexual practices, as well as women, who sought education, physical activity or public recognition, were treated as

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people who could not control their natural urges, because of excessive stimulation. For Duffin, “Sickness filled the gap of inactivity so effectively that it came to invade middle-class culture... In time the perfect lady became the image of the disabled lady...- the ‘conspicuous consumptive’ “(1978b, p. 26 cited in Hargreaves, 1994, p. 47)

<sup>101</sup> Gilman followed the pragmatic camp of Lester Frank Ward who opposed determinism by suggested that humans are free, within certain biological limits, to create their own society (Lane, 1983, p. 212; Palmeri, 1983, pp. 101-105).

<sup>102</sup> Gilman’s humorous analogy is between the housework of the woman and the work of a horse. She states:

The horse works it is true; but what he gets to eat depends on the power and the will of his master. His living comes through another. He is economically dependent.... The labor of women in the house, certainly, enables men to produce more wealth than they otherwise could; and in this way women are economic factors in society. But so are horses. (1898, pp. 7, 13 cited in Palmeri, 1983, p. 108).

<sup>103</sup> Like Wollstonecraft before her, Gilman was as much lambasted for her personal life, as for her theories. She divorced without good reason (being miserable in a marriage was not good reason for women), she gave up her child to her husband and his second wife and she remained great friends with her ex-husband and his second wife. Eventually, her daughter, her husband’s second wife and herself lived together after her husband’s death. Like Wollstonecraft, it was suggested that an agreement with Gilman’s theories would result in an approval of her private life (Lane, 1983).

The links that could be made to contemporary feminists in Gilman’s writings are numerous. Her understanding of the importance of the female’s experience, as a dissonant corrective to the male description of that experience, is a forerunner to feminist standpoint theories. The specific utilisation of that point in her discussion of women’s labour preceded that discussion in socialist feminism. And her recognition of the obligation produced in women because of men’s control of the economic resources in society, was a forerunner to the notion of “compulsory heterosexuality” (Rich, 1980 cited by Spender, 1982, p. 524). Yet, in Spender’s terms, these insights had to be “painstakingly forged again” by contemporary feminists, denied Gilman’s insights (1982, p. 516).

<sup>104</sup> Lenskyj (1986) details the various forms that medical arguments took to legitimate constraints on women’s participation in sport. Throughout the many modifications to the medical justifications, two ideas remained paramount; that the female’s anatomy limits her destiny, and that the female’s moral responsibility is towards others, and not herself.

<sup>105</sup> Hall cites the work of Jill Matthews, an Australian feminist historian who studied the Women’s League of Health and Beauty, an organisation with 170,000 members in the 1930’s. Many women made friends and had a good deal of fun at the League. Whilst not offering a public resistance to male power, the League did serve a purpose in the private lives of many women (1996, p. 39).

<sup>106</sup> My insertions.

<sup>107</sup> Vertinsky comments:

Absorbing the popular medical belief that physical health would engender mental stability, Gilman believed that the depressions which plagued her would

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be eased should she strive for a high level of physical fitness... Mental and physical health, she conjectured, were so intimately connected that true growth could only occur when both aspects were allowed to develop... Seen in this light, health became “more an experiment than a blueprint,” a search in which unrestricted physical energy was an important key to personal autonomy and a useful support in escaping from the private to the public sphere... This, however, was just a starting point because the new identity could become concrete only if the mind was also ready to jettison traditional encumbrances to welcome new challenges and creative growth (1989, p. 16).

<sup>108</sup> Hargreaves suggests that changes in education for females, in the late nineteenth century probably did more for the actual participation of women in physical activity than any other change in society. It legitimated the use of games and sport as a means of control, yet the experience of these activities by women led to sport’s reform in the wider community (1994, pp. 56-87).

<sup>109</sup> Foucault sees this surveillance and normalisation as characteristic of the modern period. The bourgeois schoolboy endangered both his physical strength and his ‘intellectual capacity, his moral fiber, and the obligation to preserve a healthy line of descent for his family and his social class’ if he indulged in any untoward variety of ‘secret pleasures’ (1979a: 121 cited by McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 81). Foucault goes on to discuss the bourgeois woman as another example of the effects of modern medical technologies of sexuality as part of the unified modern concern with the management of life (McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 82). This surveillance and normalisation will be discussed further in Chapter Six.

<sup>110</sup> Lenskyj goes on to detail the various public programs (schools, YWCA) and manuals which prescribed physical activity for females. These prescriptions were normally for light activity, directed toward the production of feminine beauty and strength for motherhood. For example, one of the goals of the physical education program was ‘bust development’ (1982, p. 6).

<sup>111</sup> The textbook *Public School Hygiene* (1910) carries warnings associated with this ‘masturbation phobia’ for girls. Lenskyj states that the book recommended:

Loose and light clothing was recommended, especially in the area of the chest and abdomen, and the “narrowed waist” was cited as “the forerunner of indigestion, weakness, nervous debility and consumption.” It is not coincidental that medical authorities predicted these same consequences, and others more dire, for those who engaged in “the secret indulgence” [masturbation]. A chapter on masturbation in *The Science of a New Life*, a book aimed at adult, married readers carried this warning: “The wearing of corsets... prevent a free circulation of blood... confiding it in abnormal quantities in the pelvic portion of the body, and so irritating and creating a desire in the sexual department of the woman... (1982, p. 6)

<sup>112</sup> Hargreaves quotes a Miss Dove, who states:

I think I do not speak too strongly when I say that games... are essential to a healthy existence, and that most of the qualities, if not all, that conduce to the

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supremacy of our country in so many quarters of the globe, are fostered, if not solely developed, by means of games (1891 cited in Hargreaves, 1994, p. 67)

<sup>113</sup> According to Mark Dyreson, women suffered a similar backlash after the 1932 Los Angeles Games, with scientists remarking that participation in competitive athletics will make it more difficult for female athletes to attract the “most worthy of fathers for their children” (Rogers, 1934 cited by Dyreson, 1995, p. 37), and the noted journalist, Grantland Rice suggesting that the female athlete lacks ‘grace’. Rice went on to suggest that the six athletic world records set by females at the Olympics may have revealed a new form of female ‘super-physique’ which could become graceful (1932 cited by Dyreson, 1995, p. 37).

Dyreson goes on to consider the reporting about the legendary female athlete Babe Didrikson, as compared to that associated with Babe Ruth. The reporters praised Didrikson’s talents in feminine activities such as cooking and sewing, and hoped that she wouldn’t turn professional and lose her womanly skills. Never were such concerns raised about Ruth. According to Dyreson: “...despite some increased avenues for achievement, sport still reinforced traditional feminine roles. Popular attitudes still require the defense of sport for women as a beauty aid” (1995, p. 39).

<sup>114</sup> Hargreaves suggests that this thesis about the inappropriateness of female participation was shifted from all activities, to competitive and vigorous games. One critic argued, “The pendulum has probably swung too far in the direction of over-exertion... This is especially true of the wealthier girls” (Burstall, 1907 cited in Hargreaves, 1994, p. 83). Also there is a strong condemnation of female sports in the *Badminton Magazine* of 1900 which concludes with, “Let young girls ride, skate, dance and play lawn tennis and other games in moderation, but let them leave field sports to those for whom they are intended- men” (Dodds 1973 cited in Hargreaves, 1994, p. 109).

<sup>115</sup> Dr E. Arnold, following “experiments” at his normal school concluded:

Whenever economic efficiency is the deciding factor, restriction of menstruation is profitable; whenever fertility is of importance, it is undesirable. This would seem to interdict a regimen of exercise which will diminish the menstrual function for that period in a woman’s life when she should be fertile... What is needed is a restriction in quantity of competition in any form... The exploitation of oncoming womanhood by national or international competition is a menace to womanhood, the magnitude of which one can only contemplate with a shudder.

Lenskyj comments:

This type of argument was used as a rationale for the elimination of interschool competition for adolescent girls. It is significant that a physical education professor of Wayman’s stature, and many of her female colleagues throughout the U.S.A., accepted this kind of alarmist pseudo-medical pronouncement so uncritically. Wayman even added her own unsupported generalizations to the debate: “physicians state that the hospitals and sanitariums are increasingly full of girls and women who will never be able to become mothers... caused by participation in “the wrong kind of sports.”... The notion of the “dictatorship of

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the ovaries” which had dominated medical thinking before the turn of the century continued to colour the thinking of doctors and educators (1982).

<sup>116</sup> Lenskyj states: “Dudley and Kellor drew attention to players’ clothing in their discussion of teaching methods for basketball.” It is difficult to avoid holding and catching clothing because of the loose, baggy suits, and special training is needed to avoid such plays.” (1982, p. 8; Lenskyj’s emphasis) Hargreaves agrees that women, when they achieved new freedoms, rarely questioned or criticised the conventions of participation as set by the men controlling these sports (1994, p. 97).

<sup>117</sup> In a later section of her book, Hargreaves talks about the ‘lived culture’ of contradictions between the official ideology of women’s sporting participation, and the sensuous and hedonistic joy they found in activities such as hunting, cycling and swimming. Again, such experiences provoked a sharp and stinging rebuke from the moral physiologists (1994, pp. 91-94).

<sup>118</sup> Parratt states:

...During the early part of 1901, the readership of *Womanhood* was invited to join in a debate on the propriety of mixed sea bathing and the letters written in response reveal that the consensus among them was that there was no good reason for the enforced separation of the sexes and that, indeed, there were very good reasons for doing away with the practice (1989, p. 148).

<sup>119</sup> Parratt gives a number of examples of aristocratic sponsorship of female sport. One was the presentation of a silver cup, by the Duke and Duchess of Connaught, to the ladies’ open sea champion of the Portsmouth Swimming Club (1989, p. 149). Another was the provision of a club pavilion to the Women’s Bowling Club, by the famous cricketer, Dr. W.G. Grace (1989, p. 155).

<sup>120</sup> Parratt discusses the sport of croquet, one that there is no difference between men and women:

The Single handicap event of the 1902 Irish Championship was won by a woman... and an interesting account of another competition in the same year shows that the best female players in no way deferred to their male counterparts... Clearly, players such as this, and there are references to several others, were far more than refining influences and decorative additions to the croquet lawns (1989, pp. 150, 151).

This appears a different description to the one provided by Hargreaves about mixed tennis in the era, which was viewed as a significant method of reproducing gender roles:

needless to say, when men and women found themselves playing together it was deemed only honourable for the males to give [women] every possible advantage, such as allowing the lady to stand as near as she liked to the net when serving. On no account would any man hit the ball too fiercely in the direction of a woman or, if perchance he did so by mistake, he would certainly allow her another shot. (Wymer, 1949 cited in Hargreaves, 1994, p. 55)

<sup>121</sup> Hargreaves discusses the women’s soccer teams that played in England shortly after the First World War, to raise money for charity. Women’s soccer gripped the country by 1920, where the women played at Everton in front of 53,000 spectators. But by the next year, with England returning to normal after the war, the male-run Football Association

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withdrew its support, supporting this withdrawal with the claim that “the game of football is quite unsuitable for females” (Williams and Woodhouse, 1991 cited by Hargreaves, 1994, p. 142). Melling (1999) also reveals that the idea of the ‘plucky heroine’, contrived during the war effort, was extended into the early post-war years in certain locally specific contexts. The ‘pea soup’ soccer matches, played and organized by the working-class women of Wigan and Leigh to raise money during the miners Lock-Out of 1921, were also used as vehicles of community solidarity in times of economic hardship. The economic and social difficulties permitted these women liberation from a country that hoped to return to pre-War gender roles and traditions. At the same time, working-class communities in Lancashire had always contained powerful matriarchal figures. Women had traditionally acted as arbiters of these communities.

<sup>122</sup> The persistence of the lesbian athlete as the ‘bogey woman’ remains strong in contemporary times, where Arsenio Hall, a black television comedian and member of a cultural group whose sexuality is often considered deviant, makes the observation: “If we can put a man on the moon, why can’t we get one on Martina Navratilova?” (cited in Cahn, 1993, p. 1). In so doing, Hall maintains the stereotypical division between femininity and athleticism, a stereotype that produces effects for all female athletes.

<sup>123</sup> Cahn’s article continues with a number of practices that programs in women’s sport and physical education developed to offset the fear of homosexuality. One notable one was dress codes that forbade men’s slacks and included bans on boyish haircuts and unshaven legs (1993, p. 7).

<sup>124</sup> Lenskyj continues by stating:

The actions of the medical profession, in particular, were motivated by self-interest: the goal was to maintain the predominantly male monopoly over women’s reproductive health which had been achieved through the promotion of hospital births and the outlawing of midwifery. In addition to the financial benefits of maintaining the status quo, the male-dominated medical profession enjoyed its role as an authority on moral issues, especially those related to female morality. Like other conservative sectors of the male business community, it had a vested interest in maintaining a social system in which women’s position remained subordinate (1982, p. 12).

I would suggest that the male society had a number of vested interests in maintaining women in subordinate positions, and convincing them to consent to those positions. In Chapter Six of this thesis, the continuation of this tradition of medical ‘control’ will be discussed in terms of drug control in sport.

<sup>125</sup> Parratt describes one encounter with the male sporting establishment, as follows:

A group of male and female lawn bowlers had, for some time, played on the greens of the Crystal Palace until the men took it upon themselves to exclude the women from their games. The reason for this is not clear, but one objection which men frequently voiced against female players was that the long trains of their dresses spoiled the playing surface of the lawn. Whatever the cause, they set up an exclusively male club elsewhere, an organisation which apparently foundered... It was thus with some relish that Ballin [editor of *Womanhood*]

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established the lawn bowling section of the W.F.C. on the very site of the inter-sex skirmish...

... the project was significant inasmuch as it showed how women dealt with a patriarchal system which either excluded them or included them only on male terms. Women took the initiative and formed an association which would satisfy their needs but in doing so they still had to operate within certain male-defined parameters: the use of a club pavilion, for example, was acquired through the goodwill of the renowned cricketer, Dr. W. G. Grace (1989, pp. 154, 155).

<sup>126</sup> The incomplete effectiveness of equal opportunity legislation in producing an androgynous society has made it open to question as a useful tactic of female empowerment. As Brook argues, there is skepticism amongst feminists “about the power of the law to enact equal rights against the force of historically enshrined social/cultural practices and attitude, and in situations where resources and power are patently unequally distributed” (1999, p. 25).

<sup>127</sup> Both Skelton (2000) and Renold (1997) convey the importance of football as a gendering practice in coeducational schools. Exclusion of females from football may be an early and accessible form for boys and girls to learn and embody hierarchical gender relations. Skelton (2000, p. 1) criticises the unproblematic use of football to counteract boy’s underachievement at school by pointing out that football serves to define hierarchical relationships between boys and girls, people of different ethnicities, and people of different classes. The girls interviewed in Skelton’s study emphasised the collusion between male students and male teachers in the reproduction of hegemonic masculinity through football. Girls were either excluded from the game, encouraged to exclude themselves from the game, or included as add-ons in peripheral positions to the game (2000, pp. 6-8).

<sup>128</sup> Billy Jean King once said to Frank Deford, the eminent sports journalist in America: “It really doesn’t matter how much I do, or what Chris Evert does or Peggy Fleming. Until women have a professional team game we’ll always be second-class in sports” (cited in Deford, 1997, p. 63). Deford goes on to report the development of two professional basketball leagues and two professional ice-hockey leagues for women in America. Recently, a professional women’s soccer league has also been instigated in America.

<sup>129</sup> That is not to deny the importance of equal opportunity or affirmative action legislation in sports that are participated in by both men and women. White and Morgan (1991, p. 1) present the case of women in snow skiing, where symbolically this sport is seen as a “testosterone-powered uber-sport”. Affirmative action policies may open up skiing, a sport obviously suited to the lower centre of gravity which females on average possess, to greater female participation and conceptual control. But the authors also acknowledge some more radical feminist positions; that the sport is expensive and female leisure pursuits are normally sacrificed before male ones, and that the sport is dangerous and the primary care-giver in the family often sacrifices personal goals for family care (1991, p. 3). Other cases that come to mind are in sports like pool and darts, where the masculinity of the sport is related to systematic forms of discouragement for female players. With regards to pool played in bars, Broom, Byrne and Petkovic (1992, p. 180) report:

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The system of getting games, and the informal norms around the pool tables, generate a context which fosters guardedness, possessiveness, aggression, competitiveness, and which confers social approval on the display of such qualities. These may not be the qualities required to play pool itself, but they are the qualities which have been built into this environment by the people who play most often.

The authors go on to suggest that whilst pool is not a game of physical strength or power, exclusion of women has been facilitated in by the environments in which pool is normally played. But such social justifications for exclusion are often buttressed by spurious, quasi-biological reasons. Polsky, who produced an ethnography of American pool-hall culture, justified the exclusion of females on the unresearched belief that differences in the structure of the arm made it difficult for women to become good at pool. Where they did, they were eccentric add-ons to the general rule (1969 cited in Broom, Byrne and Petkovic, 1992, p. 180).

<sup>130</sup> McArdle deals specifically with cases where sports bodies have invoked section 44 of the 1975 UK Sex Discrimination Act which allows for discrimination in sports where physiological differences between males and females exist. Fortunately, he suggests that industrial tribunals have consistently interpreted the Act to apply only in those situations where a female player wishes to play a sport in mixed competition. So the act has been unsuccessful in limiting access to coaching, refereeing and administrative positions for females, and in limiting females from playing male sports (i.e. boxing) against other females (1999). Unfortunately, this still leaves the cases of when a female, of any age, wishes to play a sport against men. But, as McArdle suggests, the wording of Section 44 of the Act by the British Parliament could have allowed for far wider areas of discrimination (1999, p. 45)

<sup>131</sup> Shaw (1995, p. 2) presents similar figures for USC, UCLA and University of Iowa.

<sup>132</sup> De Sensi suggests that the hierarchy of wages which sees men paid more than women coaches is “scandalous”, when considerations of comparable worth were explored (1992, p. 85). And Moriarty and Moriarty (1993, p. 18 cited by Wigmore, 1996, p. 63)

...identified that this is more than a collegiate problem; it is an international problem. They stated that more than half of all women's teams in the United States are coached by men, and there is a similar trend in Canada, where 49 of 58 national teams were coached by men in 1991. In 1991 only 6 of 52 Canadian Olympic Association members were women, and 14 of 105 United States Olympic Committee members were women. This trend is also apparent in Britain. In high-level sport in the United Kingdom, the proportion of female athletes attending the Olympic Games increased from 30% to 33% in 1988, whereas the number of female officials fell from 33% to 25% over the corresponding period (West & Brackenridge, 1990, p. 10)

<sup>133</sup> Campbell argues that the situation is even worse in Britain because of the exclusion of sports from the legislation of the British equal opportunities Act. Coaching careers in Britain remain elitist and the system adheres to sexual stereotyping in its approach. The United Kingdom Sex Discrimination Act exempts sports in private organisations, so clubs can appoint coaches and officials on any criteria (1990, pp. 20-22 cited in Wigmore, 1996,

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p. 64). Jim McKay has produced an expansive study of the effects of equal opportunity and affirmative action legislation and sentiment on the organisational structure of Australian, Canadian and New Zealand sport. Not surprisingly, he found that men in positions of organisational power, the male sports media, and liberally-oriented politicians all resisted his findings that the organisations of sport are gendered male, and there is little motivation by most sporting organisations to practice affirmative action (1997).

<sup>134</sup> Jessica Edwards explains that the situation is worse for black female athletes in the United Kingdom, who must contend with both racism and sexism in their pursuit of authoritative positions within the sport system. She characterises their situation as:

To be a black athlete is to experience a paradoxical reality: to be integral to the success of the UK's international sporting status, but to remain largely invisible at the level of institutional power and influence and voiceless in the decision-making processes of policies which have a direct impact on Black female athletes' sporting experiences; to be considered a cultural icon, a heroine, to many (Black) women and girls, but to have our visible 'difference' deracinated and depoliticised, held apart from wider conceptions of Black females, appropriated and subsumed under the homogenizing gaze of the nation-state, the commodification practices of contemporary capitalism and even white sports feminism (1999, p. 2)

Limitations of space and time prevent me from discussing the colonisation and captivity of the black female athlete by both capitalist sports practices and white sport feminism.

<sup>135</sup> It has been suggested that the unequal distribution of resources and funding, and therefore lack of proportionality, is legitimate in American college sports because females do not participate in as expensive sports, nor in sports that require as many players. Football is a sport that, according to some critics of Title IX, requires an inordinate amount of finance and number of players. This argument suggests that, any institution is justified in spending unequal amounts on women's and men's sport, if the equipment in men's sport costs more than in women's sport. At present there is no female sport that incurs the cost of the expensive equipment involved in football (Simon, 1985, p. 119). Therefore, football should be excluded from the scope of the Equal Rights Amendment. The maintenance of equal opportunities in sport requires that more expensive sports be funded to a greater degree than less expensive ones. This should occur regardless of the sex of the participants.

The arguments which support the exclusion of football are flawed on the grounds that they suggest that the contingent structure of football is necessary, a form of argument which the antifoundationalism of pragmatism can be used to critique. For the supporters of football, football *must* exist as a college sport and football *must* exist in its current costly form. Neither is a necessary condition. Football exists as a choice made by colleges, and it exists in its current form as a choice made by the NCAA and the big-time colleges. For example, a recent *Sports Illustrated* article looked at football teams in small-town rural colleges, and the modifications they have made to the game, and the structure of their teams. The apparent 'naturalness' or 'virtue' of college football exists because men have the power to control the discourses which position college sports. Football may be played in some modified form that incurs less cost for the institutions.

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Also, if football must exist, why can it not exist for both men and women? Perhaps because this liberal reform would be too challenging to the patriarchal character of college sport and the persistent naturalistic views of males and females as members of two different and discontinuous sexes. But for women to have authority in discussions concerning football, it may be necessary to enter the football world as participants. This intervention is something not yet considered within Title IX legislation; should women be granted equal opportunities in all sports? These are examples of ‘speaking the impossible’ which feminists must use to undermine the authority of male sports. As Wolff and O’Brien so eloquently summed up in response to the argument for the exclusion of football from Title IX considerations: “There are in fact three sexes: male, female and football” (1995, p. 1).

<sup>136</sup> Staurowsky argues that the production of Congress support for a hearing on the negative effect of Title IX on male sport’s programs was developed by the presentation of male athletes as the victims of discrimination in a number of media initiatives developed by the male coaches associations. She suggests that the “Save Football” campaign launched by the College Football Association and the development of the Men’s Non-Revenue Sports Coalition, both served to lobby Congress into accepting the need for a hearing on the basis that men’s sport is more expensive to run than women’s sport, and strict proportionality between the genders is thereby sexist. This presentation was aided by a number of dubious statistical techniques employed by the authors, including the selective reporting of certain sport’s only, and the exclusion of male-only sports, such as football, from the statistics (1996, pp. 198-200).

The authors of these initiatives presented the male athlete as being treated unjustly and unfairly, and conversely, female athletes as the beneficiaries of preferential treatment. The extension of this argument has been provided by a number of male-sports supporters. If males are the victims of the neutral Title IX legislation, then females must be the victimizers. The Reverend Edmund Joyce, from Notre Dame commented that “men must go on the offensive to rescue football from women, whom he characterized as irrational, irresponsible, and militant” (1993, cited in Staurowsky, 1996, p. 203). Dale Anderson, a lawyer who acted as a consultant for the Men’s Non-revenue Sports Coalition credited social engineering feminists with the development of Title IX, its proportionality test, and *The Title IX Investigator’s Manual* (1995, cited in Staurowsky, 1996, p. 203). This allows the commentators to garner sympathetic support for their sexist discourses, whilst not directly challenging the right of females to participate. That is, female athletes are allowed to choose between supporting radical and destructive feminists, or supporting noble and rational (male) sport’s administrators, who only want what they have earned.

This dynamic of male-as-victim, and female as dominant and despotic, reverses the normal suggestion that an underrepresented group is seen as victims. It presents females as preferentially treated, and in control over male sports, and men as vulnerable to that control. Of course, such presentation belies the fact that the decisions about the implementation of Title IX legislation in any particular setting are made by the controllers of college sport, who are generally male sport’s directors. It is ironic, although predictable, that these opponents of Title IX never blame the athletic directors who are in control of

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programs. Within the sexist system of college sport, it is easier to blame those who lack power and authority, women, than those who have power, men.

<sup>137</sup> Even with the restoration of the more liberal reading of Title IX in 1988, which restored the institution-wide coverage of Title IX, Reagan resisted by vetoing the Act, but his veto was overridden by Congress. The authors suggest: “Finally, 16 years after the passage of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, the law had a set of regulations and guidelines, tested in the courts, that would put into effect in 1988 something liberal feminists had expected in 1972” (Boutilier and San Giovanni, 1994, p. 103).

<sup>138</sup> Tapper continues by answering the counter-critique of liberal feminists. She says:

The liberal feminist might insist that, even given these problems, we should still retain abstract individualism and, if necessary, embark on a program of re-socialisation to minimise such differences. However, there are theoretical problems for liberal feminism in acknowledging... sexual difference, as they must in order to advocate re-socialisation. Apart from this there are some other matters... One is that, in effect, attempts to minimise differences often amount to attempts to change women... And this leaves the values of the public sphere intact and presupposes that the lifestyles of men are the only ones that, as Lloyd said, ‘deserve to be taken seriously’. Another point... is the tendency to accept that acknowledging differences between women and men amounts to admitting the inferiority of women. Again this presupposes the desirability of male characteristics as the human ideal and their appropriateness as the basis of relations in the public.

... The problem is not so much sexual difference as such, but the significance it has, and that is that it tends to be thought in terms of the inferiority of women such that whatever characteristics women have are judged negatively (1986, p. 45).

<sup>139</sup> McArdle describes an interesting ‘distortion’ of this case in a sporting example. Vanessa Hardwick, a soccer coach in England had undergone training in the Football Association’s Advance Coaching course. For a variety of discriminatory reasons, she had failed her final test, and the Tribunal had held the Football Association responsible for this discrimination. But one of the arguments by the Football Association revealed its sexism most explicitly. The Association ran two courses, one in spring and one in summer. The spring course was particularly popular with retired soccer professionals. Hardwick, who failed the summer course, received higher marks than nine coaches who had passed the spring course. The Football Association explained that assessment criteria for the two courses was different, and argued that Hardwick had failed “not because she was a woman, but because she had done the wrong course” (1999, p. 54). But this treats this matter of preferential treatment of males, soccer professionals are all males, as if it was not a matter of sex discrimination.

<sup>140</sup> These arguments are still being made today. Ted Riley Cheesebrough, in a paper published in 1998 in the *Villanova Sports and Entertainment Law Journal*, made the point that the judgement in the *Cohen v Brown University* trial did unnecessarily ignore the differences in interest and ability between male and female college players. The ignorance

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of this ‘fact’ made the judgement an ill-considered one that would eventually lead to the destruction of athletic departments across the country (1998, p. 8)

<sup>141</sup> MacKinnon explains the irony of this link between males and reasonableness in the following example:

The special benefits side of the difference approach has not compensated for the differential of being second class... Women have also gotten excluded from contact jobs in male-only prisons because we might get raped, the Court takes the viewpoint of the reasonable rapist on women’s employment opportunities. We also get protected out of jobs because of our fertility. The reason is that the job has health hazards, and somebody who might be a real person some day and therefore could sue- that is, a fetus- might be hurt if women, who apparently are not real persons and therefore cannot sue either for the hazard to our health or for the lost employment opportunity, are given jobs that subject our bodies to possible harm. Excluding a woman is always an option if equality feels in tension with the pursuit itself (1987, p. 38).

<sup>142</sup> As Shogan suggests:

If at another time, cooking becomes a valuable skill for men, this skill is differentiated from the cooking women do by describing the activity and the men who do it differently even when the skills necessary for the activities are identical. Consequently, men are chefs and women are cooks and to be a chef is, according to the logic of gender, necessarily more valuable (1988, pp. 272-273).

This is also signified in the seriousness, as conveyed by media coverage and programming, of male and female sports. Duncan, Messner, Williams and Jensen, in a study of the media coverage of NCAA men’s and women’s basketball games, found that the men’s games were packaged as “dramatic spectacles of historical import”, whilst the women’s matches were presented as less serious, sophisticated and dramatic (1990, pp. 2, 10-13 cited by Watson, 1993, p. 517).

<sup>143</sup> Charles Barkley’s comment, when it was suggested that he should not support the Republican Party in the U.S. Elections because that party supports the rich in society, was that he was rich. Whilst said jokingly, it indicates MacKinnon’s point that these token women are the “least of sex discrimination’s victims”, and perhaps support a conservative view of gender equality, rather than a radical view which challenges the presuppositions of their personal success.

<sup>144</sup> Lois Bryson reports that a female track and field coach, Kathryn Spurling, was prevented from coaching males over the age of fifteen because this was considered ‘unnatural’. (1987, p. 356) Helen Lenskyj outlines a similar decision which prevented a woman in Connecticut, with 40 years of experience from becoming a scout leader (1990, p. 237).

<sup>145</sup> This measure of program success as economic profit produced another spurious gender difference and stereotype; the dependence of female sport on male support, more generally known as the gendered division of labour. According to Stoll and Beller (1994, pp. 77-79), opponents of Title IX suggest that there are good reasons for both males and females, why institutions should not redistribute monies earned in men’s sports away from these sports

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and towards women's sports. Men will be less likely to work hard because they perceive that their hard work gains rewards for others. And once redistribution of their rightful income occurs, men's sports will be diminished in quality. Stoll and Beller go on to criticise these arguments.

This is the sporting institution's appropriation of the public/private split in the household; male sports produce the income so that female leisure can occur. Hence, male athletes and sports become the true victims of a reverse sexism in sport. Sexism exists in the form of legislation such as Title IX produces unfair and undeserved rewards for uneconomic (female) sports.

Sabo explains that this type of gloomy prediction for the future of male sports, is the male sexist response to the incapacity to retain the exclusion of women from athletics in the contemporary liberal society. Without the legislative exclusion, the inequality must take on subtler methods of 'legitimation'. The method that is used is to predict the doom that will occur if female sports are funded equally to male sports. The slippery slope argument suggests that gender equity will lead to reduced standards of athletic excellence in male sports. This will lead to decreased support from sponsorship and alumni. The organisational structure of sports will deteriorate as the money dries up, and this will adversely effect women as well as men (1994, p. 205). That is, the fate of women's athletics is inextricably linked to the profitability of male revenue-sports (Staurowsky, 1995, p. 31). Sabo contends that the unspoken assumption supporting this argument is that the male system of sport is the best for sport, and that supporters of gender equity, therefore oppose sport. But no-one wants to oppose the noble practice of sport, so institutional inequalities remain for the good of sport for both genders (1994, pp. 205, 206).

For Staurowsky, the political effect of this argument is damming for women throughout society. She argues (1995, p. 30):

Gender difference, and most important the valuation of one gender over another, forms the substance of the gender/economic/sport relationship. Birrell (1988) speaks to this relationship in the following way: "The central lesson of sport, that differences between the sexes are "natural" and men are "naturally dominant", presents itself as common sense. But, in reality, sport is an essential ideological tool for producing and reproducing the domination of men over women, thus preserving the gendered division of labor on which the stability of the social order is imagined to depend (p482)".

The ideological and structural frameworks that are supported by this view are that male revenue-sports as dominant and authoritative whilst female sports are seen as dependent on the male breadwinners? Such a discourse maintains the 'natural law' of women as dependent on men as breadwinners. At a time when nearly 50% of women enter the workforce, it seems "improbable that a national task force of educators would find it appropriate to reaffirm a gendered division of labour" (Staurowsky, 1995, p. 36).

College sports maintain several gender divisions and markings. Men's and women's sport is separate and segregated, job titles involve gender labeling and teams are given gender-appropriate designations. The effect on the preservation of the maleness of knowledge in sport is that, according to Tannen, "Some women fear... that any observation of gender differences will be heard as implying that it is women who are different... from

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the standard, which is whatever men are... And it is a short step. ... from different to worse” (1990, cited in Staurowsky, 1995, p. 36). So the dominant and traditional standard of sport silences the oppositional experiences of female athletes out of the discussion, because for women to claim opposition and difference is closely linked to ascriptions of inferiority.

This difference between the gender groups is most descriptively displayed in the presentation of male sport as revenue-producing and female sport as revenue draining. This difference quickly becomes a female deficiency in the professionalised model of college sports, where revenue is the mark of value. There exists, in the minds of many people, a belief that most men’s football and basketball college teams produce revenue, and that women’s sport would not exist without the backing of successful men’s sport. Both Sabo (1994) and Staurowsky (1995, 1996) present empirical evidence that this notion of male sports as revenue producing is an illusion for the majority of college programs. About 87% of all football programs in the NCAA lose money (Raiborn, 1990 cited by Sabo, 1994, p. 202). But apart from the empirical evidence which suggests otherwise, this intersection of sport as big-business and the gendered division of labour (the standard), reduces the opportunity to see sport from an educational or moral perspective (the other knowledge, which is silenced). The suggestion that Title IX may provide opportunities for inclusion in sports for educational reasons for females, has been absent in the rhetoric and arguments of the NCAA (Staurowsky, 1995, p. 41). Stoll and Beller sum up more conclusively: “Inequality cannot ever be legitimately defended and justified by referring to the supposed good or goods incurred by those who suffer the consequences of unfair discrimination” (1994, p. 79), by suggesting that oppression of female athletes is allowable because the male athletes provide these oppressed females with the capital necessary to fund their less-important sports.

<sup>146</sup> Lovett and Lowry suggest:

... liberal feminism has accepted the social system and its institutions. Liberal feminist strategy does not seek to transform the system but to reform it through distributive or procedural justice. When parties agree on the allocation of resources, reform may occur by means of distributive justice. When disagreement occurs, reform may be realized through political activity by using rules, regulations and procedures. This is known as procedural justice (Thibant and Walker, 1975, cited by Lovett and Lowry, 1995b, p. 264)

<sup>147</sup> For Staurowsky:

...the notion that revenue generation has a place in a discussion of the educational experience cries out to be identified for the blatant hypocrisy it embodies. Educational value has always been assessed according to the potential meaning a given experience holds for students. What a profound departure to “measure” the importance of students’ educational experience based on how much money students... generate (1996, p. 207).

But if the standard of success is accepted as beyond challenge, such hypocrisy will not be revealed.

<sup>148</sup> McKay suggested a similar discrimination when investigating the hierarchical structures of national sporting organisations in Canada, New Zealand and Australia. For a number of illegitimate reasons, women in these organisations are denied a voice in management

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decisions. They may either be frozen out of management positions because of the 'old-boy' network or because of a stereotypically-driven perceived inadequacy for the 'hardness' of management jobs, or they may be included as tokens on management committees but survive by assuming the male personification of management (1997).

<sup>149</sup> Lenskyj suggests that gender equity programs, such as affirmative action, will have limited use in coaching, as female coaches are often isolated, and have little chance of forming political networks. In addition, the unsupportive environment for female coaches will mean that, if the door to coaching is opened to them, the resultant "chilly blast" will force them outside again (1994, p. 30 cited by Hall, 1996, p. 79).

<sup>150</sup> Michael Menshaw found that parents of professional female tennis players will endorse exploitative relationships with older male coaches on the basis that these relationships will scare away the lesbians on the circuit (cited by Lenskyj, 1995, p. 51).

<sup>151</sup> Shona Thompson describes extensively the reliance on women's nurturing labour by men and children (1999).

<sup>152</sup> There is some equal opportunity legislation that does not seem particularly liberal. Separatist legislation that allows female-only gymnasiums certainly creates a safe environment for females to work out. But such legislation seems to indicate that the female gender creates special conditions in this case. MacKinnon has suggested that this 'special benefits rule' may stretch liberalism beyond its philosophical borders (1987, p. 33).

What is interesting is that men, and some women, have used equal opportunity legislation to try to oppose the setting up of these gyms. Again, MacKinnon's reminder that equal opportunity legislation has mainly got men access to what women previously had seems pertinent here. Because equal opportunity legislation arises from liberal principles that contain a male bias, it is not surprising that such legislation has been successful for men.

<sup>153</sup> It is odd that the supporters of male sports, who also asked for special protection, did not suffer from this 'bad odour'. Lenskyj suggests the irony in one men's rights group in Canada using sex discrimination laws to prevent women-only self-defense classes, where earlier the group had criticised women who had used human rights arguments to end sexual discrimination in ice hockey (1990, p. 238).

<sup>154</sup> McKay cites as emblematic of this, the response by the Australian sports journalist and former football coach, Roy Masters, to the suggestion of affirmative action in terms of the deplorable coverage of females in sport in Australia. Masters contends that if women want greater coverage they should simply raise hemlines, lose weight, change hairstyles, and show more flesh. In other words women athletes had to sell themselves to the market.

McKay comments:

This is hardly good news for women, given that the business world is neither female-friendly nor gender-neutral. Like nearly all institutions, it is overwhelmingly owned or controlled by men. Moreover, after pornography, the advertising industry probably portrays the most offensive images of women (1997, p. 123).

<sup>155</sup> It should be noted that the two types of political motivation may result in conflicting interventions, often resulting in the displacement of economic justice for cultural justice. The economic battles often require a refusal by reformers to acknowledge the category of

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sex, so that oppressions due to sex are revealed as social, rather than natural. For example, discrimination against females wanting to enter the army is revealed as social bias, rather than any natural inferiority due to sex. Alternately, cultural misrecognition or silence requires the affirmation of the identity category of sex. Women's knowledge requires an affirmation that the experience of living a woman's body produces different forms of knowledge (Phillips, 1997, p. 148). Phillips seems to conclude that the difference between Young and Fraser makes less of a difference than they think; that both authors share a belief that contemporary society includes economic and cultural injustices towards women, and neither is more fundamental than the other (1997, p. 147). The choice of which is more pressing in a conflict of interventions is made by the subjects of oppression at the time.

<sup>156</sup> Fraser details the two areas of oppression that are deliberated upon by justice theorists. Economic injustice includes exploitation, economic marginalisation and deprivation. Cultural injustice includes cultural domination, nonrecognition or misrecognition of, and disrespect towards, a particular group (Fraser, 1995, pp. 70-71). Fraser observes that the two forms of oppression are not exclusive, that each legitimates and reinforces the other (Fraser, 1995, p. 72).

<sup>157</sup> What must be guarded against, according to Phillips, is that the politics of difference produces a hegemonic language with which we approach all problems of oppression, such that issues of economic equality are displaced (1997, p. 153).

<sup>158</sup> The point being made here is that Title IX has not produced a female football competition.

<sup>159</sup> How strongly are these flag carriers defended against female participation? Ferrante, in her description of American baseball, discusses the case of Pam Postema who, in 1993, may have become the first female umpire of a major league baseball game. Houston pitcher, Bob Knepper, opposed this change stating "as far as her ability for umpiring, she seems fine, but I don't think a woman should be an umpire." Knepper referred to a biblical decree that women should not hold authority over men. Postema was subsequently released from her minor league umpiring contract. Her response was "I'll never understand why it's easier for a female to become an astronaut or cop or firefighter or soldier or Supreme Court justice than it is to become a major league umpire. For Christ sakes, it's only baseball" (1992, p. 255 cited by Ferrante, 1994, p. 246). It is of course much more than baseball that is endangered here, and perhaps the current emphasis on verbal and physical jousts between coaches, players and umpires in baseball demonstrate the 'need' for male umpires.

<sup>160</sup> This belief is confirmed by McKay's (1997) findings concerning the importance of egalitarianism and affirmative action policies to managers of major sporting organisations in Canada, New Zealand and Australia. Through both surveys and interviews, McKay found that most male administrators and male journalists did not see gender equity as an important criteria in evaluating the success of their program. In fact, one journalist saw it as undemocratic and contravening the principles of the free market (1997, p. 119).

<sup>161</sup> Mike Messner states:

In 1973, conservative writer George Gilder, later to become a central theorist of the antifeminist family politics of the Reagan administration, was among the first to sound the alarm that the contemporary explosion of female athletic participation might threaten the very fabric of civilization. "Sports" Gilder

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wrote, “are possibly the single most important male rite in modern society.” The woman athlete “reduces the game from a religious male rite to a mere physical exercise, with some treacherous danger of psychic effect.” Athletic performance, for males, embodies “an ideal of beauty and truth,” while women’s participation represents a “disgusting perversion” of this truth (1992, p. 149).

<sup>162</sup> My insertion.

<sup>163</sup> I am aware that a similar rule exists in Australian Rules Football. Girls may play in mixed competitions until the age of twelve. Then they are required to play in separate competitions. But as the Women’s football league will not accept girls below the age of fifteen, for legal reasons of their own, it would seem difficult for a girl between the ages of 12 and 15 to maintain her playing interest in football.

<sup>164</sup> The National Rodeo Association reinforced this argument by suggesting that “insurance may not cover her in the event of injury” (Watt, 1999b, p. 7). The secretary, Stephen Drive, of a competitor organisation Rodeo Oz Style, argued (outside of the Commission) that his organisation, which allowed females to compete, used the same insurance company as the National Rodeo Association, and “there was no clause discriminating on the basis of sex” (Watt, 1999b, p. 7). The general manager of the Australian Professional Rodeo Association, Stephen Hilton, said that he knew of no other rodeo group that banned females from participation (Watt, 1999a, p. 4). Yet, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission ruled that, because the National Rodeo Association is a voluntary organisation, it was exempted under the 1984 Sex Discrimination Act, and any rule that prevented female participation would not constitute “unlawful discrimination” (Watt, 1999b, p. 7). This case evokes many of the ideas put by feminists about both equal opportunities legislation and the protection provided to male power by the private/public split.

<sup>165</sup> This also ignores the cultural oppressions that overlay and reinforce the structural oppressions women face in sport. When Justine Blainey, the Canadian ice-hockey player, fought the Ontario Hockey Association for the right to play the sport, she faced death threats, ostracism from the hockey community and pornography about her in the change rooms. Even those females who successfully challenge structural oppression may have their freedom reined in by harassment and annihilation (Robinson, 1997b, p. 134)

<sup>166</sup> The biological certainty of gender categories, and their unchangeability, is made manifest in the 1996 New South Wales laws that enact anti-discrimination against transgendered individuals. These laws purportedly give the post-operative transgendered individual the right to legally be recognised as having altered their sex. Yet, s.38P of the act provides an exception such that nothing in the legislation “renders unlawful the exclusion of a transgender person from participating in any sporting activity for members of the sex with which the transgendered person identifies” (cited in Sharpe, 1997, p. 40). As Sharpe goes on to suggest, sport is a site for “correct [and correcting] readings” of sex, in a world where sex has become ambiguous (1997, p. 40, my insertion). The sporting world allows for the production of non-ambiguous, authentic, biological sex assignments, that transgress any therapeutically driven legal recognition of transgendering.

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Further, and in light of the earlier sections of this chapter, both members of parliament and society who supported this exception, and those who argued against it, still created a dichotomous view of sex differences that was hierarchical. Women were seen as members of the weaker and inferior sex. Individuals and groups who supported the bill suggested that women could not compete with postoperative transgendered females, because of “pre-existing superior anatomical and physiological characteristics” in the post-pubertal transgendered person (The Women in Sport Foundation cited by Sharpe, 1997, p. 40). Those who opposed the legislative exception suggested that the example of Renee Richards indicates that postoperative transgendered females are weak enough to fit into the female sporting world. But both groups agree that women are located by inferiority in sport.

In contrast, Sharpe would suggest that sport makes obvious the overlap of performance between the genders, and characteristics of elite level sporting performers are related more to genetics and socialisation, than to sex. Any genuine concern to produce a level playing field in sport would deal with differences within gender groupings, as well as between them (1997, p. 40). Hence, the legislation gives men, and not women, what they want; it reproduces hierarchical and dichotomous sex categories in a world where such categories are being challenged. This will become an important consideration in the last section of Chapter Six that deals with the denaturalisation of sex categories.

<sup>167</sup> The problem may be even worse, because where men have supported the use of equal opportunities legislation for female athletes, they have often been victimised by athletic departments. Don Sabo explains:

Wounded-giant sexism [the term he uses to describe the male opposition to the implementation of Title IX] also isolates and marginalizes those male coaches and male administrators who lean toward adoption of more educational, inclusive and equitable athletics... Rudy Suwara, a former volleyball coach at San Diego State University, claims he was fired for insisting on equal treatment for female athletes. Jim Huffman... has filed a lawsuit alleging that, because he assisted the women's team in regaining varsity status that was stripped away from them, he was not retained when the department restored the team... (1994, p. 206, my insertion)

<sup>168</sup> My insertion.

<sup>169</sup> This list does not include the extensive literature on women participating in bodybuilding, as this literature will be engaged with in Chapter Six of the dissertation.

<sup>170</sup> I know that several feminist authors would be appalled at the suggestion that the capability for violence is a feminist action. Lenskyj (1999), when reviewing McCaughey's book on the issue of self-defense as a form of physical feminism suggested that the taking up of an aggressive, male posture endorses male qualities as the standard of successful, assertive qualities. Whilst she agrees that this posture is useful to a degree, she would condone neither the use of firearms nor the initiation and enactment of violence by women against anyone. Helmbold agrees, and suggests:

The... reason I take issue with McCaughey is because she sensationalizes women's use of self-defense, which she describes as women's violence. She titles a chapter "Getting Mean," a theme emphasized by the jacket design. It is

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disconcerting when women fight back, instead of cowering, when they are attacked. But the goal is not for women to act mean or violent. The goal is to stop the attack, to escape to safety, and long-term, to minimize attacks. I am not arguing that women should not take on "men's" violence, but rather that the goal is the reduction of violence. By being alert and confident, women discourage attacks. Increasing gun ownership does not have this effect (2000, p. 192).

My defense of the use of physicality as explained by McCaughey is firstly, that I see this as one strategy amongst many, and secondly, that the woman athlete presents her athletic body as *capable* of violence. This does not mean she must initiate or enact violence against others. So from an ideal ethical/feminist position I support the critics of McCaughey, at the same time I am worried that the opposition to the use of firearms is another layer of subordinating women made necessary by some women becoming physically stronger. McCaughey explains that the firearm can be considered a prosthetic, as explained by Grosz (1994, p. 188), such that the prosthesis transforms the woman's bodily comportment (1998, pp. 15, 16, n. 4). So, it may be pragmatically necessary for women to take up firearms. But equally, I am wary of any intervention which in Carpenter and Acosta's terms, allows women to win but only by selling their souls (cited in McKay, 1997, p. 154). McCaughey herself recognises that the endorsement of self-defense classes "felt like resigning myself to use 'the master's tools'" (1998, p. 1).

Helmbold introduces another issue to the debate about self-defense classes for women. She suggests that McCaughey could have also been more attuned to the commodification of these practices which place their pursuit out of the economic reach of poor women. In addition, this commodification presents some of these classes (padded attacker and gun classes) as glamorous, an obvious problem for the feminist aware of the gendering of activities (2000, pp. 191, 192).

<sup>171</sup> It is acknowledged that other writers (Balsamo, 1996; Obel, 1996; Ndalianis, 1995) are less certain of the resistance embodied by female bodybuilders. Chapter Six of this thesis will include this debate.

<sup>172</sup> Surveys of women athletes in Intercollegiate programs by Blinde, Taub and Han (1993, pp. 47-60) indicate a belief amongst these women that sport contributes to their empowerment in at least three distinct ways. It allows women to exhibit the qualities of bodily competence, self-perceptions of competence, and a proactive approach to life.

<sup>173</sup> Again, it is interesting that men, and some supportive women, have tried to use equal opportunities legislation to prevent women-only self-defense and fitness classes, and weight rooms. As Lenskyj suggests, these actions "demonstrate the extent to which some men perceive women-only activities as a threat to male hegemony, particularly when the activity is women's self-defense" (1990, p. 238).

<sup>174</sup> My insertion.

<sup>175</sup> Gloria Steinem, discussing the ongoing congressional trials about women in combat, argued that patriarchal culture would be far less successful at achieving its goals if "every underpaid waitress and every sexually harassed secretary had two years military training." She goes on to argue that violent and physical protest may be the only change agent in a

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world where equal opportunities laws have been ineffective in gaining women access to power (cited in Merryman, 1994, p. 311).

<sup>176</sup> This argument forms a major portion of Chapter Six of this thesis. For the moment, it is being used to display how equal opportunities legislation may be utilised more broadly if underlying beliefs about ‘natural’ gender differences are ignored.

<sup>177</sup> Ryz reports that a recent case of equal opportunities litigation occurred in wrestling where a female wrestler wished to train with a male high school team, but was denied this opportunity. The school board claimed that the female would be endangered by her physiological and anatomical differences, regardless of weight categories, that the male coaches would have to engage in training practices that could be misconstrued as sexual harassment, and that male members of the team may be placed in sexually explosive situations. Ryz hopes that the court will again rule that paternalism and chivalry do not justify discrimination (1997).

<sup>178</sup> Lois Bryson (1987, p. 353) cites the example of the use of The Theatre and Balls Act of 1908 by the New South Wales premier to prevent a kick boxing match between women in 1984 because of a clause which called for “the preservation of good manners and decorum.” As one of the organisers of the bout retorted, “It’s no more disgraceful or demeaning for women to fight than it is for men” (Macken, 1984 cited by Bryson, 1987, p. 353).

<sup>179</sup> According to Barovick, the boxing market may be changing. Women’s boxing has apparently struck a chord with both jaded fans, and exasperated boxing promoters, who are disillusioned with men’s boxing, such that women’s boxing gets better ratings on ESPN than men’s boxing. But additionally, Barovick reports that women boxers suggest that boxing has helped them to fight off other oppressions in their life. So regardless of whether the market embraces it or not, women’s boxing remains an important site of empowerment (2000, p. 2).

<sup>180</sup> This position will be criticised in Chapter Six where, following a Foucauldian line, it will be suggested that acts of transgression may occur even when the actor does not wish to transgress (i.e. is docile).

<sup>181</sup> Another ‘subtle’ mechanism of control and incorporation by the male sporting fraternity are the charges of lesbianism that often accompanies females doing male sports. For Hall, these “...allegations of lesbianism, and how these are managed, serve patriarchal interests by discouraging female participation in so-called masculine sports, by dividing women in sport, and eroding the solidarity needed for effective political action” (1987, p. 333). Burroughs, Ashburn and Seebohm go further in their discussions about the charges made by the Australian female cricketer, Denise Annetts, that the Australian cricket selectors have a bias towards the selection of homosexuals. According to the authors, this charge made women’s cricket a high profile sport for a short period of time. It was high profile because it allowed the media to both trivialise the game and denigrate the females who play it (1995, p. 272). This preoccupation in the media with lesbianism indicates the extent of the threat that is posed by women playing a sport that has traditionally been considered a male activity.

<sup>182</sup> The authors maintain that such individual resistance has done little to challenge the binary oppositions of masculinity and femininity. If anything, these acts further endorse

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masculinity, as even women aspire to be “like a boy” (1999, p. 108). Crossing the boundary between masculinity and femininity for adult women is always a threat to the gender order that evokes strong resistance, in the forms of homophobia, annihilation, parody or accommodation.

<sup>183</sup> Theberge (1998, p. 4) also remarks that the binary is re-asserted in the idea that the aggressive physicality of the men’s game, a social construction, is due to men’s superior strength, a biological reason. So differences from the male standard are justified by biological, and not social, differences, and hence the binary is reasserted as a biological and fixed one.

<sup>184</sup> Code explains that the Aristotelian model of society excluded females from the possibility of being virtuous or authoritative. Similarly, whilst not formally excluded, it is difficult to think of many authoritative female figures in science, literature or the arts (1986, p. 62). I would also think that authoritative female figures are not particularly evident in sport.

<sup>185</sup> I would suggest that the rhetorical questions posed by Nelson when she asks “Must we play as the men play?... Should we celebrate female boxers? Should we take drugs?... Are sports still fun?” (1991, p. 8 cited by Duquin, 1993, p. 291), indicate a suggestion that women may produce a better way of appreciating sport than currently exists. This is especially apparent as Nelson goes on to describe what sport would be like as guided by values which emphasise an ethic of care. This ethic of care emanates from the extensive socialisation given to women in caring behaviour. Duquin (1993, p. 289) posits rightly that such a view of sport offers an alternative, rather than a better, option to the sport model that is currently dominant.

Hall, following from Harding, suggests that “the standpoint of women provides for a more accurate and comprehensive representation of reality than the standpoint of men” (1985, p. 32). I presume that she means that this standpoint of women will be better at dealing with the specific and gendered problems faced by women, and hence will allow for the remaking of females through sport. This fits in with the antifoundational notions of making reality, important to a feminist standpoint position. However, it would be easy to read such statements as the suggestion that female standpoints more closely fit some pre-existing reality.

<sup>186</sup> I would suggest that such claims can be justified by non-gendered arguments about harm to others.

<sup>187</sup> This is magnificently captured in Australian Rules Football, when one of our most eminent coaches, Ron Barassi, suggested that the melee rule, which legislated against wrestling on the arena, was further evidence of the feminisation of the game. Football teaches men aggression, virility and courage. The removal of these important virtues is caused by allowing irrational mothers a say in the running of the game.

<sup>188</sup> This will become the theme of Chapter Six of this dissertation.

<sup>189</sup> According to Judith Lorber, the persistence of a gender division that results in “two unequally valued categories” of people supports current instances of gender inequality. For that reason, the long-term goal of the feminist movement should be to do away with gender divisions, and not simply minimise and localise their impact. She calls this a “feminist degendering movement” (2000, p. 80). This will become an important theme of Chapters

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Five and Six of this thesis. For now it will suffice to say that both poststructural and radical feminists provide the theory to support the shift toward a degendered society.

<sup>190</sup> This statement seems contradictory. How can there be legitimate sex differences in a system where the lowest significant grouping in matters of justice is humanity? The statement intends to convey the widespread belief that, some ‘natural’ differences between the sexes must be acknowledged. For example, there are separate competitions for women in most sports, based on the ‘legitimate’ belief that women benefit from the exclusion of men.

<sup>191</sup> At the same time, Mitchell reminds her readers that whilst the feminist critique has weakened the ties between feminism and the liberal conception of equality, it is an unnecessary step for modern feminists to skip the present and think that “equality is not something to be fought for” (1987, pp. 41, 42). The new society which values liberty, but is built on the starting points made by equality feminists, is probably a better society than the one which is built on oppression and privilege. Bradiotti (1986, pp. 49-51) suggests, with regards to the maleness of philosophy, that the inclusion and contribution of women like Simone de Beauvoir has, at least, broken down some stereotypes of femininity that stood in the way of women participating in discursive practices. As stated several times in the previous chapter, whilst, by itself, inclusion in male systems of thought will not produce equity, it may work to reduce the effects of sexist stereotypes.

<sup>192</sup> Sue, one of the respondents in Kevin Young’s study of women in sport, and a female rugby player, sums up succinctly: “They want you to be a girl, I want to be a girl, but I want you to watch my sport and like me when I do it. And the truth is I don’t know if rugby can be played in any “feminine” way” (cited in Young, 1997, p. 301).

<sup>193</sup> For Bryson (1987, pp. 352-353) the control extends beyond the media, to the men who organise female sports and the men in government and business who control the allocation of funding. This chapter will limit itself to a discussion of media control, with an acknowledgement that this is, in Frye’s terms (1983), focussing on only one bar in the cage.

<sup>194</sup> This does not mean to imply that it is only feminists who have produced this critique of the modern epistemological project which sees the mind as the mirror of nature. Nash (1994, pp. 65-77) suggests that such a critique was also produced by philosophers of science such as Kuhn and Feyerabend, poststructuralist philosophers such as Derrida and Foucault, and postmodern social theorists such as Rorty and Lyotard, amongst others. Whilst there is serious disagreements between members of these various groups, they come together to challenge the supposed neutrality of traditional epistemology (Griffiths, 1995, p. 57). However, Bradiotti (1986, pp. 58-60) suggests that the feminist project may be different from philosophical project. The philosophical project is to rethink the philosophical tradition in order to save philosophy from rationalism and objectivity. In contrast, the feminist project is to be allowed to enunciate a different project through the gaps and silences that exist for them, as subjective female speakers, within the modern epistemological tradition.

<sup>195</sup> This separates Janack’s (1997, pp. 126, 127) position from earlier feminist standpoint theorists who suggested that the position of marginality produces an epistemologically privileged position for women. In contrast, Janack would suggest that such a position may

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produce a broader set of research topics and methodologies than conventional wisdom, but it does not necessarily suggest greater capacities to produce ‘better’ knowledge. However, equally, this does not prevent women some capacity to claim epistemic authority, as Janack has endeavoured to separate epistemic authority from any apolitical notion of epistemic privilege. She suggests that epistemic authority is an embodied authority “conferred on people or groups through social, political, and economic practices, as well as through sexist, racist, and classist assumptions about reliability, intelligence, and sincerity” (1997, p. 130; also Hawkesworth, 1989, p. 549; Griffiths, 1995, p. 84).

<sup>196</sup> As Mary Jollimore, a producer for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation’s *Newsworld Sports* suggests, “as more women get into it and don’t allow themselves to be pigeonholed as women writers writing about players’ wives’ hairdos or whatever, and make their presence known, things will have to improve” (Smith, 1999, p. 261).

<sup>197</sup> The foundations of the male epistemological method have been explained and criticised in Chapter Two of this thesis, and so it will not be repeated here. Rortian pragmatism shares with feminist standpoint theory (and other antifoundational viewpoints) a critique of the male epistemological method in philosophy. Both Rorty and some feminists suggest that this critique of philosophy is applicable to all knowledge systems, and I will use the structure of the feminist argument to critique authoritative knowledge in sport at a later section in this chapter. Knowledge production in philosophy and sport may be linked in the following ways; males have numerical control over both practices, inability in both practices is synonymous with femininity, and ability is valued in terms that are synonymous with masculinity. The adversarial method in philosophy is one of aggressive competition against your critics. Passivity and compromise are not valued in this adversarial method (Moulton, 1983a).

<sup>198</sup> Grosz explains that such acts are the “propositions, arguments, assertions, methodologies” which manifestly ignore, exclude or are hostile to women and femininity (1990a, p. 93).

<sup>199</sup> Eisenstein describes the work of Evelyn Fox Keller who explains the metaphoric association between maleness and science (1994, pp. 98-101). Moller-Okin describes the maleness of morality in liberal systems of thought concerning justice (1989, pp. 91-109). Iris Young also discusses the maleness of impartiality in dominant systems of laws and rights (1990a, pp. 96-121). Catherine MacKinnon considers the impartiality of the law as a mechanism for the maintenance of male power (1987, p. 228). Whilst all of these critiques are important, they are also similar to Lloyd’s association of Reason and maleness in philosophy. Hence, I will confine much of my descriptions to Lloyd’s arguments.

<sup>200</sup> For example, Moller-Okin’s claim is that even John Rawls, whose liberal position on justice appears to not be gender-structured, still maintains links to a tradition in moral and political philosophy that is both sexist and phallogocentric. She states: “Thus there is a blindness to the sexism of the tradition in which Rawls is a participant” (1989, p. 91). The blindness is apparent in a number of places including Rawl’s assumptions of an apolitical view of the family (1989, p. 94), of an asexual view of the division of labour (paid/unpaid and public/private) in Western society (1989, p. 95), and of a blindness toward the justice of the gender system in all aspects of our lives (1989, p. 101). This obscures any link between authority and traditions of male familial, social and economic power.

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<sup>201</sup> As Bradiotti neatly explains, the woman in philosophy has “swallowed the misogyny of a cultural system where masculine values dominate and she reproduces it unconsciously in her attempt to be better than she is, better than a woman, that is to say- a man!” (1986, p. 46)

<sup>202</sup> MacKenzie suggests that Le Doeuffe also presents this critique of the maleness of philosophy. Women have been excluded from the practice of philosophy (sexism) because their experiences have been excluded from the discourse of philosophy so that philosophy can present itself as a “complete, self-enclosed discourse.” Le Doeuffe claims that philosophy is only such a discourse “through the fact that it represses, excludes and dissolves... another discourse, another form of knowledge” (1977, p. 6 cited in MacKenzie, 1986, p. 144). The necessary feminist response is to remove this metaphor of the woman-as-Other from the discourse of philosophy by examining the role of the imaginary in philosophical discourse. But such examination will deconstruct the goals that philosophy purports to be capable of achieving; realism and universalism. Philosophy is only capable of producing such goals, according to de Beauvoir, by excluding and ignoring the experiences that the female lives (TSS, p. 622 cited in MacKenzie, 1986, p. 145). So male philosophy loses its power of universality at the confrontation with female experience.

<sup>203</sup> Hawkesworth, whilst acknowledging the theoretical ‘sophistication’ of feminist standpoint positions in comparison with those feminist positions that valorise women’s intuition, or suggest that women’s oppressed position makes them able to produce more complete knowledge than men, still suggests difficulties in the standpoint position. These difficulties include the universalisation of dominant female positions, the problem of the ‘singular’ subject, and the dangers of ignoring structural mechanisms of oppression (Hawkesworth, 1989, pp. 544-546, 550-553). So there is a politics of exclusion that may arise from feminist standpoint positions.

<sup>204</sup> Bordo explains that phallogentrism involves the symbol of the phallus acting as a metaphor which unites the male with self-mastery, stability, unity and identity, as against the metaphor of the female which is associated with body-mastery, spontaneity, multiplicity, and nature (1988, p. 621). It is at the level of patriarchal and phallogentric reality that the production of discourse is seen as a mechanism of the dominance of men. Knowledge is examined “as a process of *sexual division* and exclusion” (Gross, 1986, p. 194), as no longer something which is sexually indifferent. The development of a feminist standpoint position revealed that gender bias structures a person’s perspective on reality (Bordo, 1988, p. 619). The gender bias exists in knowledge systems because of the binary oppositions which produce “a hierarchical, oppositional construction of reality”, and which align males with the higher position on the hierarchy (Bordo, 1988, pp. 621, 626).

<sup>205</sup> Irigaray states “...if we speak to each other as men have been doing for centuries, as we have been taught to speak, we’ll miss each other, fail ourselves. Again... Words will pass through our bodies, above our heads. They’ll vanish, and we’ll be lost.” (1999, p. 82)

<sup>206</sup> As Lloyd explains:

We should instead see sexual difference as itself an expression of power, with no existence independent of the dominance of men over women. What is fundamental is the political fact... that maleness is the standard with reference

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to which both sameness and difference is judged. Sameness means being the same as men, difference means being different from them....

Virtually every quality that distinguishes men from women... is already compensated in the 'affirmative action' program which is equivalent to the structure and values of contemporary American society." (Lloyd, 1984, p. 16)

<sup>207</sup> Grosz goes on to discuss the ways that Plato and Aristotle, as forerunners to many modern philosophers, engaged in practices of sexism, patriarchal and phallogocentric thought in their theory development (Grosz, 1990a, pp. 153-157). Importantly, women and the feminine must be expelled from the qualities of reason, knowledge and virtue which philosophers chase. For philosophy to be valued it opposes subjectivity, perspectivism, emotion and the body, qualities which are 'naturally' related with the feminine. So philosophy expels the feminine. Masculinity is the norm for philosophy (Grosz, 1990a, p. 154). Janice Moulton relates this to the adversarial method in philosophy which values traits normally associated with men; aggression, dispassionate argument, objectivity (1983a).

<sup>208</sup> Grimshaw's (1988) claim is that some philosophers, such as Nietzsche at times, provide counterexamples to the dominance of phallogocentric reality, and such individual perspectives make any generalisable claim against the history of philosophy impossible to sustain. This is countered by Bordo who argues that dominance remains in place even without homogeneity (1988, pp. 622-623). This follows from Foucault's notion of power and resistance occurring simultaneously in discourse communities.

<sup>209</sup> Pam Creedon describes the history of women in sports journalism from the 1860s through to the current era (1994a, pp. 67-107; 1994b, pp. 108-158).

<sup>210</sup> The authors also suggested that further studies might investigate whether a female reporter with known sporting credentials as a player, may have less difficulty in establishing expertise, and whether such expertise might be transferable across sports. As yet, I am not aware of whether either of the proposed future studies have been attempted.

<sup>211</sup> This annihilation is captured by a story from Marg McGregor, a sports editor for a Canadian newspaper. A colleague, Sue Holloway, asked a group of grade three children to name all the female athletes they could think of. After much effort and silence, one of the children suggested 'Alwyn Morris'. Morris was a Canadian Olympian, but also was a man. As Holloway later explained, the children simply don't see female athletes in the Canadian sports media (McGregor, 1997, p. 292).

<sup>212</sup> I do not wish to imply that the positions of female reporters will be better than the positions of male reporters because of the oppression of women in sport. I merely wish to suggest that it could be different and such difference should be sustained, rather than submerged. At the very least, it would be difficult to imagine a female reporter referring to a crowd at a boxing match as made up of "2000 people- mainly men but with a sprinkling of dumb blondes" (cited in Bryson, 1987, p. 356).

<sup>213</sup> Vertinsky discusses the position of sporting 'knowledge' in the new male identity groups such as 'The Promise Keepers' and the new male magazine media. The Editor of the British male magazine, *Maxim*, heralded the emergence of the 'millennium man' as a re-establishment of what it means to be a real man. In his terms, this included playing the

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game of soccer, “that game which will always be a male thing truly understood by males, and never understood by females” (1997 cited by Vertinsky, 1999, p. 4).

<sup>214</sup> I wrote this section of the thesis before I had read Anne Hall’s (1985, p. 38) position. It was heartening that she also had trouble putting into words the qualities that give men credibility in the sports media, and so too had to resort to the use of the term ‘it’. In both cases, I would suggest that the use of this term expresses a disgust at the sexism of the situation; that such differences in opportunity are reducible to indefinable terms which are properly conveyed by the trivial and small pronoun.

<sup>215</sup> The government controlled Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC) perhaps leads the way with its Victorian radio football coverage including the former Australian netball coach, Joyce Brown, as a specialist commentator, and its television rugby league coverage including the sport’s commentator Debbie Spillane, as its sideline commentator. It is interesting to note that Joyce’s son, Carlton footballer Fraser Brown suggests that her commentary would be improved if she ‘took on’ the past footballers and media experts who analyse the game, more often (1997).

<sup>216</sup> I am not aware of the incidence of female sport’s reporters in America and Europe. My guess would be that they would be no more frequent on a per capita basis than in Australia, and the separation of duties between men and women would also be similar. There would, of course, be differences between sports and countries. Creedon explains that the opportunities for women broadcasters on male sports are sparse. CBS continues to refuse to allow women broadcasters on its male golf coverage (1994b, p. 145). It would seem to me that golf is one of those sports where female and male participation is strikingly similar.

<sup>217</sup> John Hargreaves argues

Men figure far more than women as participants and even more so as media-sport professionals...despite the rising number of women participants in sport.... The few women who have gained entry to this male media preserve tend to be restricted to reporting and commenting on ‘women’s sports’.... Male commentators in male-dominated sports like cricket and football are, no doubt, what the majority of the audience expects, and in fulfilling this expectation the media accommodate to the prevailing pattern of gender division. But men also report and comment more frequently on women’s sporting activity than vice versa... The image of women in media sport is, therefore, predominantly constructed by men (1986, pp. 154-155).

<sup>218</sup> Hargreaves does not deny the importance of counting numbers of male and female sports journalists (1994, p. 198). Producing a radical change in the way that female athletes and sports are covered would be a courageous move for a female journalist in a practice community which, according to British Sports Council figures at least 95% male.

<sup>219</sup> Toni Bruce’s (1998) ethnographic study of experienced women basketballers’ reactions to viewing the televised coverage of women’s basketball revealed that there is a site for resistance to this coverage. The women viewers resisted the coverage because the trivialisation and denigration of the female basketballers, and the holding up of the male game as the standard did not resonate with their own experiences as women basketballers. The resistance took the form of refusing to grant legitimacy to the ‘expertise’ of the

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commentator, mocking the commentator's lack of knowledge about the game and its history, refusing that male basketball is the standard against which women's basketball is judged as deficient and denigrating the male game for its violence, individuality and emphasised skills. So television viewing was not simply passive, but was an active interpretation carried out by individuals within a certain context. For experienced individuals resistance can exist in the dissonance between the commentary and the broadcasted vision of female athletes as 'physically strong, skilled, tactical, and aggressive' (1998, p. 12).

<sup>220</sup> As with all examples of occupational discrimination, equal opportunities legislation, at the very least, erodes discriminatory stereotypes that attempt to keep women out of sports reporting.

<sup>221</sup> Bartky explains the differences between the psychological oppressions of black and white women. Whilst possibly useful for an understanding of racial oppressions in sport with women of different colours, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to go deeply into this area. I will continue to use the collective noun, 'they', even though I recognise differences in standpoints according to race, class and other aspects of identity.

<sup>222</sup> Code goes on to describe how easy it is to live one's life on the basis of the knowledge claim in philosophy that women are deficient in reason. Many aspects of the world will be made sense of by this stereotype. But, it is just as possible to understand 'reality' via a different stereotype (1988, pp. 190, 191, 193).

<sup>223</sup> Recalling Dale Spender's book (1983), which was discussed in Chapter Three, it is probably more accurate to suggest that any semblance of a memory of an alternate culture has been suppressed by the dominant culture in a number of equally successful ways.

<sup>224</sup> Bartky describes the objectification of women in the street. Unaware of the gazes of men, she may parade down the street joyously. But awareness of the stares and calls of men, she becomes petrified and stiffens. She becomes conscious of herself as an object. She could have been enjoyed in silence, but to dominate her the men had to make her aware of her role as a sexual object. That makes her aware of how men see her; it compels her to be aware (1990, p. 27). Gatens (1986, p. 19) uses this example to demonstrate why existentialism, as a male system of thought, will not be expanded by simply the inclusion of women as objects of investigation in an apparently neutral system. Sartre's account of 'the look' is an exemplification of the mutual apprehension of one individual [male] with another individual [male]. But the experience is changed when gender is included as a variable; 'the look' is no longer one of mutual apprehension and a struggle for mastery. The mastery is established prior to 'the look.'

<sup>225</sup> Frye uses this double bind situation in terms of female sexuality. The adolescent female may not be sexually active or inactive. Both courses of action will carry condemnation (1983, p. 3). Barry has suggested that such a view of sexuality is institutionalised so that rape, pornography and sexual slavery are practices that are done to bad women, and good women are spared by their attachments to traditional feminine roles, relationships and sexual behaviour (cited in Rowland and Klein, 1990, p. 287). For the female athlete, she must not be too successful, as to be thought unfeminine. But if she is too feminine, she will be thought of as not really an athlete (Young, 1988). All these practices serve to split women from each other.

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<sup>226</sup> In a wonderfully ironic passage, Bartky refers to an eminent Marxist humanist who suggests that for the good of artistic beauty, women's liberationists should attempt to look pretty and attractive. She says that this comment "would be a species of objectification anywhere; but it is absurdly out of place in a paper on woman's emancipation" (1990, p. 29).

<sup>227</sup> Many of these points will be developed further in Chapter Six of this thesis that deals specifically with the authoritative female body.

<sup>228</sup> This does not deny either that individual men benefit from this oppression, or that individual men help to reproduce the oppression at the local or specific level. As will be explained in the following chapter on Foucault, subjective positions of 'oppressor' and 'oppressed' are produced relatively independently of the individuals that occupy them.

<sup>229</sup> My insertion. Frye likens this to the situation of white people expressing their oppression at not being able to travel through ghettos. Whilst both groups experience the ghetto as a barrier, it is produced and maintained by the white people, with the intention of maintaining their privilege. Only when dominance supersedes difference as the main point of focus, does this barrier appear as part of a systematic oppression of one group by another (1983, pp. 12, 13).

<sup>230</sup> The importance of taboos on homosexuality in our society makes it even more pressing that we announce our sex early and clearly in communications with another (Frye, 1983).

<sup>231</sup> Tapper suggests that the learning of such sex-marking behaviour by boys and girls is almost subconscious. Boys and girls do not need to be told how to sex mark and sex announce. They "learn this in learning the language, in hearing how women are talked to and about, in how women are looked at, in how girls are dressed and touched, and in what is going on around us" (1986, p. 44). As part of the background within which people formulate their beliefs and desires, they are still effective in regulating communication even in cases when we hold beliefs and desires which are contrary to those presented in dominant discourse. Men remain powerful in society, even when communicating with women-identified women, because society is dominated by men (Tapper, 1986, p. 44).

<sup>232</sup> Frye makes the contrast between gays and heterosexuals. She suggests that many gays understand that their sex-marking behaviour is theatre (either openly or closeted gays). In contrast, heterosexuals think that this is real. But in a sense, it is real, because it is the reality that males have constructed (1983, p. 29)

<sup>233</sup> It is important to repeat that the sports media is only one bar in the cage that traps females who participate in sport in relative subordination, but they become more important in the late capitalist era of mass sporting spectacle (Yeates, 1995, p. 43). Jennifer Hargreaves also discusses legislative changes which have privatised leisure facilities, policy changes toward elite sport, gender relations in the home, the school and the workplace, child and adolescent corporeal socialisation, bias in sports organisations and sports coaching, in addition to imbalances of power in the sports media (1994, pp. 174-208). Lois Bryson details the structural control that men have over Australian peak sporting associations, even in sports such as ice-skating which has a male membership of only 6% of total membership. International bodies are also made up predominantly of men (1987, p. 352). Jim McKay (1997) has also produced research, on the National Sporting Organisations of Australia, Canada and New Zealand, that suggest an overwhelming

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patriarchy and phallocentrism in their practices and policy making, and a reluctance to redress this with affirmative action policy.

<sup>234</sup> Duncan's (1990, p. 28) example of the portrayal of Florence Griffith Joyner on the cover of *Sports Illustrated* and *Time* indicates the way that methods of dominance have become more subtle. Whilst ostensibly, the inclusion of female athletes on the cover is indicative of feminist resistance to patriarchy being successful, the presentation of Griffith Joyner in a sexualised way incorporates that resistance.

<sup>235</sup> Bruce (1998, p. 1) reports that the more sexist and overtly negative characterisations of female athletes in the media through the 1970s and 1980s may be dropping, but there are still a number of subtle mechanisms of maintaining ambivalence toward female athletes.

<sup>236</sup> Both Lenskyj (1998) and Mikosza and Phillips (1999) report on the relative coverage of female and male sports in the Australian media as percentages of total sport coverage. Messner (1992, pp. 164-165, 214 n. 24) has reported on similar research in America and Hargreaves (1994, pp. 193-198) reports on gender imbalances in the media in Britain, including a section on the representation of female journalists. It is not surprising to find that male sport and male journalists dominate media coverage.

<sup>237</sup> It is important to report that Bruce's study demonstrated that women viewers do not necessarily take up the hierarchy suggested by commentary and programming. Women may resist this hierarchy and use the maleness of the commentary as a site of empowerment. Hence, just because a media presentation trivialises or denigrates female athleticism, it is not necessary that the viewer is disempowered by this presentation (1998, p. 2). This is expanded upon in a later section of this chapter.

<sup>238</sup> According to Halbert and Latimer the trivialisation and stereotyping is most evident on those occasions when women and men compete together. In the *Battle of the Sexes* tennis match between Jimmy Connors and Martina Navratilova, all these forms of trivialisation were evident in the commentary. But perhaps the worst is that which is dressed up as chivalry; "it's really hard when you play with men your whole life you don't want to slam the ball at the girl. You've got to be a little gentlemanly" (1994, p. 306). Not only are the two players gender marked by different descriptors (men/girl) but the man does not try his hardest. I vividly remember watching one of these made for television contests between Jerry West and a female basketballer who destroyed West in a game of donkey. But the defeat was trivialised by the constant mock-surprised looks between West and the male commentator. It was as if West was being gallant to lose.

<sup>239</sup> Birrell and Cole's article on the media's treatment of the transsexual tennis player, Renee Richards, demonstrates how the treatment was framed by the idea that women's tennis was inferior to men's tennis. So, media support for Richards' 'liberal right' to participate masked the desire to see anybody beat the female tennis players, even a transsexual. Whilst the female tennis players had legitimate concerns about the effects of 40 years of male corporeal socialisation, their opposition was ridiculed as being anti-liberal, conservative and cowardly (1994, p. 227).

<sup>240</sup> The example cited by Boutilier and San Giovanni of the female marathoner, Grete Waitz completing her world record New York City Marathon in 1979 just as the television credits were rolling over the screen is emblematic of such ignorance (1994, p. 187)

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<sup>241</sup> Frank Deford suggests that the trend in women's sports, such as gymnastics, ice skating and tennis towards the production of younger champions makes it easier to trivialise women's sport. When young girls can excel at these sports, the sports can be dismissed as child's play (1997, p. 63). Moreso, such dismissal also occurs when adult women are reproduced by the media as girls. So all female sport may be treated as non-serious.

<sup>242</sup> Kolnes (1995, p. 67) argues that this image allows the needs of patriarchy to be married to the desires of capitalism. Hence, the sexualisation of the female athlete becomes more important as the athlete becomes more public, and there are greater economic interests involved. Harris' study of the advertising campaigns that were designed to attract women to European Championship soccer matches in 1996 suggested that, whilst the adverts depicted women who knew something about football, they did not depict them as players. So, even in trying to attract a female audience, Harris concludes that "while the boys go out to play, the girls are still expected to lie back and think of England" (1999, pp. 8, 9).

<sup>243</sup> One of the most troubling photographs described by Duncan was of six Romanian gymnasts bending over to receive the congratulations of six Chinese gymnasts. The shot, taken from behind, gives viewers intimate access to the gymnasts whilst also conveying how small and child-like their bodies are. As Duncan explains, "This is a potentially dangerous combination because it sexualizes a child image and gives viewers visual power over that image. This sense of visual power is reinforced by the submissiveness of the gymnasts' postures..." (1990, p. 34).

<sup>244</sup> Duncan suggests that photography is a powerful medium for presenting viewpoints because of the perceived realism of the photograph. This realism occurs because the viewer ignores how shots are posed and touched up, what shots are displayed and what shots are ignored in the magazine (1990, p. 23).

<sup>245</sup> Perhaps the best indicator that females have been successfully appropriated by the maleness of the sports calendar is the defense by some female athletes that such calendars are acceptable if they are 'done tastefully.' As reported by Starkman (1999), one female athlete supported these calendars on the basis they were artistic and analogous to an "architect putting up a picture of a building they've drawn." The athlete has not only ignored the objectification apparent in her own comments, but also the way that art and taste has been dominated by male judgements.

<sup>246</sup> Mikosza and Phillips (1999) contrast the soft-porn of the *Golden Girls* Calendars with the artistic photography of naked male and female athletes in a photo-journalism magazine, *In Black and White*. The obvious differences are that in the latter there is no discontinuity between the athletic pose and femininity. The female athlete is pictured in action demonstrating muscularity, strength, power, aesthetic beauty and agility. This demonstrates a possibility for resistance to dominant stereotypes by female athletes. Further the female athlete's gaze is neither averted nor inviting and so the athlete is posed as gazing back at the viewer. Finally, the emphasis on certain body parts is made for aesthetic and athletic reasons and not heterosexual tastes. Kuhn (cited by Mason, 1992, p. 2) explains this as the difference between pin-up pornography, where the male consumer is invited to objectify and consume the woman, and auto-erotic pornography, where the woman remains endlessly elusive of male consumption. The Golden Girl's Calendars are examples of the former type of pornography where the inviting or averted looks of the

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athletes/ models “produce a particular position for the male spectator to occupy” (Mason, 1992, pp. 2, 3), that allows the spectator to maintain a patriarchal view of femininity. Lenskyj’s commentary on the calendar produced by the lesbian softball league, the Notsos, in 1993, also demonstrates how the use of a tool of male heterosexism, the soft-porn calendar, is undermined when parodied by an oppressed group (1994, p. 368). Interestingly, in 1999, the Australian Women’s Soccer team, the Matildas, produced a nude calendar with at least one potentially ‘homosexual’ pose. Perhaps this was a sarcastic response to the media’s traditional sniggering about women playing a male sport.

<sup>247</sup> In a later article, Lenskyj looks at the depiction of females in the Australian sports magazine, *Inside Sports*. She found many of the same forms of ignorance, sexualisation and trivialisation that plague most coverage of female sports. But one pictorial section covering women’s rugby showed them such that “no attempt was made to glamorize or sexualize the images” (1998, p. 24). At first glance, this appears to be progress. But when it is recalled that women’s rugby is trivialised by its contrast with femininity so that women rugby players are deviant others, and that this magazine had virtually no other pictorial coverage of women athletes, though it had a lot of female models in athletic gear, it contains a different message to similar coverage of male sport.

<sup>248</sup> Both Burroughs, Ashburn and Seebom (1995) and Lenskyj (1995) discuss the other news story in women’s sport from 1994, the claim by a heterosexual female cricketer that she was discriminated against because of her heterosexuality. Whilst the Australian Women’s Cricket team had been World Champions at the past two tournaments, it was only when their heterosexuality was questioned that they could get any substantial press coverage. As one netball official remarked, “she hoped netball could find its own lesbian scandal” (1995, p. 275).

<sup>249</sup> In a very interesting example of feminist standpoint theory, Dorothy Smith talks about the sociological theories on housework. She suggests that women’s work (housework and childcare) is done to liberate men for the public world. The more successful the woman, the more invisible she becomes to men. Yet the activity of women’s housework is understood using conceptual models based on men’s understanding of work and leisure. But this description opens up a ‘line of fault’ between the male terms and the female experience of housework. It is this line of fault that feminist standpoint theory captures. As Harding states; “How would our understanding of ... warfare... be expanded and transformed if it were structured by questions and concepts arising from those activities assigned predominantly to women that make possible the ways men participate in... warfare?” (1989, p. 195). How would war be described economically, politically, in literature and poetry, if a women’s standpoint was included in the data of investigation?

<sup>250</sup> Lloyd shares this skepticism about the turn to feminist anti-rationalism as a politically liberating movement. She states:

My concern is that feminists may, in the name of deconstructive strategies, be perpetuating a symbolic use of sexual difference which it would be better to expose and leave behind....Feminist affirmation of the symbolic content of *woman* may risk perpetuating that contingent alignment [of reason and maleness] with continued, deleterious effects for women. What is appropriate

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in the diagnosis of the problem does not necessarily carry over into an appropriate response to its repercussions (1984, pp. x-xi).

<sup>251</sup> Eisenstein describes the extension of this problem is that it can produce a form of biological essentialism; that some notion of women's biology makes them inherently superior to men as care-givers (cited in Martin, 1994, p. 633). Brook (1999, p. 7) agrees, and suggests that the early eco-feminist links between women, nature and childbirth, allowed for the endorsement of women's exclusion from public life.

<sup>252</sup> My insertion.

<sup>253</sup> Seller describes the shift in feminist consciousness about abortion in the seventies. As women developed the realisation that they could control the roles they fill, rather than their destinies being set by biology, they recognised that their lives and their bodies should be under their control. This changed the debate about abortion from one of crime, to one of women's rights. For Seller: "None of this could have happened if the unspeakable had not become speakable" (1988, p. 179). The continued attempts by legislators to treat abortion as a crime which is realistically covered by 'universal' legislation (that is, not gender-specific legislation) maintains someone else's control over women's bodies.

<sup>254</sup> I would suggest that elements of Iris Young's paper "Throwing Like a Girl: A Phenomenology of Feminine Body Comportment, Motility and Spatiality" (1980) convey this anger. Young, in describing the source of women being physically handicapped, points accusingly at patriarchal culture which trains women to be "physically inhibited, confined, positioned, and objectified" (1980, p. 152). Both Young's hours spent practicing a feminine walk (1980, p. 154) and Stoll's inhibition caused by the belief that exercise would cause her "female parts to fall out" (Stoll and Beller, 1994, p. 77) express anger at their oppressors.

<sup>255</sup> The difference between this later version of feminist standpoint as autobiographical, and earlier versions of feminist standpoint theory is that the later version does not permit a feminist objective reality. It does not permit feminist realists to say that if a woman does not experience childbirth either as oppressive (gender feminism), or as liberating (early feminist standpoint theory), then she is suffering from a false consciousness (Seller, 1988, p. 176). She is unaware of what she *really* feels. This is as oppressive and dominating as patriarchal realism. As Stanley and Wise argue "... if we do not have that experience [of oppression], we are not [oppressed]" (cited in Seller, 1988, p. 175; my insertions). Women are oppressed when they become conscious that the description of oppression fits their experience.

<sup>256</sup> My insertion.

<sup>257</sup> Lloyd charges de Beauvoir with this type of modification to Sartre's existential theory. Transcendence is defined in opposition to the immanence of the body. Females are metaphorically associated with the body. Therefore, transcendence involves the downgrading of traits associated with the feminine. Human excellence is associated with traits and virtues which have been linked to maleness. Therefore, women must become more like men (1984, p. 104). Later readings of de Beauvoir, have refuted this reading by Lloyd (Simons, 1992; Andrew, 1998).

<sup>258</sup> Rorty agrees that the abandonment of all dualisms is likely a step which will play into the oppressor's (the realist's) hands as the oppressed still need to make a contrast between

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“the good ‘x’s’ and the bad ‘non-x’s’” in order to change the patterns of discourse. The dualisms that the oppressed person must confront are the Platonic distinctions between absolute and particular which have become such solid parts of Western common sense (1996, p. 34).

<sup>259</sup> My insertion.

<sup>260</sup> Code suggests that the care and empathy involved in maintaining friendships is probably a better example of a trust paradigm of knowledge, than maternal relationships, because friendship involves symmetry in the relationship which the mother-child relationship cannot (1991, p. 96).

<sup>261</sup> Richard Rorty, in a recent book, suggests that relativism is a charge made by realists about those philosophers who eschew the tradition in thought that contends that there is some underlying reality to how things are. Relativists, according to their realist critics, make the claim that what realists suggest has been discovered in terms of a foundational and objective reality, is actually made or invented within the language game that the realist has chosen to play (1996, pp. 31-47).

The problem of this characterisation for Rorty is that it leads to the awkward question for those who are labelled relativists; Has the relativist discovered or invented the fact that what was considered objective, is *really* subjective? For Rorty, the theorist who is labelled a relativist should avoid the distinction between found and made altogether. To do this, they must repudiate the terms of the debate used by the realist; they should avoid all distinctions between the absolute and the relative. These theorists must not allow themselves to be labelled relativists, because that description accepts that there is something other than relativism, some Platonic absolutes with which relativism is compared. For Rorty, talk of absolutes is a metaphysical fantasy that is not needed to buttress the more useful terms such as rationality and justice. These terms can be adequately described within the local dialects of community members (1996, pp. 31-34). Harding (1989, p. 197) explains by suggesting that the charge of relativism is a political, rather than a logical, issue as male epistemologies would suggest.

<sup>262</sup> Code goes further by suggesting that women get caught in a self-fulfilling prophesy of inexpertness. They live their lives according to what others, ‘who know better’, tell them their experiences should be (1991, p. 177). And later she describes the experience of the woman who is continually reinforced as inexperienced. The pervasiveness of the male disputing the authority of the female experience means that the woman is conditioned to consider her experiences as inauthentic, subjective, irrational, and not useful (1991, pp. 216-217)

<sup>263</sup> Code has no sense of insecurity at being labelled a relativist. She believes that a provisional relativism prevents the reductionism, which plagues objective knowledge by allowing for “the interplay of common threads *and* of specific variations” in knowledge (1991, p. 19).

<sup>264</sup> Code states:

‘Gossip’, ‘old wives’ tales’, ‘women’s lore’, ‘witchcraft’ are just some of the labels patriarchal societies attach to women’s accumulated knowledge and *wisdom*. Yet the knowledge in question stands up to the most stringent tests that even the objectivists require. It is testable in practice... Its theoretical soundness is evident in its practical applications (1991, p. 68).

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<sup>265</sup> Perhaps the most compelling example, which Code discusses, is her account of *The Poverty Game* in Chapter Seven of her book. She discusses the way that a game, organised to reproduce the autobiographical experiences of being a woman on welfare with little control over their lives, made her aware of how certain speaker's experiences are ignored as authoritative because of the material realities of their lives (1991, pp. 265-313). She states about poor women generally: "...their epistemic situation... is a stark revelation of the mechanisms of power and politics implicated in all processes of knowledge". These mechanisms both determine what gets studied and what does not, and who has the capacity to be regarded as knowers (1991, p. 267).

<sup>266</sup> Following from Thompson (1989, pp. 26-30), I will suggest that the distinction between gender and sex reduces the focus of feminists from the issue of male dominance. The distinction makes no difference to that dominance.

<sup>267</sup> These experiential stories are traditionally undervalued by 'objective scientists'. Gilman's depiction of the rest cure prescribed by the eminent physician of the time, Dr. S. Weir Mitchell, in the poem *The Yellow Wallpaper*, drew scorn from the doctor. The doctor felt that the experiences of his patients were superfluous to the analysis of the treatment. He did not require this information, merely the obedience of his patients (Code, 1991, p. 211). In this section of her book, Code details the significant relationships between madness and femininity throughout history that prevented the evaluation of female stories as useful knowledge. And females did generally not recapture such madness as knowledge because it was positioned within the male discipline of madness as irrelevant. It was silenced out of the discourse (1991, pp. 209-215). Code also investigates the history of women in medicine, to show that medical discourse constructed a body of knowledge which effectively precluded women from being authoritative knowers (1991, pp. 226-241).

<sup>268</sup> Whether this exclusion was deliberately done to maintain male dominance, or whether it was a contingent result of male dominance is a question that is difficult to answer. I suggest in Chapter One that the men, who formally excluded women through the formation of rules and competitions, probably had little concern for women in these formations.

<sup>269</sup> My insertions.

<sup>270</sup> These quotes are taken by the authors from an article by Heymann (1990, pp. 15-17 cited in Disch and Kane, 1996).

<sup>271</sup> Whilst I do not want to trivialise Olson's predicament, Mary Jollimore recounts the story of a woman journalist who covered the Toronto Blue Jays in the 1970s. When faced with a naked player who was trying to attract her attention, she said, "My, that looks like a penis only smaller." (cited in Smith, 1999, p. 261).

<sup>272</sup> The subsequent response to Olson was amazing. The owner of the Patriots, Victor Kiam, called Olson a "classic bitch" and added that the players could not stand her. Editorials, reports and letters in newspapers suggested that Olson had courted disaster when agreeing to cover the locker room. Fans threatened Olson with phone calls and letters, including death warnings. At football games, Olson was showered with beer and shouted at, to the point where her newspaper had to reassign her to cover basketball and hockey. This also did not relieve the situation, and Olson eventually transferred to Australia to cover sports (Disch and Kane, 1996, pp. 278, 279).

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<sup>273</sup> The danger is that this case may be used as a method of opposing possible alliances between male and female journalists. As Boutilier and San Giovanni suggest: “Baseball clubs, faced with this media intrusion, may decide to adopt a more restrictive policy of access for all reporters. This would, as it has in the past, divide reporters and may cause the men to blame the women...” (1994, p. 202)

<sup>274</sup> Steven Schacht looks at how the rugby field, and also the after-match rugby celebration in the clubrooms, is another site where male dominance is reinforced in sport (1996, pp. 550-565). As an example, he looks at the serenades sung to the ‘rugby queen’ (normally a girlfriend or acquaintance of a player) at the after-match celebration. The queens are often forced by players into a position, for example on a player’s shoulders, from which she cannot escape. The serenade reminds the women that she is subordinate to the male athletes; in other words it is a way that male rugby teams reinforce male dominance by the sexual objectification and threat of violence to women. As Schacht explains:

Due to the coercion and force used and that some women cry and become visibly upset, this ritual is a psychological, almost physical, form of gang rape. For the moment, through the rugby queen’s “compliance” in showing her breasts or becoming upset, masculinity appears relationally omnipotent....

... like many games men play, it [singing rugby songs] is also serious business. Through the “playful” singing of this song, the players use their rugby queen as a conspicuous medium to relationally create a “special” male bond of superiority (1996, p. 561).

<sup>275</sup> Kane and Disch explain the ways that the majority of the sports media responded so as to maintain the division of power between males and females in this institution. Two categories of response were evident, both of which maintained the gendered division of labour. The first category suggested faults in Olson which denied her, and all critical female journalists, epistemic authority. In this category, Olson either provoked the incident by being in an inappropriate environment and peering excessively, or overreacted to the incident in a typically feminine way. Both characterisations can be contrasted with male objectivity in sport reporting. The second category suggested a systemic breakdown of either the female apologetic, on behalf of Olson, or the professional respect for journalists, on behalf of the players. Both characterisations ignore that the construction of the gendered relations between male players and female journalists is done by males to reinforce male dominance (1993, pp. 340-348).

<sup>276</sup> Duncan and Brummett (1993, pp. 57-70) talks about the types of ironic and sarcastic redescriptions made by female viewers towards the preferred readings contained in telecasts of male sports. Such irony empowers the viewer as a critic of the male commentary about sport. The authors suggest that “By remarking on the awkwardness, arrogance, and stupidity of football players, the women symbolically reduced the game to an absurd, comical spectacle, an event unworthy of great seriousness” (1993, p. 69). But such empowerment is experienced privately, or separately, and not as part of a public forum.

<sup>277</sup> Whilst I will not go on to discuss the importance of the heterosexual matrix to the maintenance of male power in society and in sport, this has been a significant topic in feminist analyses of sport. I do not have the space to devote sections to this important

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topic. I will use Disch and Kane's explanation of it, in terms of Lisa Olson, to inadequately cover it. The authors suggest:

...sport serves as an affirmation of what Judith Butler calls the heterosexual matrix (1990, chap2). We mean by this that sport constructs not only the gender order but binary sexual difference as well; in turn, the certainties it affirms go beyond gender complementarity to the more precarious fiction of oppositional sexual orientation...

Our argument... will seem counterintuitive to feminists who take for granted that gender is to sex as culture to nature. Indeed, Butler refutes precisely this assumption that gender is the cultural reflection of a natural sexual binary. Instead she argues that gender designates the social practices by which that binary is made to seem inherent in nature. Butler introduces the concept of the heterosexual matrix in order to disclose what she calls the "compulsory order of sex/gender/desire," the cultural logic that makes binary sex difference seem to be the cause of the social effects by which it is constructed, that stabilizes masculine and feminine gender identification, and that regulates the orientation of desire in such a way as to establish heterosexuality as the natural and inevitable outcome of normal psychological development (1990, 6-7)... [B]y her [Olson's] intrusion into the locker room, she destabilizes the opposition between masculinity as that which is both penetrating and impenetrable and femininity as that which is receptive and deferential in the face of male power (1996, p. 282).

Several authors have shown how this heterosexual matrix has been used to stereotype female athletes as either feminine (passive and receptive) or lesbian (powerful), and so maintain the exclusive control of sport in the hands of men (Bryson, 1987; Theberge, 1987; Lenskyj, 1990, 1994; Hall, 1987).

<sup>278</sup> The authors outline the following rules;

- 1) The female reporter will be hazed and must accept this 'harassment' in good humour
- 2) The female reporter must never initiate looking at the male athletes. They must only ever be invited to look.
- 3) The female reporter must maintain eye-to-eye contact, and must take every precaution to avoid any other display by male athletes.
- 4) The female reporter should never linger (Disch and Kane, 1996, p. 301).

<sup>279</sup> As an example of deference, Kane and Disch describe the relationship between another female journalist, Christine Brennan, and the Washington Redskins' player, Dave Butz. Butz acted as a protective 'big brother' to Brennan keeping the players in line and chastising them for excessive harassment of Brennan. In the relationship, the female critic is repositioned as reliant on the protection of men. She reaffirms the dominance of men and the child-like status of women (1993, p. 344).

<sup>280</sup> Disch and Kane go on to discuss the significance of race to this experience. Black men 'gained' the support of whites even though they harassed a white woman, because the black's indictment both normalised male sport and black sexuality; both of which could be said to oppress blacks. Therefore, the support was a dual-edged sword for blacks. As Disch and Kane argue: "This construction [of support for the Patriot athletes] worked

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simultaneously to confirm the biological basis of male supremacy and to specify elite white males' privileged position over the black men they mark as violent and the white women they mark as inherently vulnerable" (1996, p. 287, my insertion).

<sup>281</sup> This may further reinforce the heterosexual dominance in male sport. How could women resist the temptation to look at such exemplars of maleness, when given the opportunity?

<sup>282</sup> *Live and Sweaty* was a weekly sports comedy show that was telecast live on the ABC (Australian Broadcasting Commission) on Friday nights around 10.30. The ABC is no longer producing it. As a late night show on ABC it rated moderately well, and produced a passionate cult following among its watchers. For those readers not fortunate enough to see it, a television show from Britain that is similar is *Fantasy World Cup*. Both shows challenged popular wisdom about sport, by producing discourses about sporting events from a variety of non-sporting sources.

<sup>283</sup> The Brownlow medal is the award given to the best and fairest player in the Australian Football League for the season. It is presented at a glittering award ceremony on the Monday before the Grand Final, and is covered extensively by the media. Much media attention is paid, not only to the football players, but to the females who accompany them to the ceremony.

<sup>284</sup> This is a tightrope that the female performer must walk. For, as Brook explains, "performance work that overdisplays the female body, even for parody, is easily coopted back into the male gaze" (1999, p. 132).

<sup>285</sup> It is interesting that a major force in reasserting the dominance of men, and the exclusion of women, in the discourse about Australian Rules Football has been another comedy show, *The Footy Show*. Aside from direct attacks on female involvement in football (when Elaine Canty, a respected journalist and lawyer was placed on the tribunal, the male experts agreed that she could not judge because she had never played the game. Defences of her appointment suggested her similarity to male tribunal members who also did not play the game. Never was it suggested that Canty could add something useful to the tribunal as a woman.), there were also indirect attacks. One of the most popular segments on the show was *Streetwork* where the show's sex symbol, Sam Newman, went to the streets to discuss football with the general public. The segment regularly becomes a continual stream of abuse toward the public yet it becomes particularly disparaging when women appear. Women appear as either the shrill-voiced, football-haters that they are meant to be as feminists, or the hypnotised and powerless objects of Sam's excessive masculine sexual desires. Caught between irrational (unAustralian) and undesiring (unfeminine), obedient silence may seem an attractive option. Male expertise is demonstrated as the contrast to these eccentric, female viewing positions. Following MacKinnon (1987), it seems that the football space is a particularly gendered space, where just being female exempts you from rational comment.

<sup>286</sup> Amongst many examples that could be taken from Australian television, both Jana Wendt and Naomi Robson were very competent news reporters, presenters and journalists who were consistently presented by the television networks they worked for as females who were 'worth a look at'. Elle McFeast parodied this focus on the attractiveness of

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women reporters by revealing that "...her ambition is to be the first woman on television who's over 40" (Cook and Jennings, 1995, p. 7).

<sup>287</sup> Trujilo discusses the use of the introductory music videos in *Monday Night Football* as "[t]he most explicit sexual objectification of the male body" (1995, p. 417). The female rap group, *Salt N' Pepa* perform their hit "Whatta Man" in the company of male athletes lifting weights. The singers wander through the gym, fondling the athletes, and swinging their pelvises provocatively. Interspersed throughout the performance are quick flashes of male players which were explicitly sexual. Trujilo concludes: "Of course, it was the women who sexualized the male bodies as objects..., but it was sexualized in a traditional (and hence 'safe') heterosexual context" (1995, p. 417).

<sup>288</sup> Brook asks ironically, "can a feminist indulge in the carnal pleasures of football without betraying the sisterhood?" She then goes on to explain how this objectification can resist the patriarchal nature of male sport (1997).

<sup>289</sup> In no way do I wish to suggest that the situation of Olson is similar to that of McFeast. McFeast had the security of (probably) male sound crews and camera operators to help resist the threat. What I am suggesting is that McFeast was able to 'peek excessively', that is, to make critical comments about the maleness of sports, by using a comic, rather than a critical, mode.

<sup>290</sup> Lindley (1995), in a comic lecture about Australian Rules Football commented that she hoped the players would never go into the types of shorts worn by American basketballers because she liked seeing her footballers in tight shorts. The football press picked up on this, and some female journalists strenuously made the point that they enjoyed football for the skill and athleticism, rather than for the good backsides. Lindley responded by suggesting that she too enjoyed the skill and athleticism, but also the good backsides of the players. The story is interesting in two ways; firstly, it shows how earnestly sports reporters deny the eroticism of sport and how staunchly 'serious' female sports reporters take up this (necessary by male, heterosexual standards) denial, and secondly, it may demonstrate the pressure on female journalists not to eroticise their workplace for fear that an erotic perspective undermines their 'objectivity'.

<sup>291</sup> Fairchild gives the example of how the story of the female athlete, Gwen Torrence, allows us to expand our community by including a marginalised voice. After winning the 1992 Olympic Gold Medal, Torrence was asked what she was thinking of on the podium. She replied that she was thinking of her young son, the times she had to leave him to train, the help she needed from family and friends to care for her son, and the support given to her by her husband in taking care of the household. This reply demonstrates the different positioning of male and female athletes. Female athletes must typically also take care of the home. Only extraordinarily gifted and assisted athletes can relinquish those demands. But the demands remain a psychological concern for even the most elite female athlete who is also a mother. Torrence reminds us that "There is more to achieving athletic success than just the performance recorded on the track" (1994, pp. 69-70). Importantly, such stories not only break down the distorted assumptions about female athletes held in the male discourse. They also produce an alternate picture that can be taken up as a replacement for the distorted reality. With respect to the goal of expanding the number of possible realities of sport, this makes sense of Messner and Sabo's (1990, p. 14) and Hall's

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(1985) claims that the positions that come from members of an oppressed group may give a 'truer' picture of their reality, without wishing to universalise that reality. As Fairchild argues: "Thinking from the perspective of women's lives, for women as well as for men, will be strange because we have not previously tried to think this way" (1994, p. 70).

<sup>292</sup> According to Frye, "...there probably is really no distinction, in the end, between imagination and courage" (1983, p. 80 cited in Rorty, 1991a, p. 6). The imaginative speaker steps outside the boundaries of rationally acceptable ideas. She produces words and phrases which are not coherent with what is accepted as rationality; according to Rorty, she courageously produces beliefs which cannot fit "...with the rest of the beliefs of those who currently control life-chances and logical space... Such courage is indistinguishable from the imagination it takes to hear oneself as the spokesperson of a merely possible community, rather than as a lonely, and perhaps crazed, outcast from an actual one" (1991a, p. 6). This is the courage of a person unwilling to continue to be oppressed by the discourse of the dominant society, and willing to stand apart from the members of the dominant society.

<sup>293</sup> See pp. 91, 92 in Chapter Three.

<sup>294</sup> Harvey and Sparks investigate the emergence of 19<sup>th</sup> century gymnastics in France as an illustration of Foucault's notion that modernity is characterised by a concern with the life processes of the individual. Whilst they don't deal greatly with the gendered aspect of that concern, they do state:

... a politics of the management of the body was demonstrated (a) initially in the concurrent policies of repression of gymnastics associations and exploitation of gymnastics in military training and (b) subsequently in the merger of gymnastics, military training, and education in the Third Republic.

This policy... was coupled with a repressive policy for females that proscribed their involvement in active sports.... In the administration of "men and things," women factored into post-revolutionary France primarily on the basis of their reproductive capacities. As De Beauvoir (1989, p. 120) pointed out, abortion was regarded as a "crime against the state" during this period at the same time as divorce was rendered illegal.... Clearly the politicization of the body in France was guided by a politics of gender (1991, p. 183).

In a very interesting discussion of late 19<sup>th</sup> century male bodybuilding, Vertinsky suggests that this form of activity provoked great anxiety about the stability of the male gender. Part of the anxiety was due to the idea that excessive muscular bulk could not be put to any particular use. As Vertinsky comments, "while the body could be shaped and reshaped, altered to different purposes and tasks, and changed with time and taste, it always had to be done with the needs of a socially efficient and moral world in mind" (1999, p. 7). This idea will be used in the concluding section of this chapter to discuss the transgressive opportunities open to, and closed to, female athletes.

<sup>295</sup> See pp. 92, 112 in Chapter Three.

<sup>296</sup> See pp. 124-127 in Chapter Three.

<sup>297</sup> Whilst this thesis will only touch on the history of this issue, there is an interesting literature that deals with the anxiety that is produced by the female athletic body. Vertinsky (1999, pp. 1-24) suggests that contemporary unrest with female bodybuilders in the late

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20<sup>th</sup> century mirrors the unrest with the female athletic body of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Cole (1993, pp. 90, 91) also explains that the female athlete has a history “embedded in suspicion, bodily/biological examination, and bodily probes and invasions,” concerned with refuting the border-crossing of gender boundaries.

<sup>298</sup> See pp. 91, 113, 114 in Chapter Three.

<sup>299</sup> See pp. 114- 118 in Chapter Three.

<sup>300</sup> According to Verbrugge, this notion of natural differences between the sexes was also maintained in the gender-segregation of both physical education classes and the organisation of the physical education profession. Women physical educators argued that the ‘emotional make-up’ of females made it necessary to practice physical education free from the emotionality of male sports, and that it was the female instructor who was most able to satisfy this criterion. This ‘conservatism’ ironically allowed for the development of ‘radical and separatist’ ideas about female physical activity that affirmed different values from those of male classes. As she states, “Whether woman teachers calculated its effects or not, conformity bought them independence” (1997, p. 278).

<sup>301</sup> See pp. 118-123 in Chapter Three.

<sup>302</sup> See pp. 114- 115 in Chapter Three.

<sup>303</sup> See pp. 116-118 in Chapter Three.

<sup>304</sup> Brook (1999, p. 111) makes the point that all female athletes present bodies that are resistant to the “identification of femininity with the private and domestic body.” This remains an important point to make about contemporary female sport.

<sup>305</sup> See pp. 121, 122 in Chapter Three.

<sup>306</sup> See pp. 119, 124-127 in Chapter Three.

<sup>307</sup> Thomas Laqueur (1990, pp. 194-207 cited by Vertinsky, 1999, p. 3) argues that “whenever boundaries are threatened, arguments for fundamental sexual differences are shoved into the breach.”

<sup>308</sup> See p. 127 in Chapter Three.

<sup>309</sup> See p. 138 in Chapter Four.

<sup>310</sup> See pp. 138, 169-173 in Chapter Four.

<sup>311</sup> See pp. 167, 173-187 in Chapter Four.

<sup>312</sup> See pp. 223-232 in Chapter Five.

<sup>313</sup> See pp. 213-216, 253-257 in Chapter Five.

<sup>314</sup> See pp. 253-167, 269, 270 in Chapter Five.

<sup>315</sup> As with Fraser’s criticism of Rorty placing feminists on a pedestal, McNeil (1993, pp. 147, 148) makes the point that the utilisation of Foucault by feminists should be guided by the projects undertaken by feminism. Feminism should be the leading partner in this ‘dance’. In her view, “feminism does not require Foucault and women do not need him”, but they may find uses for him.

<sup>316</sup> It will hopefully become evident throughout this chapter that there is a large amount of commonality between the ideas and strategies suggested by Foucault, with those suggested by critics of equality feminism, difference feminists and feminist standpoint theorists.

<sup>317</sup> McHoul and Grace (1993, pp. 73-75) oppose this criticism of Foucault by suggesting that it reduces Foucault’s work on “power to its least interesting dimension”. Foucault was not trying to produce a ‘theory’ of embodiment. He was trying to indicate a relationship

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between knowledge, power and subjectivity, that, in modern times, including a specific art of the human body. But this art of producing the human body, or subjectivity, requires a more complex theory of power and society than Marxist or liberal social theorists had provided. So his object of analysis was to break down the authority of these grand theories and provide a space for others (or himself, at a later stage) to produce a discourse on the patriarchal construction of the female body.

<sup>318</sup> Sawicki explains that Foucault intended to write a history of women's bodies entitled *Woman, Mother and Hysteric*. The work intended to locate the processes through which the woman's body is controlled; that is, "the discourses and practices of 'biopower'" as they apply to specifically female bodies (1999, p. 190).

<sup>319</sup> My insertion.

<sup>320</sup> Both Soper (1993, p. 30) and Newton (1990, pp. 1, 8) suggest that feminists contributed a great deal to the production of a discursive space for the new historicism of Foucault's work. According to Newton, the critique of masculine elitism in Western knowledge, the importance of discourse to the construction of society, sexuality and individual bodies, and the definition of power as less global, and more local and particular, were all feminist ideas that preceded Foucault (1990, p. 8).

<sup>321</sup> Aladjem (1991, p. 1) refers to this as Foucault's humility; a professed "refusal to lead, to judge, or to tell the 'truth'" about the expositions on history and human existence that he wrote about.

<sup>322</sup> Eribon (1991, pp. 156-159) gives a fuller account of the objects of attack for Foucault's work. He suggests that Foucault's initial major work, *The Order of Things*, was particularly aimed at Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, and at Sartre's existential humanism.

<sup>323</sup> I am aware that Dreyfus and Rabinow contributed a chapter of their book on Foucault to an analysis of his structuralist period. I am unable to engage with this chapter, but it is revealing that Foucault considered that he had never been a structuralist, that he had thought of titling *The Order of Things* with "An Archaeology of Structuralism" to demonstrate a counter-reading of structuralism, and that in his words his failure was that he had not sufficiently "resisted the seduction of structuralist vocabulary" (1970 cited in Eribon, 1991, p. 168). In a more vitriolic refusal of structuralism, Foucault continues by stating:

In France some half-witted 'commentators' persist in labeling me a 'structuralist.' I have been unable to get into their tiny minds that I have used none of the methods, concepts, or key terms that characterize structural analysis. (1970, p. xiv cited by McWhorter, 1994, p. 166 n.2)

In a later interview, Foucault goes so far as to say "I don't see who could be more of an anti-structuralist than myself" (1980, p. 114 cited by McWhorter, 1994, p. 159).

<sup>324</sup> According to McHoul and Grace (1993, pp. 43-56), four things are important when understanding Foucault's analysis of discontinuities. Firstly, his various analyses of the discontinuities of specific discourses do not become an overarching theory or change, nor a list of suggested techniques of change. They are documentations of specific transformations. Secondly, his documentations should not be confused with 'great mind' theories of discursive change. He considers such theories as the result of

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the discursive conditions of possibilities at a specific site. The genius is produced in the discourse, rather than being the producer of the discourse, at the site of what is allowed to be said. Thirdly, the subject is produced through the various techniques and rules of discourse. The discourse sets up spaces for subjects to be formed; ‘the patient’, ‘the doctor’, ‘the scientist’ are all set up via the relations of force within the discourse. Fourthly, discursive analysis is not a chronology of any of these objects of study of the humanities and social sciences, but is an analysis of discourse. As McHoul and Grace suggest: “Foucault wants to describe and analyse the *dependencies* that exist *within* discourses..., *between* discourses... and *between* discourses and the broader forms of socio-political change in which they arise” (1993, p. 48). Hence, the notion of discontinuity-in-general (an essence of discontinuity) does not replace the continuity of the human mind or nature. Discourse exists as a centreless web, such that discursive change cannot be thought of as having a single cause. For Foucault, each specific discourse has a complex process of emergence, continuance and transformation such that the relations of force at each stage can be analysed and described, and the techniques that produce knowledge, power and subjectivity at any stage may also be analysed. Such analysis leads to spaces for resistance to the unity imposed by official discourses.

<sup>325</sup> According to Eribon (1991, pp. 164, 165), Foucault does not deny or reject history, but merely the way that History has been used as a philosophical crutch to the great themes of modern life; progress, human liberty, continuity and social freedom.

<sup>326</sup> The notion of discontinuities between and within discourses for Foucault meant that in writing about knowledge, he expressed the need to talk about historically *specific* discourses which had distinct techniques and power relations from both discourses in other disciplines, and from other historical periods of its own discourse (Bell, 1994, p. 11, my emphasis). Foucault’s archaeologies attempt to write a history of the rules of formation and conditions of possibility that allow for the production of those statements that function with the status of ‘truth’ at specific moments in history (Grosz, 1990b, p. 81).

<sup>327</sup> Fox (1998) proceeds to criticise this for the potential it has to produce power as total, and/or power as vacuous. Both criticisms will be answered in the section on resistance and ethics, later in this chapter.

<sup>328</sup> As Foucault explains, “certain great themes such as “humanism” can be used to any end whatever” (1986b, p. 374).

<sup>329</sup> For Shumway (1989, p. 157), this distinguishes Foucault from those social critics that his work emerged from. Foucault did not deny the importance of distinctions of truth and falsity. What he denied was *his* ability to decide whether these distinctions were properly made or not. So his purpose was not to make these distinctions, but to demonstrate the procedures and effects that arise from how others have made such distinctions.

<sup>330</sup> According to Grosz, this is also Foucault’s criticism of psychoanalysis. In addition both Marxism and psychoanalysis rely on a view of power that is repressive (1990b, p. 83)

<sup>331</sup> Foucault explains that his genealogical analyses dealt with relationships of power, which should not be confused with relationships of domination. The former exists when different partners in the relationship have strategies available to them that alter the

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relationship. In the latter state of domination, the relations between partners have congealed (1988, p. 3).

<sup>332</sup> As Foucault suggests:

If power was anything but repressive, if it never did anything but say no, do you really believe that we should manage to obey it? What gives power its hold, what makes it accepted, is quite simply the fact that it does not weigh like a force which says no, but that it runs through, it produces things, it induces pleasure, it forms knowledge, it produces discourse; it must be considered as a productive network which runs through the entire social body (1978, p. 36 cited by Grosz, 1990b, p. 85)

<sup>333</sup> Foucault goes further by suggesting that the two “diseases of power”, fascism and Stalinism, use the same ideas and techniques of control and coercion found in the political rationality of Western liberalism (1982, p. 230).

<sup>334</sup> However, Foucault does acknowledge that pragmatically, the liberal rights discourse is the one that is available and established in contemporary political debates. Hence, it cannot be easily discarded and replaced (Fraser, 1989, p. 57).

<sup>335</sup> Fraser strongly criticises the idea of the ‘irreducible body’ in Foucault. She suggests that the choice to make the body irreducible is a political one by Foucault, no different to the choice by liberal theorists to make the human subject irreducible (1989, pp. 59-66). Whilst not in identical form, this issue will be taken up in the concluding section of the chapter which deals with gendered notions of resistant bodies.

<sup>336</sup> Foucault suggests that the nineteenth century transformation of the sodomite (a person who acts in a particular way) into the homosexual (a subjectivity), produced a new type of person. Foucault states: “the sodomite had been a temporary aberration: the homosexual was now a species.” (1976, p. 43). The homosexual species was produced through a number of strategies of power-knowledge that objectified and subjugated. Now named as a species, the homosexual was in a position to resist these discourses.

<sup>337</sup> Foucault is never concerned with assessing the epistemic contents of discourses, but reveals the procedures for knowledge production, and the disciplinary and institutional effects of that production (Fraser, 1989, p. 21).

<sup>338</sup> Foucault links the modern multiplication of sexualities to a particular point of emergence in the Western culture, the advent of individual Catholic confession (Shumway, 1989, p. 143). Harvey and Sparks give a wonderful description of the emergence of widespread confessional techniques and pastoral power in the modern period (1991, pp. 167, 168).

<sup>339</sup> Donnelly goes on to criticise this shift in Foucault, away from a historical specificity and toward an epochal generality. Whilst genealogy is concerned with thick description and historical detail, the epochal statements of Foucault are drained of specific contents or contexts. Hence, his epochal statements can be accused of the types of totalisations that were the objects of Foucault’s own critiques. When Foucault offers, “is it surprising that prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals, which all resemble prisons?” (*Discipline and Punish*, p. 228 cited by Donnelly, 1992, p. 201), he can be accused of substituting generality for specificity. Foucault’s response would be that the ‘carceral society’ is a combination of specific mechanisms of control. He states:

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These tactics were invented and organised from the starting points of local conditions and particular needs. They took shape in a piecemeal fashion, prior to any class strategy designed to weld them into vast, coherent ensembles. It should also be noted that these ensembles don't consist in a homogenisation, but rather a complex play of supports in mutual engagement [of] different mechanisms of power which retain all their specific character (Foucault, 1980a, p. 159 cited by Lacombe, 1996, p. 338)

This criticism of the epochal strain in Foucault may be more appropriate for those who have utilised Foucault's notions of disciplinary power and normalisation, whilst ignoring his notion of resistance. For Foucault, the possibilities of constraint and agency go together (Lacombe, 1996, p. 332).

<sup>340</sup> This is an important extension of Foucault, made by feminists such as Bartky (1988). According to Bartky, the disciplining of women reveals that the invisible gaze can be suspected from any number of sources. Hence, the panoptic gaze is disseminated throughout the social body, in both institutional and non-institutional spaces.

<sup>341</sup> As Foucault suggested, "Sex was not something one simply judged; it was a thing one administered... it called for management procedures; it had to be taken charge of by analytical discourses (1976, p. 24).

<sup>342</sup> Michael Donnelly (1992, p. 199) explains the link between the two poles of development of the governmentality of human life. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault investigates the disciplining and optimisation of the individual body to produce a docile but useful machine, integrated into economic systems of production. In Foucault's terms, this was achieved "by the procedures of power that characterized the *disciplines*: an *anatomo-politics of the human body*." The other pole, investigated mostly in *The History of Sexuality, Volume One*, looked at the species-body, utilising concepts of propagation, birth and mortality, health, life expectancy and longevity, and investigating and controlling the conditions that affect these things. Again, according to Foucault, the supervision of the species-body was "effected through an entire series of interventions and *regulatory controls: a biopolitics of the population*." (Quotes from Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume One*, cited in Donnelly, 1992, p. 199)

<sup>343</sup> To clarify the purpose of his book, Foucault (1977, p. 12) explains:

I do not claim that sex has not been prohibited or barred or masked or misapprehended since the classical age; nor do I even assert that it has suffered these things any less from that period on than before. I do not maintain that the prohibition of sex is a ruse; but it is a ruse to make prohibition into the basic and constitutive element from which one would be able to write the history of what has been said concerning sex starting from the modern epoch. All these negative elements... are doubtless only component parts that have a local and tactical role to play in a transformation into discourse, a technology of power, and a will to knowledge that are far from being reducible to the former.

<sup>344</sup> Foucault explains:

Sexuality... is the name that can be given to a historical construct: not a furtive reality that is difficult to grasp, but a great surface network in which the stimulation of bodies, the intensification of pleasures, the incitement of

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discourse, the formation of special knowledges, the strengthening of controls and resistances, are linked to one another, in accordance with a few major strategies of knowledge and power (1990, pp. 105, 106).

Bell goes on to explain that although the act(s) of sex have a long history, it is only during the Victorian period that these acts were mapped. A ‘truth’ about sexuality was produced which included categories of sexual subjects; the prostitute, the homosexual, the married woman. Such categories were developed through observation, regulation and the labeling of human activity (1994, p. 13).

<sup>345</sup> Foucault’s explanation of the purpose of his series on *The History of Sexuality* is to “transcribe into history the fable of *Les Bijoux indiscrets*” (1976, p. 77). This is a fable about a sultan who receives a ring from a genie that causes women’s sexual organs to speak the truth. According to Foucault, the modern era is one characterised by “the talking sex” which produces a truth about/of sex and desire. For Foucault, the purpose of his volumes on sexuality were to not only explain what the equivalent of the genie’s ring is in modern society, but to also investigate which masters have the ring, what power/knowledge is produced in this will to truth, and how each individual has become their own sultan (Shumray, 1989, p. 141).

<sup>346</sup> As Lacombe states, Foucault’s “approach dispenses with the transcendental subject of phenomenology, the meaning-giving, thinking, willing subject of liberal humanism, and the empty subject of structuralism.” What is left is the subject that is produced through strategies of objectification and subjectification (1996, p. 349).

<sup>347</sup> My insertion.

<sup>348</sup> As Colwell (1994, pp. 65, 66) argues:

This means that the subject arises, or emerges, as a relation, a relation between itself and knowledge of itself (and other things), a relation between itself and those who have knowledge of it, a relation between itself and those who coerce it or are coerced by it. What we need to see here is that it is possible for the subject to have a relationship to itself, one of self-mastery or otherwise, without there being anything originary to be mastered.

<sup>349</sup> The shift towards a medical control over sexual stylistics occurs, according to Foucault, with the ancient Roman idea of medicine’s importance in proposing a regimen of existence. But again, this regimen of existence was meant to augment, and not replace, the cultivation of the self by the self (1984b, p. 100). Foucault explains the difference with the modern era as “the fact that these regimens are more “concessive” than “normative”” (1984b, p. 124).

<sup>350</sup> This stylistics of existence guided by the cultivation of the self remains an important ethical motive through Foucault’s study of ancient Rome. Yet it was also transformed by a greater emphasis on the “weakness of the individual”, which resulted in reference being made to “universal principles of nature or reason” that guide self-cultivation (1984b, pp. 67, 68). This shift, though interesting, is not important to subsequent sections of the thesis.

<sup>351</sup> Foucault’s works emanate from problems he perceives in the present. The change in practices of punishment from the premodern to the modern age is an object of investigation for Foucault because of his dissatisfaction with contemporary practices of imprisonment (Sawicki, 1991, p. 168). This concern with problems of the contemporary age, leads

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Sawicki to suggest that Foucault's works often read as histories of descent, because Foucault's concern is with a contemporary malevolent use of power (1991, p. 169).

<sup>352</sup> Hacking argues that the 'ethical subject' is present throughout Foucault's work as the sphere of individual agency. So, in relation to power-knowledge, the agent chooses to constitute themselves as subjects of knowledge, chooses to act on others or be acted on by others and chooses to talk about and to others. What is left out in genealogy is the "inner monologue" (1986, p. 236).

<sup>353</sup> Foucault (1984a, p. 4) demonstrates the linkages between the modern conception of sexuality and the forces of relation that emerge from the will to truth about sexuality. He states:

To speak of "sexuality" as a historically singular experience also presupposes the availability of tools capable of analyzing the peculiar characteristics and interrelationships of the three axes that constitute it: (1) the formation of sciences (*savoirs*) that refer to it, (2) the systems of power that regulate its practice, (3) the forms within which individuals are able, are obliged, to recognize themselves as subjects of sexuality (1984a, p. 4).

<sup>354</sup> For example, McHoul and Grace suggest that the ancient Greek debate about the relationship between pederasty and marriage is almost unthinkable in contemporary times, because the variables of the debate have been altered. But, for Foucault, what this reveals is that "the thing we apprehend in one great leap, the thing that, by means of the fable, is demonstrated as the exotic charm of another system of thought, is the limitation of our own, the stark impossibility of thinking *that*" (1970, p. xv cited in McHoul and Grace, 1993, p. 118).

<sup>355</sup> Foucault states:

Power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free. By this we mean individual or collective subjects who are faced with a field of possibilities in which several ways of behaving, several reactions and diverse compartments may be realized. Where the determining factors saturate the whole there is no relationship of power (1982, p. 240).

It is the possibility of resistant action that differentiates power from domination.

<sup>356</sup> Bordo (1993, p. 33) makes the point, pertinent to a number of feminist theories, that the 'other' who is marked by the categorisation may often resort to insisting on its 'naturalness' to reduce its demonisation. So, the 'other' gets caught in the very discourse of normality and deviance.

<sup>357</sup> Ostrander continues by suggesting, following Foucault, that change in practices are most likely to emanate from the experiences of those who do not benefit from the governmentality of life processes. As he says, "new heterogeneous practices are always thrown up from below, from the plebs" (Ostrander, 1988, p. 174).

<sup>358</sup> In a wonderful study of this phenomenon, Lycos uses the child's story, *The Emperor's New Clothes*, to demonstrate the relationship between power-knowledge and discipline. He states:

... the boy's cry wrests and detaches *the power* of truth from 'the regime of the production of truth' ... within which it operated up to the point of his cry.... Up to the point of the cry the power of truth was seemingly undetachable from the

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forms of hegemony and domination... represented by the Emperor.... The determination of what counted as an authoritative or valid statement about 'being clothed' and 'finely clothed' was not only firmly in the grip of the whole system of relations of power represented by these figures, the *effect* of this regime of truth-production is well, captured by the stunned and uneasy silence of the assembled population at the procession. The hooha and laughter that meets the boy's cry is not simply a change of belief... but more significantly a shift, at that moment, in the relations of power within which the determination of the truth of statements... is to occur (1993, p. 3).

<sup>359</sup> Following Deleuze, Shumway describes Foucault's work as a "box of tools" that allow people to do things (1989, p. 159).

<sup>360</sup> This quote was used previously in Chapter Three (p. 89) to introduce the counter-history of female participation in sport.

<sup>361</sup> But ironically, the pathological 'other' lies on the fringe of institutional power such that when he/she speaks, he/she becomes the potentially dominant. To desire liberation from normalisation is to desire power, but the irony is that this 'will to power' is also normalising. Radical movements produce different forms of power/knowledge (Fox, 1998, p. 424; Lacombe, 1996, pp. 336, 343; Ransom, 1993, p. 129). As Grimshaw argues, "new modes of resistance and self-understanding run the danger of re-instating... aspects of that against which they have been struggling" (1993, p. 59).

<sup>362</sup> This is an important response to those feminists who suggest that Foucault did not attend to the specific patterns and techniques of panopticism that underpin patriarchal dominance and with which women must cope. The historical emergence of gendered bodies was, for Foucault, an example of the modern concern with 'dividing practices'. He did not study bodies to reveal the inaccuracies of current conceptions. He studied bodies as a specific example of the ways that modern power/knowledge produces subjectification (McHoul and Grace, 1993, pp. 73-75).

<sup>363</sup> The second axis of the modern regimes of power, as described by Foucault, is the rise of 'biopower'; the political control over the life of the species-body (1976, p. 139). This axis has not been utilised by feminist theory in sport, to the best of my knowledge. It would, in my opinion, be useful to consider the strategies and technologies of power concerning the disciplining of the HIV athlete, from this perspective.

<sup>364</sup> Bartowski refers to the Foucauldian counter-history of bodies as a reproduction and production of "the patriarchal history of sexuality" (1988, p. 47 cited by Balsamo, 1996, p. 22).

<sup>365</sup> Markula demonstrates the insight of this. Many of the exercises performed in aerobics classes are recognised by the women as useless in regards to improved functionality. The movements are not needed to perform the women's everyday chores. The sole purpose of these exercises is to improve the physical appearance of the women. In light of Foucault's emphasis that modern forms of power extract labour and time from subjects, it may be argued that the production of an aesthetically pleasing look is appropriate labour for females. Resistance may then come in the form of exercising for functional purposes. Some of the female aerobicisers suggested that their exercise assisted them in the performance of other sports (Markula, 1995, p. 438).

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<sup>366</sup> Many of the female exercisers studied by Markula identified the ubiquitous ‘society’ as the source of the gaze that disciplines their actions (1995, p. 437).

<sup>367</sup> Bartky suggests, following Foucault, that the discipline that produces the feminine body is located both at institutional sites, and in unbound discourses. The effect of the latter is to create the impression that “the production of femininity is either entirely voluntary or natural” (1988, p. 75 cited by Theberge, 1991a, p. 127). Yet, Bartky observes, whilst there are few overt forms of coercion into femininity, there is still the imposition of power and disciplinary authority. And because these effects of ‘official knowledge’ produce “a ‘subjected and practiced,’ and inferiorized body, they must be understood as aspects of a far larger discipline, an oppressive and inegalitarian system of sexual subordination” (Bartky, 1988, p. 75 cited by Theberge, 1991a, p. 127).

<sup>368</sup> Bordo (1993, p. 189) explains the historical emergence of this feminist idea as follows; ... a staple of the prevailing sexist ideology against which the new feminist model protested was the notion that, in matters of beauty and femininity, it is *women* who are responsible for whatever ‘enslavement’ they suffer from the whims and bodily tyrannies of ‘fashion’. According to that ideology, men’s desires have no responsibility to bear, nor does the culture which subordinates women’s desires to those of men, sexualises and commodifies women’s bodies, and offers them little other opportunities for social or personal power.... Set in cultural relief against this ‘thesis’, the feminist ‘anti-thesis’ was the insistence that women are the *done to* not the *doers* here, that *men* and *their* desires (not ours) are the ‘enemy’, and that our obedience to the dictates of ‘fashion’ is better conceptualised as bondage than choice (1993, p. 189).

Whilst there are obvious problems with the feminist anti-thesis, for Bordo, it is important to be reminded that it was produced prior to, and without the aid, of Foucault.

<sup>369</sup> According to McNeil (1993, p. 157), it may be this obsessive self-regulation and self-control, produced in an era of confessional truth-making, that are at the heart of the problem of anorexia.

<sup>370</sup> Deveaux also suggests that the specification of specifically modern forms of power which are subtle and insidious may blind feminists to the more obvious, dangerous and apparent barriers to a woman’s freedom, such as male violence, rape and assault (1994, p. 3). This may be an especially important point to consider in sport.

<sup>371</sup> Hargreaves comments that the female engagement with boxing has been contained by the popularity of boxercise, boxerobics and boxtraining. These products include the physical workout of boxing, but reject practices that might “masculinize the real body” (1997, p. 45 cited by Vertinsky, 1999, p. 18 n. 2).

<sup>372</sup> As a minor criticism of several of these uses of Foucault, I would suggest that many authors sometimes slip into a reading of the female body that is naturalistic. Markula suggests that several feminists have observed that: “Women diet to obtain the desired extremely slender body rather than accept the *natural* dimensions of their own bodies” (1995, p. 425, my emphasis). Duncan talks about the inculcation of an “*unrealistic* body ideal in women” (1994, p. 48, my emphasis). Eskes, Duncan and Miller suggest that the problematic association of health and beauty in fitness texts means that “*real* gains in

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women's health and in the public arena in general are not realized" (1998, p. 317, my emphasis).

<sup>373</sup> Eskes, Duncan and Miller (1998, pp. 317-344) go further and suggest that the texts in fitness magazines often present women's fitness work as empowering, and this ties in with a pro-feminist ideology. Yet the orientation of the texts, as individualist and with narrow notions of feminine attractiveness, suggest that the feminist concepts of empowerment, autonomy and freedom have been coopted to patriarchal needs and desires.

<sup>374</sup> Duncan describes the types of strategies employed by women's fitness magazines to produce self-surveillance and self-control in women who read these magazines. These strategies are 'designed' to create in the woman an individual desire to perfect their bodies. But the notion of perfection is a decidedly patriarchal and public one. Fitness and health are understood in terms of public (male) standards of female beauty, rather than biomedical or experiential standards of personal wellness. Hence, according to Duncan, "Whereas health may be a private condition that varies from individual to individual, beauty is a social, public standard that admits few variations in our culture. Therefore when beauty is advanced under cover of the rhetoric of health, its appeal to the reader is persuasive, yet duplicitous." (1994, p. 55).

The disguise of this public discourse as a private desire is achieved through a number of techniques employed in the stories in the magazines. Firstly, the stories exhort individual women readers to "commit to 'worthy' body changes", disguised as the individual's ideal body (Duncan, 1994, p. 51). But the ideal body is one that is imposed publicly, and with disregard to the individual's particular circumstances or genetic makeup. The changes to the individual's bodies are to be achieved through personal initiative and commitment, which disguises societal demands as personal desires (Duncan, 1994, p. 53). Female readers are encouraged to surveil and monitor their bodies' problems, compared to the ideal of the models pictured and analysed in the stories (Duncan, 1994, p. 56). Also, the stories about individuals who have lost weight utilise a discourse of shame and redemption. The overweight individual is responsible for her own 'failure'; she confesses to previous sins of laziness. The successful individual has redeemed herself through a commitment to the rigid body ideal of femininity (Duncan, 1994, pp. 57-60).

For Duncan, this conflation of public and private has the effect of political disempowerment for women (1994, pp. 54, 60). The confession of shame/sloth to a published magazine presents the failure to live up to public standards of beauty as an individual problem. But the public standard of beauty that divides women into hierarchical categories is left untouched. As Duncan demonstrates with one story told by a pregnant woman:

'During my pregnancy I gained 65 pounds. My husband informed me on the day of my daughter's birth that if I didn't lose all my weight he would divorce me. That's how my commitment to myself began.' This statement vividly illustrates how public and private are conflated, for Guthmiller [the woman] identifies her husband's insistence on her living up to a public, patriarchal ideal as the motive for her own personal commitment....

The consequences of sin are graphically illustrated; men punish us when we weigh too much (1994, p. 60).

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But if women weigh too much, they are trained to believe that it is them, rather than the standard, that is the problem.

<sup>375</sup> The authors also suggest that, whilst the aerobicizing body hopes to attain the status that goes with thinness, it also becomes muscular enough to look athletic (Maguire and Mansfield, 1998, p. 114; also see Eskes *et. al.*, 1998, p. 320). However, this notion of strength is attached to the prescriptions of femininity; muscle is a ‘new’ way of being attractively female (Eskes *et. al.*, 1998, p. 333). This idea of resistance in incorporation will be discussed in a later section of the chapter in terms of female bodybuilding.

<sup>376</sup> In a recent article, Duffy and Rhodes (1993 cited by Real, 1999, p. 143) report a pragmatic turn in aerobics participants towards how the class makes them feel, rather than the aesthetic imperative of how the class makes them look. Hence there remains a liberating potential for women in the aerobics class, regardless of the oppositional forces toward docility and individualisation (Real, 1999, p. 147).

<sup>377</sup> Cole does not finish on this note, and suggests that the future of feminist sports studies also involves, in Haraway’s terms, females learning “to always ‘see’ with ‘double-vision’ in an effort to locate struggles and possibilities” (1985 cited in Cole, 1993, p. 94). Maguire and Mansfield also investigate the ambiguity in the ways that aerobicizing can be read, that may disrupt patriarchal standards of femininity (1998, pp. 134, 135). This insight will be developed in the second and third waves of feminist appropriations of Foucault.

<sup>378</sup> Palzkill (1990, p. 223) argues that the state of childhood allows athletic girls a temporary site of sanctuary from the prescriptions of femininity. They, in the neutral state of childhood, can affirm an athletic identity, without challenging discourses of femininity. But this neutral state cannot be affirmed indefinitely. The pressure on the girl to become feminine increases as the effects of puberty become evident.

<sup>379</sup> McLaren goes on to criticise this limited reading of Foucault.

<sup>380</sup> As Harvey and Sparks explain, “Relations of power can coalesce strategically around certain discourses, activities, and institutions without an apparent author of their tactic” (1991, p. 167).

<sup>381</sup> My insertion.

<sup>382</sup> Foucault explains that, “Enlightenment must be considered both as a process in which men participate collectively and as an act of courage to be accomplished personally” (1986a, p. 35). This courage is the act of disenfranchisement from, and transcendence beyond, the knowledge limits that are imposed on the individual (1986a, p. 50).

<sup>383</sup> Frye contends that there is a need to produce a positive category of ‘woman’ to oppose the definition of ‘woman’ that is produced in the man/woman distinction that sees the man as the universal and exclusive term and the woman as that which is not-man. This latter phallogocentric definition is the one that has functioned, in a number of deployments in sport and society, to restrict women to being the same as, or different to, Benchmark man. The categorisation occurs via an A/not-A dichotomy such that:

To be an **A** is to be something; **not-A** is not a “something” one can be.... If, for instance, “vanilla” is assigned as the **A**, then **not-A** includes not only strawberry, chocolate, and peppermint ripple but also triangles, the square root of two, the orbit of Haley’s comet, and all the shoes in the world. All of these are not vanilla, and as not-vanilla, they are indistinguishable. The vanilla/ not-

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vanilla dichotomy makes no distinctions within the realm of not-vanilla.... This is why I... would say that an **A/not-A** structure is not a dualism. It does not construct two things.... I continue to call such structures “dichotomous,” because they divide/split the world; but paradoxically, they do not split it into two (1996, pp. 999, 1000).

Frye suggests that to construct a positive category of ‘woman’ is possible in such a way that neither defines nor essentialises the characteristics that limit the category. That is, she looks to construct a category of woman that is congenial to the political function of feminism as a politics of pluralism such that intersections with color and class affiliations are supportable (1996, pp. 998, 1002).

<sup>384</sup> My insertion.

<sup>385</sup> An example discussed by Aladjem involves an analysis of marriage. One feminist analysis holds that the chains of marriage felt by the wife extend across historical periods. Whilst the contemporary marriage may have ‘softened’ the chains, they still remain as a form of oppression. In a Foucauldian analysis, in contrast, the identity across history and across specific cases is resisted. The constraints of modern marriage are different to the constraints of marriage in the past century, which are both different from the constraints felt by wives in ancient Greece. But moreso, Foucault would also challenge the discriminating comparisons that allow for the description of modern constraints as ‘softer’. This may reveal more subtle mechanisms of power in the contemporary era, but in a way that avoids “the distortions of comparison and assimilation” (Aladjem, 1991, p. 4).

<sup>386</sup> Spelman (1988, p. 187 cited by Dewar, 1993, p. 213) argues:

Those of us who have engaged in it [analysis of oppression of women] must give up the hunt for the generic woman- the one who is all and only woman, who by some miracle of abstraction has no particular identity in terms of race, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, language, religion, nationality.

<sup>387</sup> Eagleton (1990, p. 394 cited in Grimshaw, 1993, p. 69) poses the question for Foucault, “What would a stylish rape look like?” Are there some moral absolutes, such as the pain and suffering of others, that act as limits over the ethical relationship one has to oneself?

<sup>388</sup> Part of the problem for Foucault in his later works, according to a number of feminists (Grimshaw, 1993, p. 68; Soper, 1993, pp. 39-47; Ramazanoglu and Holland, 1993, pp. 249-260) is that the starting point of Greek society, populated by free *men* and a number of disciplined ‘other’ groups, is that the valorisation of such a society produces an androcentric view of freedom and autonomy. This androcentric view also supports the notion of the free *individual*. Soper goes further by suggesting that when Foucault recounts the story of Lapcourt, the simple-minded farmhand who was reported to the mayor, arrested and judged, and investigated by medical experts, for engaging in the rural sexual pleasure of “a few caresses from a little girl”, he divulges an account of morality which is *his* rather than *ours*. His use of this case as exemplary of the explosion of sexual discourse that categorises, divides, normalises and controls subjectivities is one reading of the incident. But this reading silences a counter-reading that this incident was a case of child sexual abuse (1993, pp. 42, 43)

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McLaren's response is to suggest that Foucault's goal is not to produce a gender-neutral subject, but to expose, as feminist standpoint theorists have exposed, the maleness of the subject. This does not prevent feminists explaining the production of a/many female subjectivities. Such investigations of the historical production of specific female subjectivities may create the impetus to a deconstruction and reconstruction of such subjectivities (1997, p. 122). As Foucault suggests, whilst he can disturb conventional ways of thinking, he cannot tell others what to do in their political struggles with these disturbances. He says that such activity can only be done "by those who are willing to risk their lives to bring it about" (1988b, p. 124 cited by Ramanazoglu, 1993, p. 12). And Aladjem suggests that the 'absence' of the female from Greek ethics "poses a sort of question", that Foucault is unwilling to answer, but that feminists may answer. So the absence of women from Greek ethics is itself a subversion, the limit of what the humble Foucault, unwilling to speak for others, can make (1991, p. 3).

<sup>389</sup> Bordo discusses this in terms of the numerous cosmetic surgeries that produced Cher. She suggests that the meaning of this surgery in contemporary society is not, as the poststructuralists suggest, an indication of the plasticity of the body. The meaning of the surgically-enhanced body of Cher is one of a defective body that is corrected. Whilst advocates of plastic surgery suggest that this intervention involves free choice and self-determination on the part of the subject, the images that act as norms against which individual bodies are judged and corrected are politically produced images. Not only is the ideal image a gendered one. It is also a racially, ethnically and sexually contained image. Cher has successfully become definitive of 'normal' Anglo-Saxon beauty (1993, p. 197). Bordo continues by suggesting links between normalisation through cosmetic surgery and the idea of late capitalism and postliberalism (and postfeminism) described by Cole and Hribar (1995, pp. 347-369) and LaFrance (1998, pp. 117-139) in their discussions of Nike commercials.

<sup>390</sup> Bordo makes the point that feminism probably preceded Foucault in the deconstruction of natural sex/gender categories. Germaine Greer, in 1970, stated: "The new assumption behind the discussion of the body is that everything that we may observe *could be otherwise*" (p. 4, Greer's emphasis cited in Bordo, 1993, p. 181). The heritage of 'the politics of the body' should, in Bordo's view, lie with a collection of feminist authors of the late sixties and seventies and is probably traceable back to De Beauvoir, and possibly Wollstonecraft (1993, pp. 182-185).

<sup>391</sup> Verbrugge continues, in a Foucauldian sense, to discuss the transformations in the human science disciplines that made the two-sex model the dominant one. 'Discoveries' in biochemistry and genetics, along with the acceptance of the Darwinian theory of evolution produced the dominance of biomedical models of sex differences, which reinforced the ideas of both sexual dualism and biological determinism, and enabled both to harden into scientific paradigms. These developments of the early twentieth century tied in with the production of separate physical education for men and women (1997, p. 280).

<sup>392</sup> Bailey later acknowledges the possibility for this limited form of essentialism to be co-opted by other interests (1993, p. 117)

<sup>393</sup> Undermining these pleasurable identities may be the source of what Frye, as explained in Chapter Two of this thesis, suggests as the courageous act of separation from the

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normal, that any feminist 'poet' must undergo. As Markula states about resistance towards the ideal of feminine slenderness: "One has to be extremely secure to be able to confront the everyday challenges put forward by the dominant discourses and even more confident to engage in openly resistant action" (1995, p. 446).

<sup>394</sup> Butler states:

Because there is neither an 'essence' that gender expresses or externalizes nor an objective ideal to which gender aspires, and because gender is not a fact, the various acts of gender create the idea of gender, and without those acts, there would be no gender at all. Gender is, thus, a construction that regularly conceals its genesis; the tacit, collective agreement to perform, produce, and sustain discrete and polar genders as cultural fictions is obscured by the credibility of these productions- and the punishments that attend not agreeing to believe in them (1990, p. 140 cited by Brook, 1999, p. 116).

<sup>395</sup> Gould (1997, p. 37 cited by Vertinsky, 1999, p. 3) claims that "new technologies of mediatic body construction and plastic cyborg-surgery challenge the very presence of a real body." The conclusion of this chapter will use both cyborg bodies and computer subjectivities to discuss whether the female athlete can ever escape gender.

<sup>396</sup> Bailey uses here the example of Madonna as a performer who both subverts the notion of 'femininity', whilst seducing through that notion, as an example of such a 'partial struggle' (1993, p. 107). As argued previously, it may also be fruitful to consider female bodybuilders in the same light; both accommodated and resistant at the same time.

<sup>397</sup> As with any boundary position, cross-dressing can be used to reinforce, as well as challenge, the boundaries. Brook (1997, p. 3) suggests that the Australian footballers who perform on television shows, and the audience who watch these shows, love drag, precisely because these men could never pass as women. They could never, nor would never, perform femininity authentically. Their desire for cross-dressing is to underline their masculinity by performing masculinity to excess. As Brook says, "every skirt was skimpy, every top was tight, the fake breasts were enormous, the underwear was obviously 'sexy', and the makeup was positively garish. 'Woman' as performed by male footballers is a sex object, an outlandish exhibition of an/other, 'desirably' different but utterly disavowed body" (1997, p. 3).

<sup>398</sup> Birrell and Cole's (1994, pp. 207-237) study of the male to female transsexual tennis player, Renee Richards, demonstrates the work that is done, both by society and some transsexuals, to maintain the two-sex paradigm. It also shows how experts of the sex-role system produce the normalising discourses and reinforce the subjectivities that are taken up by people. As Birrell and Cole remark, there is "male-dominated transsexual empire of surgeons, lawyers, and psychologists whose technological and discursive practices make it legally and... morally possible to change one's 'body/sex'" (1994, p. 213). This male-dominated empire has the power to monitor, regulate and control the body and sex of individual people. A person would not feel gender dysphoria unless they felt a need to satisfy the sex-role demands of the opposite gender, a subject position that is produced by the attachment to a model of two, and only two, natural, distinct and absolute sex categories (1994, pp. 210, 211; also see Frye, 1983, p. 164; Vertinsky, 1999, p. 16; Lorber, 2000, p. 80). Before sex-reassignment surgery, itself a discursive production imposed by

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the two-sex model, the transsexual “must live as a member of the opposite sex as proof of his or her ability to accomplish appropriately gendered behaviour” (1994, p. 211). Hence, gender, sex and heterosexuality are re-naturalised, and the ambiguity produced by the transsexual is redescribed as individual malfunction. As Birrell and Cole state, “The transsexual’s solution to gender dysphoria is to change sexes: an individual solution to a systemic problem.... By seeking surgical remedy, the transsexual acquiesces to a system that locates individuals as either male or female subjects” (1994, p. 212). In Richards case, the mostly male sports media reinforced the power of the lawyers and doctors of the transsexual empire by commenting on the success of their work in producing a body that had many of the signifiers of the female body, that fitted the category of female (Birrell and Cole, 1994, p. 219).

Richards embraced the demands commonly placed on members of her new gender. She was happy to have her body objectified (once performing a media interview naked). She equated female sexuality with passivity and submission to the desires of the male (Birrell and Cole, 1994, pp. 219, 220). And she was happy to endorse the ‘support’ she received from male tennis players, such as Ilie Nastase, who expressed that she was more feminine than many other female professionals (Birrell and Cole, 1994, p. 226). In endorsing this support, she fails to recognise the way that such support confirms the notion of female as the weaker and inferior sex, and reproduces the skepticism and anxiety that accompanies outstanding female performance in sport. Richards, the transgressive transsexual, becomes Richards, the defender of naturalised sex categories. As Birrell and Cole suggest (1994, pp. 209, 210):

Although initially Renee Richards appears to be newsworthy because s/he is a sexual anomaly who challenges taken-for-granted assumptions about sex and gender, our critical reading suggest how the media frames invoked to explain the meaning of Renee Richards reproduce rather than challenge dominant gender arrangements and ideologies, specifically the assumption that there are two and only two, obviously universal, natural, bipolar, mutually exclusive sexes that necessarily correspond to stable gender identity and gendered behaviour.

The case of Renee Richards also shows the importance of sport as an element “in a political field that produces and reproduces two apparently natural, mutually exclusive, “opposite” sexes” (Birrell and Cole, 1994, p. 208; Sharpe, 1997, p. 40). Sport is a competitive activity that differentiates, that produces winners and losers, based on physical superiority. Hence sport is a site that reinforces a hierarchical notion of two sex categories. The defense of Richards’ ‘right’ to play women’s tennis was reinforced by her poor results. This naturalised the idea of gender differences that, in sport especially, are synonymous with female inferiority. Richards was seen as weak enough to play against the women in a ‘fair’ competition. The women players who criticised her entry into sport were vilified as unfair and irrational. In addition, the media coverage couched the debate about Richards entrance into tennis as one about natural male strength and the effects of sex re-assignment. In so doing, the media ignored the years of privileged access to sport that Richards had had as a male. By ignoring this privileged access, the media was able to naturalise women’s ‘inferiority’ at tennis (Birrell and Cole, 1994, pp. 229-232).

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Combining the three waves of feminist appropriations of Foucault, the case of Richards reveals the ways that the individual monitors and regulates their behaviours in terms of the subjectivities that are produced through official discourses about sex. At the same time, the revelation of the work done by the media, by the transsexual empire and by Richards herself, to mould her story into the paradigm of the two-sex model, is resistant in that it reveals how this model is as constructed as any other. As Lorber argues, most people “who cross gender boundaries... want to be taken as ‘normal’ men and women.” Yet, the resistance produced by such transgression of boundaries to the idea that the imposition of such boundaries is natural, does not necessarily require the support of a transgressive agent (2000, p. 80). Hence, resistance does not necessarily need to be produced by an active agent, but it does require official discourse to be ‘read against the grain’.

<sup>399</sup> Balsamo’s position is that the shift to de-essentialise bodies, which has been part of poststructural and postmodern theory, may be used by patriarchy to disempower the politics of feminism. Balsamo advises feminists to engage in “constructing and critiquing theories of the body within postmodernism... it is time for feminism to crash the postmodern party” (1996, p. 31).

<sup>400</sup> This brief explanation will not do justice to Haraway’s notion of cyborg bodies and cyborg politics. But as many of the sporting bodies discussed in the last section of this chapter can be thought of as cyborg bodies, it is important to capture, albeit briefly, some of the potentials that Haraway sees in the cyborg body (1999).

<sup>401</sup> There is neither time nor space to go into an expansive reading of Kristeva’s notion of the abject female body.

<sup>402</sup> Mary Douglas (1966, cited by Brook, 1999, p. 50) suggests that menstruation is an abject condition due to the transgression of the ‘natural’ human state where bodily fluids are contained. But Douglas also wants to investigate why menstruation is perceived with disgust whilst other forms of bloodflow is not. As Brook suggests, the language and imagery of the sanitary product is organised around the idea of containment, an idea that is particular policed with ‘leaky’ female bodies (of harm and embarrassment) (1999, pp. 5, 50, 51). Kissling (1999, pp. 79-91), in an investigation of the marathon win by Uta Pippig when the media mostly ignored that she was ‘enduring’ the obvious signs of menstruation, also observes that the abject is contained by a refusal to discuss. Pippig’s performance was remarkable, made more remarkable by the distress of the cramps, vomiting and diarrhea she was suffering. But the abject must be contained in all sorts of ways.

But Gatens goes further, and explicitly suggests a gender politics to the abjection of menstruation. The shame and modesty associated with menstruation are characteristically feminine qualities (1983, p. 149). The gender politics of this containment is ‘leaked’ in a parodic twist of genders by Gloria Steinem, when she states:

So what would happen if suddenly, magically, men could menstruate and women could not?

Clearly, menstruation would become an enviable, boast-worthy, masculine event:

Men would brag about how long and how much... Street guys would invent slang (‘he’s a three-pad man’) and ‘give fives’ on the corner with some exchange like, ‘Man, you lookin’ *good!*’ ‘Yeah, man, I’m on the rag!’...

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Lesbians would be said to fear blood and therefore life itself, though all they needed was a good menstruating man. Medical schools would limit women's entry ('they might faint at the sight of blood')....

Menopause would be celebrated as a positive event, the symbol that men had accumulated enough years of cyclical wisdom to need no more. (1984, pp. 338, 339 cited by Brook, 1999, p. 54).

It is in parody that some of the strongest seeds of resistance to containment are displayed.

<sup>403</sup> My emphasis.

<sup>404</sup> In an ironic twist, Leanne Stedman (1997, pp. 75- 90) investigated how the postmodern turn towards fractured identities, especially as influenced by the commodification of late capitalism, resulted in an assertion of identity by male surfers that closed down sites for female freedom. Whereas the surfing media, and the community of surfers, welcomed female participation until the mid-1980s, the commodification of the symbols of surfing meant that the male surfing identity of this period, previously differentiated by its resistance to mainstream culture, no longer enjoyed this defining characteristic. The postmodernisation of surfing subculture in late capitalism, produced a new 'resistance' to mainstream culture in the form of male surfers' excessive, and politically incorrect, misogyny. This re-gains the position of counter culture for surfers, by redirecting it towards a hatred of, and ignorance toward, women surfers. Hence, the surfers countercultural identity was counter to the apparent tolerance of mainstream society. As Stedman suggests, the emancipatory potential of fragmentation is contingent on the reactions produced toward the uncertainties of these fractured identities, and such reactions are no more likely to be tolerant than they are to be reactionary (1997, p. 75). Her feminist response to this is that:

It must be recognised that oppressive structures can be reconstituted through male collective action in response to the uncertainties of the postmodern condition. Such recognition also holds hope for change in postmodern society. By exploding the myth that postmodern cultures exist apart from oppressive structures, legitimate space can be opened for a reclamation of subjecthood by women and a collective feminist response to those inequalities generated by reactions to postmodernisation (1997, p. 76).

<sup>405</sup> There is another feminist debate that suggests that the narrow notion of excellence in sport is something that should also be challenged by females (Watson, 1993, pp. 510-522). The previous chapter of this thesis dealt with the feminist criticism of phallogentrism in social and sporting commentary. In this chapter, the male notion of excellence will be left untouched, and the political intervention will deal with athletic bodies.

This does not mean that I do not support the words of Theberge (1991a, p. 129) when she calls for the transformation of sport, such that alternative practices that are "consistent with a feminist vision of power" are embraced. Examples of this transformation, such as Birrell and Richter's early work on alternative women's softball leagues (1987, pp. 395-409), Lenskyj's article about lesbian softball teams (1994), Theberge's own work on women's ice-hockey (1997; also see Young, 1997) and even some recent work on the new sport of windsurfing (Wheaton and Tomlinson, 1998) all explicitly state or imply that women's incorporation of their own meanings into sport will

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be resistant in that these meanings will produce new ways of playing sport and relating to others and themselves. Catherine MacKinnon tells the following exemplary story:

Once when I was talking about this with the same student I mentioned earlier, she reminded me that both men and women have climbed Mount Everest.

When asked why, the man said, because it is there. The woman said, because it is beautiful (1987, p. 124).

<sup>406</sup> Kane cites the example of Ila Borders, the first female to be a starting pitcher on a men's baseball team. After winning her first two starts comprehensively, Borders did not receive much praise. Instead, she was the victim of vicious and vulgar taunts laced with profanity and sexual innuendo. One New York radio interviewer asked her if she was a lesbian. Kane concluded that the deviant-mutant most challenges the 'reality' of the binary construction of sex differences, a reality regularly reinforced in sport. The deviant-mutant "therefore needs the greatest amount of surveillance and punishment, because the binary rests on the assumption that sexual difference is inherent, not part of some larger male conspiracy" (1995, p. 211).

<sup>407</sup> 'Benchmark Man' is a term of Margaret Thornton, a feminist critic of liberalism and mainstream philosophy, to denote the invisible man who is the assumed subject of Western philosophical and legal discourse (1995a cited by Brook, 1999, p. 97). In the sporting world, Benchmark Man would also refer both to a specific type of body and a specific form of embodied performance, with which the female is normally compared unfavourably.

<sup>408</sup> Coles describes the anxiety that is felt by bodybuilding organisations that confront the 'gender-bending' of female bodybuilders. The response has been to judge competitions on criteria closer to beauty pageants, rather than in terms of bodily size (1999, p. 449)

<sup>409</sup> Doctors have criticised bodybuilders' health because of a number of disorders including amenorrhoea and infertility that may result from excessive training or drug taking (Obel, 1996, p. 187). This danger is only a problem for the family-making female of compulsory heterosexuality

<sup>410</sup> Vertinsky argues that this was "perhaps one of the reasons why drug-testing became mandatory in female competitions five years before those for males" (1999, p. 14). Saltman (1998, p. 59 n.10) suggests that within the male bodybuilding subculture, steroid use is expected. In contrast, it would appear that the 'freakishness' of the bodybuilder who does not use steroids, does not extend to female bodybuilders.

<sup>411</sup> When describing the six-times female bodybuilding Ms Olympia champion, Cory Everson, Mansfield and McGinn suggest that her success is the result of walking the "thin line between muscularity and acceptable femininity" better than anyone. She does this; ... by working her body in a particular way to produce the ideal size and proportions, by adopting a posing style emphasizing dance, grace and creativity, and by trappings of hair and make-up and the like reminiscent of the style adopted by the fictional women of Dallas (1993, p. 63).

<sup>412</sup> Weber reports that in 1990, only 2% of the female population of America had breast implants. In the professional bodybuilding world, the proportion of competitors with breast implants was 81% (1993a, pp. 98-100 cited by Ndalians, 1995, p. 17).

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<sup>413</sup> In the previous chapter of this thesis, it was suggested that the practice of female athletes producing soft-porn calendars might be counterproductive to the production of authority spaces in the media. The female athlete has become a favorite of pornography (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 167). Both Saltman (1998, p. 50) and Coles (1999, p. 448) explain that the female bodybuilder has also become a favorite of pornography. This would be another example of resistance in docility, as the display of musculature as heterosexually feminine is challenging to more dominant notions of heterosexual attractiveness for females. Yet both authors comment that even this resistance is reined in through the use of submissive poses, absurd props (such as stillettos), comforting commentary and smaller bodybuilders. They are, as Ndalianis explains, “examples of ‘freaks’ in a world of ‘norms’; they signal a moment of excess allowed to seep through into the dominant, but these moments are always about controlled forms of excess” (1995, pp. 13, 18). The ‘ripped’ bodybuilder, revealing veins and muscle striations, is not yet presentable as a sexual image for females.

<sup>414</sup> Bordo claims that bodybuilding is merely a practice where the female takes on a male role through accepting the discipline of the strict regimes of training that produce the muscular, and masculine, body, without being granted male power and privilege. Hence, bodybuilding does not transform an embodied social order that is gendered (1989, p. 24). In response, Saltman (1998, p. 57) argues that;

to say that female bodybuilders become male is to abandon muscularity to the category of masculinity. It reinforces the notion that gender is defined by biological difference.... The hulk-like triangular shape is prosthetic: It is clothing for both men and women. Secondly, if our bodies are a site of struggle against gender normalization, then it would seem that the development of alternative and multiple “feminine” beauty forms would contest the one dominant version of female beauty.

<sup>415</sup> Saltman explains:

In other words, because categories, which make meaning through exclusion, rely upon the excluded outside for intelligibility, this denied outside resides *within* the category. Categorization and naming, so necessary for interacting with others, induces us to forget that identity gets constituted through negation.... In bodybuilding, these interior exclusions are momentarily remembered; they manifest themselves, allowing brief glimpses at the excluded outside which resides inside (1998, p. 48).

<sup>416</sup> It is interesting that Saltman describes ‘gender-bending’ as going both ways in bodybuilding, to the point that “a whole new category” of gender is produced. Saltman explains that men who bodybuild develop smooth and rounded breasts (accentuated by steroid use), depilate body hair, use tanning cosmetics and oil, and dress in g-strings. But moreso, male bodybuilders engage in a set of bodily routines that are normally peculiar to the disciplining of the female body (1998, pp. 49, 50; also see Obel, 1996, pp. 194, 195; Vertinsky, 1999, p. 15).

<sup>417</sup> It is important to recognise the Foucauldian point that practices that transgress official ‘truths’ are only temporarily transgressive, and in turn set up new ‘truths’ (Price and Shildrick, 1999, p. 414).

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<sup>418</sup> Ndalianis reports that the clamour by supporters of female bodybuilding became so strong that eventually the Federation of Bodybuilding had to rethink their judging criteria in 1993 and 1994, and reversed their decision to “tone down the beef levels on the ladies” (1995, p. 16).

<sup>419</sup> As reported by Mansfield and McGinn, some bodybuilders begin to produce a different language about female muscles. Robin Parker suggests that her entrance into bodybuilding occurred when “beautiful muscles appeared” during her weight training to firm up her body. Carol Mock explains that in her performances, she wants “to almost sing with muscle.” This new language resists the dominant rationalised language of bodybuilding (1993, p. 58). But this new language is by no means universally accepted.

<sup>420</sup> Vertinsky explains a ‘new’ (though the theme is the same as historical forms) form of containment of bodybuilders. The National Physique Committee of America has over 1000 annual competitions in ‘Women’s fitness’ shows. These shows use standards of contemporary femininity to judge participants, and to market themselves. The judging criteria for these shows include “a dress code (2 piece swimsuit), personality, skin tone, complexion, style and so on” (Vertinsky, 1999, p. 22, n. 80). The feminine ideal of “soft curves and hard bodies” is seen as more attractive than the massive musculature of female bodybuilders. Vertinsky comments: “The transgressive, disruptive possibilities of female bodybuilding (with its mime or masquerade of masculine power and musculature) are thus brought into check, limiting once again the cultural imagination of possibilities for the female body” (1999, p. 1).

<sup>421</sup> My insertion.

<sup>422</sup> What is more disappointing from a feminist perspective is the effort that is made by these sports to include masculine elements for the comparison of competitors. (It was tempting to suggest the “true” or “objective” comparison) Strength and power are made important by evaluating the height of a jump or kick and the steadiness of a position. Not only is the stigma of female difference reaffirmed, the dominant discourse which creates the importance of masculine elements in sport is reaffirmed.

<sup>423</sup> Reminiscent of MacKinnon’s claim that stereotypes become objectifications, which become embodied practices (1987, pp. 118, 119), McCaughey states that her feminist opposition to violence, which was stereotyped as a male behaviour, was naturalised to the point that she did not think women were capable of violence. Only through practicing self-defense did she come to realise that women incapacity for violence was a social, rather than a natural, effect. Her practice of self-defense allowed for an embodied, resistant subjectivity (1998, pp. 277, 278). Wheaton and Tomlinson suggest that many hardcore female windsurfers experience empowered identities, partly related to the development of physical capacities through windsurfing (1998, p. 259).

<sup>424</sup> Chapman makes the point that teammates, coaches, officials and the sports institutions that govern rowing were also involved in producing the effects of power. Whilst not closely monitored by coaches, rowers lived with the possibility of weigh-ins. Also, the individual rowers knew that they would be weighed before a race, and the team would not be allowed to compete if they were too heavy (1997, pp. 212, 213). David Johns, in an investigation of eating disorders in rhythmic gymnastics, explains that the close proximity

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of judges and athletes produced an even greater force experienced by the athletes to regulate their food intake (1998).

<sup>425</sup> Even when the rowers recognised that they had a “warped sense” of weight management, the problem was located in themselves. In this way, societal discourses on thinness and attractive femininity are ignored (Chapman, 1997, p. 214).

<sup>426</sup> My insertion.

<sup>427</sup> Wheaton and Tomlinson, in their ethnographic study of windsurfing culture, found that women windsurfers were respected as active sports women to a greater extent than in more traditional sports (1998, p. 257). This may have been due to a number of interrelated factors including the difficulty for the hard-core windsurfer who practices her craft often in rain and wind to be conventionally feminine, the development of muscle strength that goes with practicing windsurfing, and the need for windsurfers to enact choices to allow a lifestyle of windsurfing where such choices, such as the refusal to have children, contravene the current model of femininity. So the windsurfing female is able to produce a new identity that evades many of the requirements of femininity (1998, pp. 258-263). However, the authors also suggest that, whilst these new identities may be personally empowering, they are not politically resistant. The women windsurfers enthusiastically accepted their identities as different to most other females because they were detached from other people. Whilst this may be more empowering than a female who understands her identity through attachment to a husband, boyfriend or children, it also precludes attachment to a political community of women (1998, p. 262). Such identities allow the female windsurfer to be “one of the lads,” isolated from all but the most superficial contact with others (1998, p. 265). The authors conclude that the solitary nature, and economic and leisure-time costs, of windsurfing mean that the development of a feminist community is limited by ‘material and structural influences and constraints’ (1998, p. 270).

<sup>428</sup> Fen Coles makes the point that lesbians and bodybuilders both undermine the patriarchal fiction of the naturalness of sex, gender and sexuality, and hence, the responses of the dominant culture to both these groups of females are similar. The response of the bodybuilding media has been to promote the heterosexiness of muscles. A most interesting example is the adverts for the ‘vaginal barbell’ which tightens vaginal muscles to increase the enjoyment of heterosexual couplings. But increased tightness is clearly tailored to the enjoyment of the male in these adverts. So a wedge is driven between bodybuilding and lesbianism (1999, p. 448).

<sup>429</sup> The notion of ‘real’, when dealing with gender categories, is stated ironically.

<sup>430</sup> There are so many contributing factors to this difference in response that it is impossible to reduce it to any one factor. Johnson’s colour and literacy, the relative importance of the two events, and the relative power of the two continents may have also been factors in this difference in response. Also, the respective country of each of the defeated athletes should not be overlooked.

<sup>431</sup> According to Markula, women of this era were reassured by the medical empire that the presence of female hormones made it impossible to develop extensive musculature. Hence, the existence of such musculature was indicative of unnatural practices, and this was a physiological ‘fact’ (1995, p. 432).

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<sup>432</sup> There was a disparaging comedy skit at the time of the 1994 Australian Tennis Open, when the Melbourne zoo was trying to name a baby gorilla. The comic suggested they should name it Aranxta, after the champion female tennis player, Aranxta Sanchez-Vicario. What was disappointing was that Sanchez-Vicario, a champion tennis player, is derided for possessing a body which is muscular and strong; a body-type which makes up for an obvious lack of height.

<sup>433</sup> My insertion.

<sup>434</sup> Coles makes a similar argument about the containment of female bodybuilders. The threat posed by the muscular female is indicated by the degree to which she is negatively labelled in the community. The female bodybuilder has been called grotesque, perverse, obscene, lesbian, and freak (1999, p. 449).

<sup>435</sup> Cheryl Cole (1993, p. 78) argues that sport is a major site of the sexing of bodies and the maintenance of this dominant episteme in society. She goes on to suggest that one of the most depressing aspects of modern sports is the willingness of all athletes to submit to the invasive practices which sport uses to ensure the dominant episteme.

<sup>436</sup> This is the sense I make of Deveaux's (1994, p. 2) position that sovereign power may remain, but only as a way that disguises more insidious forms of power.

<sup>437</sup> A common tactic of those who want to maintain the dichotomous categories of the sexes in sport is to argue that sport is about strength, power and speed, and the most elite male performer will always outperform the most elite female performer in these categories. Therefore, separate competitions for the two sexes are needed.

<sup>438</sup> As previously discussed in a note in Chapter Four (note 164), Sharpe suggests that the exception to the New South Wales' anti-discrimination against transgendered persons Act (1996) that allows for discrimination in sport, suggests that sport is one site where unambiguous and biological gender hierarchies are established (1997, p. 40). If the postoperative transgendered female cannot produce ambiguity over dichotomous gender categories, I am not sure that the drugged female athlete will have any greater success.

<sup>439</sup> I fully acknowledge that the 'drugged' speaker is presently not an authoritative body. This does not mean that they will not be in the future.

<sup>440</sup> This is one aspect of Foucauldian theory that demonstrates a close affinity with feminist critiques of the maleness of reason. According to Lloyd, it is the constitution of gender difference through power/knowledge that links the work of Foucault with that of Catherine MacKinnon, which was utilised in earlier sections of this thesis. In discussing the similarities, Lloyd suggests that for both authors,

... there are no individual subjects which transcend the construction through power of different kinds of subjectivity. There is nothing to be extricated from the overlay of social 'barnacles' - neither the sexless individual... nor the authentic female identity. There is no true femaleness waiting to flow out of the biologically given once the crustaceans have been removed from the statue.... Here there are no facts of the matter of sex difference- only ways in which dominance has rationalised and perpetuated inequalities (1989, pp. 16, 17).

<sup>441</sup> Lloyd suggests a change in the symbolism associated with phallogocentric logic from a Cartesian view of the mind-body relationship, with its emphasis on the sexless mind that,

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according to Lloyd, allowed for the protection of the male standard of rationality under the cover of gender neutrality (1989, p. 14). She, following from Spinoza, proposes a shift to a monistic view of embodiment, as an example of a type of discourse of the body that would be useful for feminists. Spinoza suggested that the mind be redescribed as the 'idea of the body' such that the idea must conform or resist the symbolic structure that describes male and female bodies in different contexts. How does this symbolic structure affect the lived human body of the female and male differently? The 'powers and pleasures' open to a female body will be different to those open to a male body, and this will affect the idea of the respective bodies (Lloyd, 1989, p. 21; Lloyd, 1984, p. xii). Whilst this is a difficult concept, Lloyd explains it well in considering that the idea of the large body must be different from the idea of the small body. The powers and pleasures, the threats and dangers, for the large body makes the idea of the large body different. There are distinctive powers and pleasures associated with differently sized bodies. Corporeal socialisation and experience will be different for large and small bodies. Therefore, we can conceive of large-bodied and small-bodied minds. So we should also conceive of male and female minds (Lloyd, 1989, p. 21). There will be both similarities with, and differences between male and female minds. Contrary to the Cartesian sameness of minds, this view of the body is able to explain minds as multi-faceted and continuous with the socialised and contextualised body. The idea of any individual (female or male) body is continuous with the social forces that produce the female or male subject. Female subjects are formed by the socially imposed limitations on the female body (Lloyd, 1989, p. 21; Thompson, 1989, p. 25).

<sup>442</sup> As an example, Gatens describes the historical and cultural power that produces the dominant biological and social description of sex in society since Freud. She states:

Freud saw the biology of women and men to be unproblematic- the ovum is passive, the sperm active- the problem for him was the psychology of masculinity and femininity which "mirrors" this biology.... However,... it is not given *a priori* that the penis is active, the vagina passive. This concept has to do with the imaginary anatomy, where the vagina is conceived of as a 'hole', a 'lack' and the penis as a 'phallus'. One could just as well, given a different relational mode between men and women, conceive of the penis as being enveloped, or 'embraced' by the active vagina. In this context an interesting addendum is provided by recent biological research which maintains that the ovum is not as passive as it appears- it rejects some sperm and only allows entry, or envelops, a sperm(s) of its "choice".

... [A]s such sex and gender are not arbitrarily connected (Gatens, 1983, p. 152).

Emily Martin's characterisation of the reproductive function as explained by scientific literature as "egg as damsel in distress and sperm as heroic warrior to the rescue" comically captures the politics of reproduction (1991, p. 491 cited by Browning, 1997, p. 14 n.5).

<sup>443</sup> Moller-Okin suggests that the Rawlsian original position requires that people "must... think from the perspective of *everybody*, in the sense of *each in turn*." This forces people

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to consider the ramifications of discourses and traditions from *all* points of view (1989, p. 101). She illuminates this point by describing a cartoon:

Three elderly, robed male justices are depicted, looking down with astonishment at their very pregnant bellies. One says to the others, without further elaboration: "Perhaps we'd better reconsider that decision." This illustration graphically demonstrates the importance, in thinking about justice, of a concept like Rawl's original position, which makes us adopt the position of others- especially positions that we ourselves could never be in.... As we have seen in recent years, it is quite possible to enact and uphold "gender-neutral" laws, concerning pregnancy, abortion, childbirth leave, and so on, that in effect discriminate against women.... One of the virtues of the cartoon is its suggestion that one's thinking on such matters is likely to be affected by the knowledge that one might become "a pregnant person." (Moller-Okin, 1989, p. 102)

<sup>444</sup>O'Brien states that the anonymity of online business transactions is used by women to 'hide' their gender. But success at such hiding normally means that the woman is performing according to the male standard (1997, p. 6). And the recognition of this deception may result in the normal forms of male response to gender crossing behaviour by females. One woman was threatened with "real, very physical, very painful rape" when she was found out as passing successfully as a man on a conference board (O'Brien, 1997, p. 6). The danger for women is that such verbal harassment is often assumed to be part of the 'fantasy', and is routinely dismissed online (O'Brien, 1997, p. 6). Browning (1997, pp. 4-7) discusses the online rape of a cybercharacter produced by a woman in Seattle, by a character produced by a student in New York, and witnessed by all people on this particular Multi-user dimension, Object-Oriented chat space. In her terms:

the woman in Seattle who had written herself the character called legba, with a view perhaps to tasting in imagination a deity's freedom from the burdens of the gendered flesh, got to read similarly constructed sentences in which legba, messenger of the gods, lord of crossroads and communications, suffered a brand of degradation all-too customarily reserved for the embodied female (1997, p. 4; also see Balsamo, 1996, pp. 128-131).

The Seattle student's use of the term 'rape' provoked controversy over whether such an act is possible in cyberspace, and whether such a label trivialises the experiences of the embodied rape of 'real' women. But, like MacKinnon's (1987) opposition to pornography on the basis that its meaning subordinates all women, even if individual women profit from it, enjoy consuming it, and express no opposition to it, cyberrape also has a meaning that is oppressive for women. As Klein (1996, p. 357) states about pre-virtual reality pornography and virtual reality rape, "... people are saying... that this has no impact whatsoever on what you do in "real" life- who are they kidding?"

In addition, Carol Stable suggests that cyberspace is also a problematic site because of its eurocentricity and elitism. For all its claims of breaking down national boundaries, the cyberworld still requires "skills, time and inclination" to allow engagement (1994 cited by Brook, 1999, p. 138).

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