

Article

Mixing soccer and sexually 'subversive' identities: Enabling a representational counter-culture in South Africa?

Kate Joseph

This article looks at the significance of sport as a cultural catalyst for social change, with particular reference to South Africa. Building from that discussion the article moves to a more focused investigation around soccer and episodic narratives revolving around iconic South African women's participation in the game. This conversation is deepened by connecting it to previous academic discussions around the themes of sport and gender more generally which speak to the marginalisation of women (particularly homosexual women). The article critically engages with the notion of Gay Sport, and critiques the integration-segregation tension which such a solution offers. The article returns to a South African focus through an examination of a case study, in which I use Critical Discourse Analysis¹ to interpret an article run in the *Mail & Guardian*. This is done to investigate popular cultural perceptions via looking at how the South African press represents and responds to *The Chosen FEW*, a South African lesbian soccer team.

The politics of sport have been entwined with plays for power for decades. Notably within traditional paradigms the importance of the field of sport as a crucial means of formatting society has been acknowledged by thinkers like Anderson² and is extensively covered in works by Bourdieu³ who recognised sport as "doing politics." Consequently, it was understood that to effect a desired change in the political, one could intentionally affect the social organisation of the field of sport.

Historically in South Africa, sport has been a relevant field of power contestation. Soccer has a long standing history of being tied to a political struggle in relation to race (and concomitantly class) during the Apartheid years⁴. Korr and Close's text *More Than Just a Game: Soccer Vs. Apartheid: The Most Important Soccer Story Ever Told* (2008) details the way that soccer was used by black⁵ men in South Africa as an active force to challenge the oppressive Apartheid regime.

Within a postmodern paradigm in which such a causal definition of Power is compromised, can sport still be seen to be deeply politically relevant? Within this postmodern paradigm could a subversive politic, rather than the idea of intentionality, fit more appropriately since the conception of the political is itself unstable and dynamic? What shape could a subversive politic take? How is one to represent the intervention accordingly? Indeed recently Worby⁶ has offered what might be termed a postmodern description of how South African urban pick-up soccer can be viewed as representing 'spontaneity': as a space where Apartheid history is not only suspended, but is a moment of pure social fluidity

and an aspiration to realise an unfettered racial freedom through the “informal connectivity and assemblage of potentialities that has neither formal structure nor predictable form.”

The preceding questions instantiate an interesting theoretical trajectory from which to investigate soccer in a post-Apartheid era, to see if the game’s historic political (racial) aspects can be extended now and make room for the field to become a space in which issues of gender/sex politics may be contested. Formalised women’s soccer has been played in South Africa⁷ since the 1970s⁸. However women’s soccer continues to be viewed as an amateur (even illegitimate) imitation of the men’s game.⁹ In the broader arena an abundance of anecdotal evidence exists from women in South Africa, who tell of how their participation, observation or enjoyment of sport is not given any acknowledgment by male counterparts. Instead a woman and her positionality as a potential sexual partner is immediately conflated and accessed. “The men think we are coming to the place just to have a good time with them. They cannot even think that we are entering a place to enjoy ourselves and not satisfy them” said a woman from Cape Town commenting on a local township sport/games hall.¹⁰

In short, how others read sporting women’s sex *and* their sexuality can have far-reaching implications. Naidoo¹¹ has noted that talented South African women footballers have been denied positions which their skill should have afforded them owing to such expectations of ‘legitimised’ sexual congress. The story of Gloria Hlalele is a case in point. Hlalele is one of South Africa’s great soccer players – she was instrumental in establishing both *Banyana Banyana* and the *Soweto Ladies*, as well as being recognised “as good enough to coach men”.¹² While Hlalele grew up playing as part of boys’ teams, she was prevented from playing professionally in male teams because she was a woman. She went on to found and play for the women’s team, *Soweto Ladies*. Later on Hlalele and fellow team mate, Pumla Masuku, were banned from the team. This followed a public sexual harassment accusation laid against the then coach of *Soweto Ladies* (Hlalele maintained the coach made several sexual advances, which Hlalele rebuffed). Both Hlalele and Masuku are lesbian. Hlalele strongly believes that her sexual orientation and refusal to sleep with the coach, was a reason for her exclusion from the male managed team.¹³

In April 2008 Eudy Simelane, who openly identified herself as lesbian, was raped and stabbed to death in KwaThema, Gauteng. Simelane was the midfielder for *Banyana Banyana*, the South African national women’s football team. The crime has been deemed a hate-crime by Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) focused on gender equality,¹⁴ and considered as a crime which exposed the amount of prejudice suffered by lesbians particularly in poorer, black communities within South Africa.¹⁵

Thus there is the assumption, outside of and within the sporting arena, that women are first and foremost seen as sexual objects in the service of men. Not only that, but if a woman rejects this role, the repercussions can often be extremely detrimental, either professionally as in the case of Hlalele’s career, or

bodily with the looming threat of grievous abuse and harm, as highlighted through the murder of Eudy Simelane, (among others). The female body, the embodied experience itself, also becomes a site of tension as the stories above illustrate with regards to its not being 'man enough', as well as its being seen as 'not being woman (read heterosexual) enough'.

As Naidoo¹⁶ points out, this phenomenon becomes a 'double bind' for many lesbian professional and semi-professional women footballers in South Africa. Indeed the preceding narratives instantiate just how necessary the creation of counter-culture zones are, when speaking in relation to hegemonic social relations and expectations about gender and sexuality. While the cultural practice/performance via sport has historically been a vehicle able to challenge social hierarchies, particularly around issues of race and class, the task however may be much more complicated in relation to a restructuring of gender relations; since sport itself has a history of patriarchal domination.

Sport represents a social institution which, perhaps more than any other, perpetuates the ideologies of male superiority and female inferiority, argue Kane and Greendorfer.¹⁷ Dworkin and Messner¹⁸ express that in the wake of two decades of burgeoning athleticism by girls and women, medical leaders in the 1920's and 1930's responded with what now seem like hysterical fears that vigorous physical activity for women carried enormous physical and psychological dangers. One so-called psychological danger, and a major social fear, was the conventionally accepted idea that through strenuous physical activity (or strenuous mental activity i.e. attending university) the prospect for women to 'become' homosexual increased.¹⁹ In response to these fears institutionalised women's sport was adapted to a 'tamed down' version. As Dworkin and Messner²⁰ pronounce, this effectively served to ghettoise women's sport, leaving the hegemonic masculinity of sport virtually unchallenged to this day.

Sport and gendered marginalisation

Griffin²¹ argues, and I support, that although more recently it is lesbians who are the targets of attack in women's sport, it is in fact *all* women who are victimised by the use of the lesbian label in sport to intimidate and control according to gendered and sexualised systems and structures of power. Nevertheless, this discrimination has led to the emergence of 'Gay Sport;' a relatively recent phenomenon originating in the 1970's, which seeks to establish a sporting 'safe space'. Over the last four decades there has been exponential growth in the number of all- (or predominantly) lesbian sports clubs, organisations and competitions throughout the world.²² The flipside however is that the establishment of all-gay sport can provide an excuse for mainstream clubs and organisations to do nothing about their own sexual intolerance, homophobia and discrimination.

A further drawback as Hargreaves²³ points out, is that Gay Sport has remained on the fringes and crossing into mainstream elite sport is not yet a realistic option for sportswomen hoping to advance their sporting careers. Hargreaves is aware

of the contradictory position afforded through Gay Sport and argues importantly that such a campaign, aimed at reimagining sexual prescription in sport, is, however, taking place in insular, ghettoised spaces and that Gay Sports liberation is partial and conditional – it has come only with separation and not with integration.²⁴

Thus lesbian sportswomen face a double conundrum around segregation-integration: whether the increased numbers of 1) women's and 2) lesbian, clubs and organisations are liberating or restrictive. Gay people are asking: "Are these clubs a symbol of our strength or will self-imposed segregation from mainstream sport inevitably hamper our progress towards greater acceptance in the heterosexual world?"²⁵

Using sport as a site of potential counter-culture

On the other hand, Hargreaves²⁶ catalogues the potentially positive contributions of Gay Sport as a form of counter-culture to catalyse socio-political change. It is argued that Gay Sport provides lesbian sportswomen with a prejudice-free space – something that mainstream sport, as I have stated, has failed abysmally to do; enabling lesbians to come out without the labelling and discrimination that accompany coming out in mainstream sport. Gay Sport can provide a safe women-only space and sense of comfort and belonging. It challenges stereotypes, giving lesbians a higher profile, not only creating positive images for other lesbians, but also gives lesbians greater visibility, pushing forward the growing public acceptance of homosexuality. This is arguably true in a South African context where the political utilisation of soccer from the NGO sector, particularly from women- and lesbian-centered organisations, has met success at the level of community located sporting events. For example an annual women's soccer tournament, initiated by the Lesbian and Gay Equality Project in 2009 in the course of mobilising the local LGBTI community in Kwa Thema around the murder trial of Simelane, now receives warm, broad-based approval in the same community where four years ago Simelane was murdered specifically for being a lesbian.

These new constructions and positive images, Hargreaves²⁷ argues, have political power through their visibility in dominant culture. Yet how dominant are these kinds of images allowed to be in South African 'mainstream' culture? And can the level of representation in fact signal a move beyond a "tolerance of private sexual politics" towards a construction and inevitable "acceptance of alternative lifestyles" as Featherstone et al²⁸ postulate?

The South African media and Gay Sport

It was quite a task to find articles in the South African press during 2010 which handled the topic of Gay Sport. In fact I was unable to find an article in the South African media reporting directly on the 2010 Gay Games. I thought this was peculiar since South Africa's bid to host the very same event had been widely and positively reported in preceding years: IOL publications – *Gay Games may be a boon for the city of gold*, March 11 2005; *Gay Games venue to be announced soon*, November 2 2005; *Joburg loses out on Gay Games*,

November 14 2005. One explanation for the lack of coverage in 2010 may be the seemingly innocuous justification that the popularity of the FIFA World Cup simply overshadowed the Gay Games in media reporting. However perhaps another explanation for the change in the reception of the Gay Games had more to do with the political climate in the country: In 2010 a creeping wave of conservatism and homophobia engulfed the South African government and its foreign representatives: Jon Qwelane, a South African foreign ambassador was convicted of homophobic hate speech. Baso Sangqu, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations voted in favour of removing sexual orientation from a UN Resolution condemning extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions. The Zuma cabinet (unlike Mbeki in 2009) did not radically denounce the resurfacing of the previously stalled Ugandan anti-homosexual, 'kill the gays,' bill.

Domestically, only the independent *Mail & Guardian* carried stories on *The Chosen FEW*,²⁹ the lesbian soccer team representing South Africa at the Gay Games (*Belles of the ball*, April 23 2010; *Lesbian team fight for rights in SA*, May 5 2010). It would appear that the major nationally syndicated newspapers did not deem such a story newsworthy, though it was picked up and reported on internationally (*The Guardian* (online), United Kingdom, *The Chosen Few lesbian team has changed Lerato Marumolwa's life*, June 20 2010; *CNN*, United States, *World Cup inspires lesbian footballers to play with pride*, June 22 2010).

It would then seem that constructions of lesbian sports women are certainly not a dominant feature in South Africa mainstream media. And furthermore I will argue, by reference to an analysis of the article *Lesbian soccer team fight for rights in SA* (*Mail & Guardian*, May 5 2010)³⁰, that even when the press do publish articles centred around progressive counter-culture advancing subjects, at a level of representation the construction of lesbian (and women) sports people remains at best ambiguous, and does not overwhelmingly invite an acceptance of alternative gender or sexuality relations.

The blueprint³¹ article, *Lesbian soccer team fight for rights in SA* (*Mail & Guardian*, May 5 2010), in some instances rightly gives recognition to the inextricable connection between politics and cultural practices; and appears to promote the use of sport as a means of challenging power. In the article there is a strong insistence, supporting Hargreaves's notion, that all-lesbian sport provides a safe space and sense of comfort and belonging³². The author notes that "players say the team has become a refuge for them"³³ particularly "in contrast to the danger and prejudice they suffer in their townships."³⁴ One of the players states that: "FEW is my family," "It is a space where I feel at home, I can be myself."³⁵ She says, "We come from different backgrounds but when we come here we are one thing, we are a family."³⁶ Another player echoes these sentiments: "This team means a lot to me, because we are like sisters. We are the family".³⁷

'Family' by and large has the connotations of being a nurturing, protective and close-knit space. This is the idea the players are referencing. However,

Simmons³⁸ expediently demonstrates that, couched within the imagining of the stereotypical, nuclear family are hidden discriminatory relations of power: patriarchal dominance, racial cohesion and heterosexism. With regard to a lesbian team battling homophobia and violence against women (arguably ideologically at odds with the historic logic of the family³⁹) as well as the fact that an all-women team does not visually resemble typical representations of the family, one might think this a misappropriate and damaging metaphor. Yet it is possible to read the family metaphor in this context as operating as a site of subversive resistance. This can occur in two ways: On the one hand referencing ‘the family’ shows basic similitude: shared values, shared aspirations, shared desire for sense of belonging; it might be seen as an attempt by the journalist to make homosexuals relatable to a predominantly straight audience – a means of delegitimising discrimination without thoroughly altering the contemporary social order. On the other hand, and more radically, one could argue that by using the metaphor of the family the speakers are slowly shifting its meaning, opening up the word to contestation and wider appropriation. As such the speakers could be said to be resisting the allocated meaning and inscribing the word with an alternative reading at the site of utterance. That is, creating counter meaning through suggesting a more inclusive notion of the family and a different image of what the family may look like.

The kind of re-inscription mentioned above is incredibly powerful and can be a vital action towards the reshaping of cultural norms. It has been recognised as such by distinguished thinkers such as the linguist, J.L. Austin⁴⁰, and the famed philosopher, Michel Foucault. In Foucault’s understanding, controlling discourses create a counter-vocabulary or ‘reverse discourse’ which typically speak in the same terms as the oppressive discourse which sought to disqualify them: “There are no relations of power without resistance; the latter are all the more real and effective because they are formed right at the point where relations of power are exercised.”⁴¹ In this case within contestation over the term ‘family’ and it is at the moment of performance (or utterance) that meaning, and with it a course to power, is laid open.

Returning to an analysis of the newspaper article; there are contrarily a number of instances in the article where empowerment and counter-culture understandings are not promoted, since the discourse presents an ambivalent resignation towards, or at best no offered challenge to offset, the denial of homosexuality and sex privileging in sports. This is particularly evident when directly examining the representation of the sport theme, which pointedly speaks to hegemonic, patriarchal power.

To focus on how the theme of sport is framed within this article let me unpack some of the linguistic features at work in the text. Looking at voice, *The Chosen FEW* (or synonymous concepts) functions as the subject of active-voice verbs which relate directly to sporting activity in eight instances. A few positive examples⁴² include, the team “play[s] with skill”; they “train”; they “won...medals”; they “will compete[.]” These verbs can be said to convey

strong, objective descriptions of the players' engagement with soccer – in other words a positive reinforcement of women in sport.

The remainder of the sport referencing actions can be read in more nuanced ways. Clauses about the players such as “most of whom began playing soccer in their childhood”⁴³ offer an ambivalent perception of their sporting integration. Great sport stars are often trained in their discipline from infancy, so on the one hand, a subtle link to this vein of exceptionalism may be suggested. The assertion that *The Chosen FEW* have substantial experience as they have been playing since they were young children is also possible. Yet on the other hand the pointed grammatical link to childhood makes the players sound or seem child-like; this patterning is described as the ‘infantalisation of women’ by feminist theorists. This concept is reinforced through discourse patterns⁴⁴ which stress ‘women-and-children’ as one category and as one which is viewed as less capable than the category of ‘men.’ In conjunction with the former described ideology is the possible inference that the players’ skills are inferior (in relation to their male counterparts); and that they have not progressed much – there is still a link to the childhood level of the game. In South Africa this is a very real perception, which needs to be combated. Fran Hilton-Smith, The South African Women's Football Teams Manager, commenting on public perception says “In this country, men’s football is seen as being the most relevant while women’s football has and still is being received as more of an amateur sport”⁴⁵. Given that women’s soccer is so frequently read as a lesser or watered down version of the ‘real’ (read men’s) sport – this phraseology is likely to call forth a derisive presentation of women in sport.

In the clause: “They dance down the pitch in formation before matches,”⁴⁶ “pitch” of course is a direct reference to sport, “dance” however may have connotations which link it to soccer, the beautiful game, particularly given the “in formation” adverbial phrase. However “dance” also carries ‘feminising’ qualities. As does “sing” which is mentioned in the clause “singing shows the team spirit.”⁴⁷ These devices could possibly be serving to neutralise the perceived transgressive element of women engaging in ‘men’s sport’ by aligning the sports women to an imaginatively constructed ‘feminine’ activity; and further may be used to lessen the perceived threat of homosexuality by making a lesbian team appear suitably ‘feminine.’

Similarly the second clause of this sentence: “and end games with a huddle and recitation of the Lord’s Prayer”⁴⁸ operates much the same way. The word “huddle” is often employed in direct relation to sport, and while many athletes are pictured thanking a god for their achievements, the decision to include this description of the team may indeed be intentionally included as a means of neutralising, and at the same time highlighting, the homosexual identity of the team – particularly given the prevalence of the assumption that engaging in homosexual practices goes against religion. Thus while many male players or teams may do all of these things: dance, sing and pray, in general these activities are not explicitly reported on when writing an article about men’s sport.

Furthermore the actions carry a different inference when describing a lesbian team.

Therefore even though an intention behind this text may have been to bring to light gender-based issues and homophobic discrimination with the aim of reforming society, the mode of representation afforded to the commercial South African press is by design, and in effect, limited to atrophied representations. One could argue that media practitioners do not in fact have a language to speak about lesbian football players – or for that matter any subversive acts which fall outside of ‘mainstream’ spaces or normative understandings of the world – however journalists need to be trained to understand how dominant language use, which is oftentimes sexist and homophobic, contributes to and reproduces discriminatory norms around gender and sexuality. Moreover alternative images or even such semi- counter-culture reporting as analysed in this paper, have certainly not become part and parcel of the ‘mainstream’ South African media culture.

As such, contemporary descriptions of *The Chosen FEW* by the South African press are situated in line with a more than two-decade old finding suggested by Kane and Greendorfer⁴⁹, that the media attempts to frame sports women as ‘women,’ despite their involvement in sport; in that gender identity supersedes any skill that these woman present. *The Chosen FEW*, represented as sporting activists, are framed primarily as *activists* – moreover as female activists; in a role in which they may be understood as nurturing each other⁵⁰ and therefore ‘appropriately’ dealing with what are frequently termed ‘women’s issues’ – *in spite* of their skill and involvement in sport. In MacKinnon’s words sports women “get to choose between being a successful girl or being a successful athlete,”⁵¹ with an enormous amount of popularity for female athletes continuing to ride on their defined heterosexual attractiveness; as was evident in the broadcasting of the London 2012 Olympic Games.

As it stands, women’s soccer is established as other through the use of the qualifier ‘women’s’ which distinguishes it from so-called ‘normal’ soccer. The setting up of the men’s soccer/women’s soccer divide, recalls several sexist ideological binaries – culture:nature; public:private; strong:weak; doers:done to – this sort of chauvinistic sentiment has historically translated into concrete practices of discrimination. The fact is that for South Africans if one is not playing at a national level (where there has been some concession, albeit disparaging, to allow ‘feeble athlete’ to read ‘woman’) the trend among the broader public still is *not* to consider women generally as competent athletes. And though advocacy is important and a legitimate intention of the team, it is also valuable to acknowledge that their performance through sport itself could be recognised as a counter culture or subversive mode potentially able to rival a hegemonic gender-distinction-biased status quo, however this reality is (to a substantial extent) overlooked by the presentation offered through the text.

In examining this particular media representation, one could also speak to what Duncan and Hasbrook⁵² termed “denial of game”. This is a strategic insistence

figuratively to decouple and keep separate, the image of women and the image of sport. This happens at two levels within this text. At one level there are the inconsistencies with the image of the athlete which I described in the previous paragraph, illustrated through the references to childhood and imagined 'feminising' activities in so far as these players are not able to be viewed in the model of the archetypal 'athlete,' (strong, active, male) predominantly because they are women but even more so because the majority of mainstream culture regards lesbianism as sexual deviance. On another level, because this article looks at players at community/civil society/NGO sector level there is the denial of sport through the decision to redirect focus onto advocacy activities, *in place of* sporting prowess. This is evident in a quantitative comparison; in an article about a soccer team, distributed in a period with a spiked nationwide interest in soccer, nine instances of active voice detailing the team referred to advocacy activity, not soccer playing. Whereas of the eight instances which refer to sporting activities, less than half of these are emphatic assertions of the team as legitimate soccer playing subjects – instead it is reported that *The Chosen FEW* "sing," "change their clothes," "walk" and "dance".

Of course there is an argument to be made that while the press has a captive soccer loving audience, this is the ideal space to subtly, even subversively, slip in some progressive information on gender discrimination while readers are what one might call 'not looking.' However this type of framing does not escape the problematic ghettoisation endemic to identity based politics. Focusing on 'us' and 'them' is not useful in the long run; describing a lesbian team or a women's team differently to regular sports reporting does culturally code them as different *from*. The media's differential style towards reporting on lesbian women's soccer, exacerbates the already segregationally-laden preserve of identity politics, which snubs, effectively in a similar manner as heteronormativity does, the possibilities of any cross-over and/or miscegenation.

Re-envisioning Inclusion: Queering Soccer

If supposedly subversive performances restrict themselves to designated, cloistered environs, to remaining doggedly on the fringes and assert themselves through a reliance on categorisation, such resistance can only ever be partial and will more usually prop up existing hierarchies of dominance. A safe-space from which one cannot escape might just as correctly be called a prison. Therefore there is the need for subversion to obfuscate the boundaries of simple categorisation in order to be truly successful; to counter hegemony. Principally, on the level of representation there needs to be an active attempt to stop the promulgation of Gay Sport and/ or women's sport as categories outside of the main; rather, there needs to be a movement to transform the main.

From the late 1990's, particularly in Europe, there have been commendable attempts to straddle the sports/sexuality divide in a way that offers both integration as well as tangible transformation. The importance of these types of organisations⁵³ is that they represent the lesbian (and gay) sports experience as not separated from, but as part of, mainstream sport society. This is a form of reconstituting the materiality of the field of sport.

Pronger⁵⁴ articulates that, “Gay culture is one that is *not* orthodox. ... Joining/belonging to a Gay Sport club is an act of resistance to the oppressiveness of orthodox culture. Gay culture is a response to homosexual oppression [.]” However I suggest as a counter-argument, that *not* joining a Gay Sports club is in fact an equal if not more strong act of resistance. One may question whether simply ‘being gay’ and engaging in ‘play’ is enough to subversively challenge the existing gendered order. I intuitively think that it is. I feel that by participating and engaging queer⁵⁵, women are redefining several different historic, imaginative constructions/perceptions. And furthermore, utilising a mode as popular and encompassing as soccer, particularly in South Africa, is a sharp cultural street for gay people to express en route how we are *not different from*. In this sense one may detect echoes of Worby’s⁵⁶ expression around the pickup game and its assemblage of potentialities and connectivity – elements which are discovered, negotiated and can be daily renewed between all on the pitch, gay and straight, woman or man.

While one cannot ignore the political significance of asymmetrical gender relations vested in certain cultural practices (sport being an ideal synecdoche) if one wishes to challenge contemporary, cultural, gender discrimination one can in fact actively create a interference in and transform those very practices from the centre out, through appropriation and the creation of a new sense of shared access/ownership. This re-invented access however must be defined in terms of integration, and not a minstrelised⁵⁷ acquiescence or, alternatively, a promulgated self-separation based on a particular identity. The course of action I propose is in line with theories from feminist politics of intersectionality, which argue that while different social divisions might be irreducible, concrete experiences of oppression are intermeshed. So one should not in the case of *The Chosen Few* and revolutionising sport, attempt to essentialise ‘womanhood’ or ‘lesbianism’ or ‘blackness’ or ‘poverty’; rather we should take cognisance of what Kimberlé Crenshaw means when she says all forms of oppression “link together to make a double, a triple, multiple, a many layered blanket of oppression.”⁵⁸

Lesbian athletes cannot perform, nor be represented, only in the confines of a safely demarcated gay space if the real aim is successful transformation at any level – be it the structural level of sport, or social mores. I argue, based on an application of Critical Discourse Analysis, that the South African press’ cultural engagement with ‘subversive’ gender relations has up to now been stilted, since firstly, the press codes lesbian sportswomen as different from; secondly it attempts to feminise their image and even deny potential popularity which could be accessed through being a sports star; and lastly even when semi-progressive/semi-problematic these representations do not generally find their way into the centre and remain outside of mainstream media. There is reason to believe, however that the same semi-progressive/semi-problematic representations are slowly pushing back the boundaries and blurring a cultural space where distinctions between homosexual and heterosexual do not have to be

so carefully managed. This is itself a challenge to the limited solution suggested through Gay Sport.

An eminent example of exploding these types of cloistered environs and thus asserting positive and integrated representations of sports women (who happen to be lesbian) could be found in media representations of the FIFA Women's World Cup 2011 held in Germany. In this sports spectacle one could witness a shift towards a casual acceptance of lesbians in sport. In this event some lesbian sports women were able to represent their sexuality openly, in public ceremonies, and be viewed, not as deviants, but simply as sportswomen. The Women's World Cup 2011 represented an opportunity for Germany specifically, but FIFA and organised sport in general, to reinvent itself in the eyes of, and through the eyes of, the global community via mediatisation. Hopefully this signals a bolstering for representations of women in sport to come into their own, offering a new cultural space where women are presented neither as sexual objects nor as lesser athletes, but egalitarianly as skilled players and in this way further mix up hegemonic gender relations.

Notes

¹ I am using a method of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) developed by Hilary Janks adapted from Michael Halliday's theories on Systemic Functional Grammar (1985).

² B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*. London: Verso. 1983.

³ P. Bourdieu, "Sport and Social Class," in *Social Science Information*, 17 (6) 1978, pp.819-840.

⁴ P. Alegi, *Laduma! Soccer, Politics, and Society in South Africa*. Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press. 2004; C. Korr & M. Close, *More Than Just a Game: Soccer Vs. Apartheid: The Most Important Story Ever Told*. New York: St Martin's Press. 2008.

⁵ I am using the term 'black' to refer collectively to people of African, Asian and coloured identities based on the convention developed by the Black Consciousness Movement, although it is worth noting that, particularly in the Apartheid period in South Africa, soccer was primarily associated with black, 'African' men.

⁶ E. Worby, "The Play of Race in a Field of Urban Desire: Soccer and Spontaneity in Post-Apartheid Johannesburg," in *Critique of Anthropology*, 2009, pp.105-123.

⁷ C. Pelak, "Women and Gender in South African Soccer: A brief history," in *Soccer & Society*, 11 (1) 2010, pp.63-78.

⁸ Pelak, "Women and Gender in South African Soccer: A brief history," p.65. Pelak chronicles that in the early 1970's, the South African Women's Football Association (SAWFA) was formed as the national governing body for women's soccer. This organisation was exclusively for whites and coloureds; yet owing to women's outsider position in soccer and the limited scope of women's soccer during these developmental years, it became perceived as a non-racial organisation, with racial integration taking place even during the Apartheid years of the late 1970's.

⁹ P. Naidoo, *Women's Bodies and the World of Football in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Human Sciences Research Council Press. 2006, p.13; S. Siko-Shosha, "Sisters Still Sidelined: SA's Female Footballers Struggle to Make Their Mark," in *The Big Issue*, June 2010, p.21.

¹⁰ Anonymous woman quoted in C. Roberts, *Against the Grain: Women and Sport in South Africa*, Cape Town: Township Publishing Cooperative. 1992, p.22.

¹¹ Niadoo, *Women's Bodies and the World of Football in South Africa*, p.17.

¹² Naidoo, *Women's Bodies and the World of Football in South Africa*, p.18.

¹³ Naidoo, *Women's Bodies and the World of Football in South Africa*, p.18.

¹⁴ Though it was not defined as such by official state law.

¹⁵ B. Moody, "Lesbian team fight for rights in SA," in *Mail & Guardian*, 05/05/2010.

¹⁶ Naidoo, *Women's Bodies and the World of Football in South Africa*, p.18.

- ¹⁷ M. Kane & S. Greendorfer, "The Media's Role in Accomodating and Resisting Stereotyped Images of Women in Sport" in P. Creedon (Ed.), *Women, Media and Sport*. California: Sage. 1994, pp.28-44.
- ¹⁸ S. Dworkin & M. Messner, "Just do... what?" in S. Scranton & A. Flintoff (Eds.), *Gender and Sport: A reader*. New York: Routledge. 2002, p.25.
- ¹⁹ M. Gibson, "American Doctors Define the Lesbian Brain and Her Intellect, 1880-1949" in B. Norton & R. Alexander (Eds.), *Major Problems in American Women's History*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company. 2003, pp.308-317.
- ²⁰ Dworkin & Messner, "Just do... what?," p.25
- ²¹ P. Griffin, "Changing the game: Homophobia, sexism and lesbians in sport" in S. Scranton & A. Fintoff (Eds.), *Gender and Sport: A reader*. New York: Routledge. 2002, p.196.
- ²² J. Hargreaves, "Sporting Lesbians" in J. Hargreaves (Ed.), *Heroines in Sport: The politics of difference*. London: Routledge. 2000, p.152.
- ²³ Hargreaves, "Sporting Lesbians," p.152
- ²⁴ Hargreaves, "Sporting Lesbians," p.150
- ²⁵ Cited in Hargreaves, "Sporting Lesbians," p.171
- ²⁶ Hargreaves, "Sporting Lesbians," p.154
- ²⁷ Hargreaves, "Sporting Lesbians," p.154
- ²⁸ Cited in Hargreaves, "Sporting Lesbians," p.154
- ²⁹ *The Chosen FEW* is a soccer team connected to and part of the NGO, *Forum for Empowerment of Women (FEW)*, which organises around protecting and promoting the human rights of black, lesbian women, particularly from townships in the greater Johannesburg area
- ³⁰ Moody, "Lesbian team fight for rights in SA,"
- ³¹ The same article was also carried by *The Big Issue*, June 2010, an independent, commercial, community magazine designed to enable homeless people to get a foot in the entrepreneurial door and by the *Guardian* in the United Kingdom, 05/05/2010.
- ³² Hargreaves, "Sporting Lesbians," p.152
- ³³ Moody, "Lesbian team fight for rights in SA,"
- ³⁴ Moody, "Lesbian team fight for rights in SA,"
- ³⁵ Quoted in Moody, "Lesbian team fight for rights in SA,"
- ³⁶ Quoted in Moody, "Lesbian team fight for rights in SA,"
- ³⁷ Quoted Moody, "Lesbian team fight for rights in SA,"
- ³⁸ C. Simmons, "Women's Power in Sex: Radical Challenges to Marriage in the Early Twentieth-Century United States," in *Feminist Studies*, 29 (1) 2003, pp.168-198.
- ³⁹ For more information see A. Rich, 'Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence' in *Signs*, 4 (5) 1980.
- ⁴⁰ J.L Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*. London: Oxford University Press. 1976.
- ⁴¹ M. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*. Cited in L. McNay, *Foucault and Feminism*. Cambridge: Polity Press. 1992.
- ⁴² Moody, "Lesbian team fight for rights in SA,"
- ⁴³ Moody, "Lesbian team fight for rights in SA,"
- ⁴⁴ Typical examples would be discourse around security which propounds that women- and-children be protected or saved first. In South Africa there is also currently a department dedicated to Women, Children and the Disabled, signaling these identity groups as more needing of a patron to ensure their wellbeing.
- ⁴⁵ Siko-Shosha, "Sisters Still Sidelined: SA's Female Footballers Struggle to Make Their Mark," p.20.
- ⁴⁶ Moody, "Lesbian team fight for rights in SA,"
- ⁴⁷ Moody, "Lesbian team fight for rights in SA,"
- ⁴⁸ Moody, "Lesbian team fight for rights in SA,"
- ⁴⁹ Kane and Greendorfer, "The Media's Role in Accomodating and Resisting Stereotyped Images of Women in Sport," pp.28-44.
- ⁵⁰ Moody, "Lesbian team fight for rights in SA,"
- ⁵¹ C.MacKinnon, "From Feminine Mystique to the Female Physique: Uncovering the Archetype of Artemis in Sport" in P. Creedon (Ed.), *Women, Media and Sport*. California: Sage Publications. 1994.

⁵² M. Duncan, & C. Hasbrook, "Denial of power in televised women's sport" in S. Scraton & A. Flintoff (Eds.), *Gender and Sport: A reader*. New York: Routledge. 2002, p.92.

⁵³ Past examples of such action include powerful lesbian, gay and queer pressure groups managing to secure a dedicated visitor's centre for the first time in Olympic history at the 1996 Atlanta games to ensure a visible queer presence. In 1997, also for the first time, BGLSF had a tent at the Gay Pride Festival in England, encouraging gay athletes to network and enter mainstream sporting events such as the London Marathon.

⁵⁴ Cited in Hargreaves, "Sporting Lesbians," p.153

⁵⁵ Queer generally indicates opposition to identity-based categories and signals a strong antipathy for 'heteronormativity' (roughly: the taken-for-granted social and sexual arrangements in a heterosexual-centered world-view) and also rejects a 'homonormativity'. As such it follows that 'queer' should not be taken to be a synonym for LGBTI communities. It is more accurate to think of queering, as with any project of postmodern discourse, as centred on disturbing fixed identity and promoting a reflexive atmosphere in which we question what we assume to be 'normal.' As such I am using the term not as representative of any particular identity, but liberally as an imposed marker to signify women who do not align with dominant expectations of 'femininity,' and/or body type, and/or sexuality

⁵⁶ Worby, "The Play of Race in a Field of Urban Desire: Soccer and Spontaneity in Post-Apartheid Johannesburg," p.119.

⁵⁷ Minstrelization: the act of conforming to the subaltern stereotype which others of the dominant group have approved. The suspected origin of the term dates back to the 'Jim Crow' era in the United States and its associated racially debased 'minstrel' performances. It is suggested, as way of a historic explanation of the word's meaning, that slave-owners probably gave preference to "good-natured Negroes" thus a smiling countenance would increase one's chances for a less back-breaking job, or possibly avert a whipping. Though lifted from racial discourse on race originally, the term is now used in discourses on transgression generally.

⁵⁸ N. Yuval-Davis, "Intersectionality and Feminist Politics," in *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 13, 2006, p.196.