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DIRT OFF HER SHOULDERS

Jennifer Doyle

If, as Monique Wittig famously observed, “the category of sex sticks to women, for only they cannot be conceived outside of it,” certain athletes come into our view for their sublime flight from that category.[1] The most spectacular example in recent years is surely the South African runner Caster Semenya. I begin this introduction not with a rehearsal of the specifics of her gender trouble (which have been analyzed extensively elsewhere).[2] Let us start instead with some attention to her running, because that is, frankly, where the trouble began. In 2009, at the age of eighteen and with very little race experience, she became the women’s world champion in the 800-meter dash. That race was remarkable. She spent the first four hundred meters in the lead pack looking focused but comfortable running shoulder to shoulder with the world’s fastest women. As the pack turned into the second and final lap she powered ahead, taking the lead and the race. She finished in a blistering 1:55.45. It was not the fastest women’s 800 ever run, but it broke the South African record (held by Zola Budd) and beat the previous best performance recorded in 2009 by almost two seconds. Once Semenya finished the race, she celebrated her win: she held up her arms, balled her fists, and flexed her muscles. Keeping her arms lifted, she turned her hands out and then folded them across the top of her shoulders. She brushed them clean, invoking Jay-Z’s 2003 hit, “Dirt off Your Shoulder”—the B side, as it happens, to “99 Problems.” It was not a grand gesture. It did not need to be: it was instantly recognizable. Haters might hate, but Caster Semenya was, in that moment, the world’s fastest woman.

Semenya’s biography is not exceptional for an exceptional athlete. She did not grow up rich or entitled; as a child she was not keen on dresses; she was bigger and stronger than other girls; she liked “rough-and-tumble” play; before she took up track, she played on a men’s soccer team. Brushing dirt off her shoulders was likely something at which she excelled. The childhood of the world’s best athletes often looks like this. The Brazilian soccer player Marta Viera da Silva (named the

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world's best player five years in a row, from 2006 to 2010) played with boys until other teams complained about the *advantage* she gave hers. As a kid, she had to fight for her place on the field. That story (about playing with boys, fighting with boys) does not appear in Marta's mythology as a source of injury. It appears as evidence of her fortitude and her capacity for play.

Semenya's sex was in question before she crossed the finish line in 2009. Her "case" became the biggest story in women's sports that year. Her victory capped an incredible season in which her personal best improved from race to race. When she powered past her opponents it looked as if she were built of different stuff — as it does in a race that is not close. Such an increase in a man's speed provokes questions about doping; in a woman it raises a different kind of suspicion. She was accused by many of being a man, of being not "100 percent" woman; she was diagnosed in headlines as a hermaphrodite, as intersex, as a gender freak.[3] She was subjected to diverse tests, the invasive nature of which we can only imagine. Her "case" — that of a gender-nonconforming woman who is also one of the fastest women on earth — inspired international bodies governing a range of sports to adopt problematic policies for deciding just what, exactly, makes a woman athlete female.[4]

"The case," "the question," "the problem" of Semenya is just one instance of the ritual humiliation of women and queers that defines the sport spectacle — women are exiled as athletes no one wants to watch (because they are boring), women are pathologized as excessive in their physicality and temperament, women are regulated out of competition for their gender variance, lesbians — visible everywhere in women's sports as athletes and fans — are ignored with an astonishing aggression. For gay men, we need turn only to the headline "Player Comes Out, and Retires" — presented in sports media as some kind of progress — to get the measure of things.[5] As *GLQ* readers know well, mainstream sports culture theatricalizes the exile and abjection of the feminine, the effeminate, the queer (isn't this what we mean by "bullying"?). It stages gender segregation as not only natural but necessary to a sense of fairness. It does so in syncopation with a racialist logic that presents the black body especially as vitality, as raw force, as athleticism itself. Semenya's speed leaves in its wake a certain kind of turbulence. She is a symbolic problem for the public sphere; she is a figure for both escape and capture. Sex and race cut across and through her lines of flight and the tortured lines of her restraint. This athlete is a cousin to the unthinkable female "bastard" described by Hortense Spillers: "A 'she,'" Spillers writes, "cannot . . . qualify for bastard, or 'natural son' status, and *that* she cannot provides further insights into the coils and recoils of patriarchal wealth and fortune."[6] The female athlete — in her speed, in her strength and power — cannot measure human capacity. Symbolically, she is significant in that she cannot. Semenya's problem — her problematic — is that of flesh's relationship to the body (flesh, in Spillers's words: "that zero degree of social conceptualization that does not escape concealment under the brush of discourse, or the reflexes of iconography").[7] As a black woman faster than all other women, Semenya is estranged from her sex. When she runs faster than every other woman, she runs like the man she is not. She runs out of gender; she does not make sense. How can this athlete, who is faster than every other woman, "really" be female? The question asked of Semenya is not "who is she?" but *what*? This is not only about the gender of speed. It is also, of course, about her race. It is hard not to see in "the case of Caster Semenya" what Fred Moten describes (in his essay "The Case of Blackness") as a "sense of the fugitive law of movement that makes black social life ungovernable." "What is it," Moten might well ask of Semenya, "to be an irreducibly disordering, deformational force while at the same time being absolutely indispensable to normative order, normative form" — the measure of all that is unmeasurable?[8]

The inverse relationship of Semenya's speed to the stability of her sex was so evident as the defining problem of her performance that many watching her run at the 2012 Olympics wondered if her silver medal was not exactly what she had sought — affirmation as a member of the second sex in the form of a second-place finish.[9] As a woman who is in fact *not* faster than every other woman alive, Semenya can run for her nation without incident. The few athletes who have also been the fastest women on earth understand her situation. The difference between the experiences of older runners and those of Semenya is that in the past, these women were subjected to visual inspection and then, later, chromosomal testing. Today's women athletes are subjected to a confused search for hormonal masculinity. Maria Mutola — one of the greatest 800-meter runners to have ever competed, with three world championships and an Olympic gold medal to her name — was the subject of endless rumors, examinations, and tests. Track officials never found whatever it was they were looking for; she retired before this new endocrinal ritual was established. Mutola, as it happens, is now Semenya's coach.

Brenna Munro observes, "It seems strangely appropriate that Caster would have a close namesake in the Castor of Greek myth, the mortal half-twin of a God."[10] Munro's writing on the incommensurate systems of meaning that shape Semenya's story brings to our attention what the press could hardly acknowledge: Semenya's story is countered with another story about black women and gender variance — that of gender-nonconforming black women who have been singled

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out in South Africa for rape and murder. One victim's name has become synonymous with the struggle against systemic, violent sexism and homophobia: Eudy Simelane. Simelane represented South Africa as a member of its national soccer team. She was killed in April 2008; her death outraged an already deeply vulnerable and politicized community. In the weeks after Semenya emerged as a headline, the men who killed Simelane went on trial.

In South Africa the sports world united in a defense of Semenya while a different story unfolded in the streets. Simelane was an out lesbian. She was out to her community and she was out to the media. Simelane, like Semenya, was an athlete to the bone — playing on local teams, coaching, organizing, and refereeing games for others. The trial became a focal point for LGBITQ activists fighting the indifference of South Africa's police and its judicial system. The intersection of Semenya's and Simelane's stories has become an important site for the articulation of a complex queer politics in South Africa — one that might attend to, for example, the place of gender in natalist discourse, homonationalism and racism in postapartheid South Africa, and the politics of using black South African women as case studies for Eurocentric feminist political models. Citing Meg Samuelson, Munro writes that as the South African media turn Semenya into an international icon of what a postapartheid nation might accomplish (and rushes to the defense of her outraged womanhood), "it is as if Semenya is being made to embody national unity while the bodies that mirror hers are being dis-remembered."[11] Simelane's story would be swallowed up by the project of putting on a "good" World Cup the following year. The six-week event featured not one official acknowledgment that a prominent member of the women's sports community had been brutally murdered in a hate crime. Responding to a call for submissions for posters celebrating the significance of the first African World Cup, the artist Tracey Rose sent in a photocollage of men wearing team shirts bearing the name "Eudy" and a Zulu warrior holding a spear, hanging from which are the names of murdered lesbians (*The Speed of Dreams*, 2009). Rose, one of South Africa's most prominent contemporary artists (and an ardent sports fan), confessed she felt strange submitting the work for consideration.[12] In her heart she did not want the names of these women to be used in the service of the corporate boondoggle that is the World Cup. She need not have worried. The work was duly rejected.

The chiasmic story of Semenya and Simelane as international icon and national scandal is important. Just putting Semenya and Simelane in the same sentence is hard: what sentence could possibly hold the distance between Semenya's accomplishments and the terror of Simelane's death? On a symbolic level, Semenya is never more gendered, or more black, than in the theatricalization of her flight — her exile — from the category of woman, which is to say, from the category of sex itself. If we feel a certain electricity when we bear witness to Semenya's speed, it is a thrill at the idea that she might achieve some kind of escape velocity. She does not race against the clock (which is to race as human, to race as man). She races a colonialist, nationalist machine that uses the athlete's body as its raw material. She races with and against the flesh. The terror of Simelane's story tells us something about what it means to do so. The collective authors of *Escape Routes: Control and Subversion in the Twenty-First Century* argue that the "twin movement of escape and capture only appears catastrophic if we insist that there must be an ultimate solution to social conflicts."[13] It is hard to consider the (very different) catastrophe of these women's stories as a matter of appearances. That said, what makes their stories catastrophic are the terrorizing systems that take the fact of these women's existences — rather than racism, sexism, or homophobia — as a conflict that must be resolved.

I would like to suggest that we claim Semenya's speed as queer, that we spend less time thinking about "what" her body is and more at marveling at what her body does. This special issue of *GLQ* is not about either Semenya or Simelane, however, nor is it about their headlines. It is, rather, an attempt to gather scholarship that helps us think about what those headlines obliterate from our view. This collection of essays is intended to suggest a few ways that our work on the body, on embodiment, movement and gesture, affect and emotion, tendencies and aversions, flesh and sensation might be expanded by thinking with and through the practices that gather under the term *athletic*.

Sport practices are practices of the self; the body; the body in relation to time, space, and things; animals in relation to time; people in relation to animals and time; groups in relation to space. Thinking about sports is like thinking about a novel that has five dimensions. It can be hard to pin down your object. The sport text has watery boundaries: Is it the event? The competition? The broadcast? The arena, fan culture? Training? The match report? Mary Louise Adams opens her essay for this issue with the matter-of-fact statement: "Sport is a huge conceptual category that captures activities as diverse as NFL football, minor league co-ed softball, and recreational jogging." Thinking about sport turns into thinking about games, forms of play. The word *sport* holds together pain and pleasure, the quotidian and the extraordinary. Robert Perinbanayagam suggests that when we engage in sports (as athletes and as fans), we are both "gaming ideologies and playing utopias."[14] Sports are fictive and frighteningly real. The sport spectacle is deeply allegorical — games speak to — or more nearly, speak — the architecture of the social self. (This point was made, of course, by Clifford Geertz in "Deep Play:

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Notes on the Balinese Cockfight.")[15] Sport seems to hold the key to something. Or everything. At least, that is the promise the sport spectacle makes to us, over and over again. That promise drives scholarship, and it also drives sports business.

A sport can allow a scholar to address matters that are public and also intimate. To cite just a few works centered on basketball — in *Outside the Paint*, a history of Chinese American basketball leagues, Kathleen S. Yep traces how "players used basketball to assert themselves not only as Chinese Americans but also as working-class men and women."[16] Stanley Thangaraj's research maps the dialogue with blackness and masculinity staged in Indo-Pak men's leagues, as players navigate competing discourses on race, ethnicity, manhood, and citizenship.[17] The FreeDarko collective published two illuminated surveys of professional basketball style, tracking the (raced, classed) politics of the game's aesthetics.[18] In an essay inspired by a 2002 kiss-in at a WNBA game, Tiffany Muller offers a compelling portrait of how lesbian fans of women's basketball operate as a counterpublic — not to the public of mainstream sports but to the public constructed by the WNBA itself.[19] These kinds of works are grounded in the analysis of the practices of specific raced, gendered, and often marginalized communities in relation to a larger political culture. *GLQ* readers not familiar with sports studies will be astonished by its interdisciplinarity. The field cuts across history, sociology, kinesthesiology, phenomenology, media studies, and more. Readers will find queer scholarship in all these fields.[20] Sports studies scholarship closest to my own areas of research (visual culture and performance studies) tends to take organized and highly visible sports as its subject — the World Cup, the Olympics, mass media broadcast, highly structured and social games like basketball. Conversation about sport and sexual politics tends to be oriented toward the most conservative, disciplining structures of sport practice — the nationalism of the Olympics, the imperialism of the World Cup, the racism/sexism/homophobia of mass media.[21] It is hard to get away from a top-down critical model — there is no end to the work of tracking heteronormative (or, in writing about the Gay Games, homonationalist) operations of sport as a disciplining apparatus. Queer sociological work in sports studies often turns to Michel Foucault's work on discipline and power to articulate the relationship of ideological structures and the body: how can we possibly understand subjectification, how power hooks into muscle and bone, how these systems produce the athletic body as a "docile" one, if not through Foucault?[22]

The rigidity of mainstream sports cultures, especially as they are defined by gender segregation, produces a version of sports studies that is itself segregated by gender. Much writing about sports is about men, or about women, or about people who trouble one category or the other as members of one category or the other. It is hard, very hard, to hold male and female athletes together if one works from the context of organized, professional sports. "Court and Sparkle," Erica Rand's contribution to this special issue, does just this. Rand's essay is the only one to address specific sports and specific athletes in detail. She breaks from disciplinary protocol in her pairing of Kye Allums, a black trans amateur basketball player, and Johnny Weir, a white gay professional figure skater. The two would seem to have nothing in common other than a shared claim on that word *queer*. Thinking the two together allows Rand to get at the particular complexities of sex/gender for athletes. Rand explains: "The visual and syntactical simplicity of adjectives modifying nouns — trans athlete, white athlete, flamboyant athlete — belies so many disconnects, splits, coverings, detours, divertings, linkages, and connections that are much more complicated than putting one word next to another can image or that the grammatical term *modifier* can convey. Athletes and athletic bodies are about more than, and other than, genders that do or do not make news." This special issue is oriented toward the kind of athletic subject Rand describes. When Perinbanayagam writes that we "game ideology" when we play, he means that we are conjured as ideological subjects in play — that a sport, in its ideological aspects, works like a cosmology. He compares the space of play to a mandala: a court, a field, a track "is . . . measured with boundaries, symmetries, harmonies, parallels, connections, entrances, and exits"; the agentic subject comes into being by playing those structures "*conceptually and practically*."[23] A player does not enter into a blank space when she takes to a basketball court. She is constituted as a player in a dialogue with that space's zones and boundaries. Iris Marion Young's widely cited essay "Throwing Like a Girl: A Phenomenology of Feminine Body Motility and Spatiality" (1980) details how the space around a gendered body might feel thicker, denser for the body marked as feminine.[24] That body might experience itself as disarticulated, pulled in different directions, as an assemblage that the subject acts (unevenly, unpredictably) on rather than with, or through. For the boxer Kate Sekules, the kinesthetic resistance to throwing a punch as a woman paled in comparison with that she encountered when she first threw a punch *at* a woman. It was like "having to push through glue to hit her."[25] When you dig into the discourses of sports, you find that an athlete's sense of self might be articulated in play, in relation to space, in a gesture — and that few of these things (body, fist, air, object) can be isolated from one another. That sense of self might be dispersed — fluid, changeable, contingent. The athletic figure is queer: it is elemental, fleshy, and intersubjective. That figure holds together pleasure and pain, discipline and its undoing: immanence and transcendence.

Charles Fairbanks's *Wrestling with My Father* (2010) helps us understand

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the subjective complexity of athleticism. The video shows an older man squirming and wriggling on a set of high school bleachers as he kinesthetically responds to watching his son wrestle. The camera, positioned directly in front of the artist's father, places the viewer roughly where we understand the match to be. We cannot see the match — only its shadows as they are played out in the father's body. There is no missing the history of the sport written into the body we see (none of the other spectators move like him). In her recent work on choreography, kinesthesia, and empathy, Susan Foster challenges the tendency to treat the spectator's experience of movement as direct and unmediated. "The viewer's rapport," she writes, "is shaped by common and prevailing senses of the body and of subjectivity in a given social moment as well as by the unique circumstance of watching [in the case of her study] a particular dance."[26] *Wrestling with My Father* makes the spectator feel the muscle and nerve of athletic spectatorship — the father's movements express a kind of knowledge. If he sways, dodges, and dips with the match's action, it is because he knows the sport's choreographies. The father's movements do not manifest an unmediated collapse of the spectator's body with the athlete's: they in fact articulate the distance between them. When his father takes on the motion of the artist's body (a body we cannot see), it is in an imaginative articulation of his body within the scene of wrestling with another. Athleticism looks less like an identity formation here than "an ecology of sensation" in which the artist's father is a happy participant.[27]

Two of the essays in this volume mine the practice of visual artists for their work with sex, affect, and embodiment. In "Queer Exercises" David Getsy considers a sequence of interconnected performances in which Amber Hawk Swanson "made herself the object of care and of harm." Getsy's essay begins with the artist's commissioned manufacture of a RealDoll in her image: in a familiar feminist turn, the artist takes herself as a subject by making herself into an object. The performative works generated by the doll literalize the problem of "feminine bodily motility," as defined by Young in "Throwing Like a Girl." The feminine subject, Young argues, experiences the body not only as a fragile thing (what body is not *that*) but "as a thing which is other than it, a thing like other things in the world."[28] Readers of local websites (eager to cover the titillating story) commented in numbers on stories about the *Amber Doll Project*, homing in on Hawk Swanson's real body as bigger, as less sexually appealing than that of the doll. Hawk Swanson responded to their comments in a series of startling performances called "Fit." She engaged in the repetitive, ballistic actions of CrossFit exercise routines while reciting things people have said about her body; she dug a hole she could stand in (and then did so again and again), following instructions given to her father by her grandfather — family exercises that might make a man out of a boy. Getsy teases out from Hawk Swanson's work a particularly queer and feminist configuration of narcissism and masochism, of discipline and desire, of subjectification and objectification.

A different set of keywords is mobilized in Leon Hilton's work with *Que le cheval vive en moi*, a performance by the artists Marion Laval-Jeantet and Benoît Mangin (who collaborate as Art Orienté Objet). In that project, Laval-Jeantet was injected with horse immunoglobins and blood plasma. She recorded her sensation of the experience: "I had the impression of being extra-human. I was not in my ordinary body. I was hyperpowerful, hypersensitive, hypernervous, very fearful, with the emotionality of an herbivore. I couldn't sleep. I had the feeling, a bit, that I was possibly a horse."[29]

In juxtaposing these two essays, I am intentionally foregrounding the athlete's proximity to the inhuman (the thing, the animal). Just after New Year's Day 2012, I found myself exploring the difference between women and horses in the comments section for an editorial I published on the *Guardian*'s website. The experience was illuminating. My essay was intended as a humorous take on ESPN's list of "the top 10 stories in women's sports in 2010." Number 4 on their list was the retirement of Zenyatta, a mare. My point had been simple enough: the media allocates so little space to covering women's sports it seemed unfair to give 10 percent of ESPN's "best of" story to a horse. A horse, I pointed out, is not a woman.[30] A surprising thing happened: people wrote in to argue that men are faster than women. Editors encouraged me to engage readers. I responded, yes, it is true that some men are faster than most women and also, some women are faster than most men. My point, however, was simply that a horse is not a woman. This drew out the paper's horsewomen. "Terrible speciesism!" complained one reader, seeing an implicit hierarchy in my insistence on the difference. The category athlete does make room for exceptional horses — Seabiscuit and Man o' War appear on lists of best athletes. In my research, however, I have not seen horses inventoried as men — because where the word *athlete* has room for "animal," the word *man* does not. In making these points in that editorial, I was being playful, trying my hand at a certain kind of sportswriting. But in the process I found that I was not observing that a woman is not a horse so much as I was *arguing* it.

If I was arguing that point, it was because conversation about gender and sport is distorted by the gravitational pull of what one might call sport's "dark matter" — raced, gendered structures of deep feeling that can shape conversations about women athletes into conversations about the difference between men and women, about the line between the human and the not-human. The ease with

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which a horse can be smuggled into the category of woman and vice versa is not all that surprising. "Women and their horses" has long operated as shorthand for the symbolic proximity of woman to animal. And, as *Que le cheval vive en moi* reminds us, horses provide a biochemical base for the hormonal production of both gender and athleticism — the equine estrogen Premarin is used as hormone-replacement therapy; Equipose, a steroid product intended *for* horses, is used by athletes. The horse provides biomatter for the production of gender and the manufacture of athletic performance as an endless increase of human capacity (for strength, for speed, for endurance). What interests Hilton, however, is the artists' experiment with the lending of affective capacity across species difference, in which the difference (of human and animal) is recorded as series of translation or transmission problems — for example, the artist's narration of a certain kind of feeling in her body as "a horse thing." The performance becomes athletic, Hilton suggests, in its sensational "oscillations between the biological register of bioart and the phenomenological stratum of body art." For Getsy, Hawk Swanson's performances become startling in contrast for the degree to which she *evacuates* feeling, especially from *Fit*. In that work the artist either speaks the discourse of the public or says nothing while engaging in exercises she learned from her father (exercises that he learned from his). Her experience, her feeling, is pushed to the margins of this work in favor of a radical objectification of the body through which she experiences and feels — an exploration of her body as a thing among other things. In contrast, within *Que le cheval vive en moi*, Hilton argues, "the artist offers her own body as a kind of mediating nexus for sensation by becoming nonhuman, conjoining and thought." Both essays are strongly centered on artists working athletically with their own (gendered) bodies and raise important questions about what it means to do so.

Framing the essays on contemporary art are essays on subjects more typical to sports studies. Rand pauses over the stories of two figures who come up often in queer sports talk: Kye Allums's season playing on an NCAA women's basketball team after he came out as a trans man appeared from a distance like a cause for optimism; the champion figure skater Johnny Weir has responded to the homophobia he encountered as an athlete by becoming a gay pop star (a recent tweet: "Thank you for the gorgeous flowers @kathygriffin! I love you!").[31] Rand's analysis of their respective (and quite different) "gender ordeals" considers "the vast reach into the athletic lives of trans and gender-nonconforming athletes of gender binarisms, stereotypes, and prejudices that ought easily to be dismissed without lengthy discussion; and the matters that hammering on such gender biases may obscure, efface, depend on, or accomplish." In "No Taste for Rough-and-

Tumble Play: Sport Discourses and the Regulation of Effeminacy," the essay that concludes this special issue, Mary Louise Adams historicizes those biases by tracing the study of gender and a preference (or aversion) to "rough-and-tumble play." Adams's essay returns to Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's bracing intervention, "How to Bring Your Kids Up Gay: The War on Effeminate Boys."[32] Sedgwick's essay considers the asymmetrical ramifications for boys of the introduction of Gender Identity Disorder in Children in the third edition of the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (the same volume that dropped homosexuality from its inventory of pathologies). Sedgwick explains: "A girl gets this pathologizing label only in the rare case of asserting that she actually is anatomically male (e.g. 'that she has, or will grow, a penis'); while a boy can be treated for Gender Identity Disorder of Childhood if he merely asserts 'that it would be better not to have a penis'—*or* alternatively, if he displays a 'preoccupation with female stereotypical activities as manifested by a preference for either cross-dressing or simulating female attire, or by a compelling desire to participate in the games and pastimes of girls.'"[33] Adams pauses over this moment in Sedgwick's essay to ask how we arrived at a point at which preferences for certain kinds of play have been completely naturalized as transparent indicators of gender identity. She offers a history of studies of gender and play, and in that history we discover that, in fact, the desire for or aversion to rough-and-tumble play has not always been read as gendered. Some of the early twentieth-century studies cited by Adams saw more in the desire to play alone versus the desire to play with others, or in the desire to engage in very structured forms of play (like baseball) and the desire to engage in forms of play involving little structure at all. A person's self-understanding might, in other words, be more powerfully indicated not by a desire to play with dolls or a desire to play football but by the desire to play alone, the desire to play with others, to play within a strong structure or without one, by the desire to play versus the lack of a desire to play (girls, at the turn of the twentieth century, were discouraged from all forms of play). That sense of play orientation (structured or not, alone or in groups) was cast aside in the 1950s in favor of the "football or dolls" axis—part of a wholesale shift in discourse on play that assumed play as an organic expression, or symptom, of a priori gender difference. For me, the reasonableness of the older model that Adams recovers is pleasantly surprising. Its flexibility recalls Sedgwick's writing on gender in a different and much more optimistic essay on masculinity. In "Gosh Boy George, You Must Be Awfully Secure in Your Masculinity!" Sedgwick proposed that masculinity and femininity are not opposite but orthogonal and independently variable. She does not stop there, of course: "I think it would be interesting . . . to hypothesize

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that not only masculinity and femininity, but in addition effeminacy, butchness, femmeness and probably some other superficially related terms, might equally turn out instead to represent independent variables — or at least, unpredictable dependent ones. I would just ask you to call to mind all the men you know who may be both highly masculine and highly effeminate — but at the same time, not a bit feminine. Or women whom you might consider butch and at the same time feminine, but not femme. Why not throw in some other terms, too, such as top and bottom?" She writes: "Some people are just plain more *gender-y* than others — whether the gender they manifest be masculine, feminine, both, or 'and then some.' "[34] The author of the 1900 study cited by Adams was not looking for gender. His was a descriptive survey of children's stated preferences, and he seemed to leave a lot of room for understanding what those preferences might indicate — not about gender qua gender but about gendered access to the practice of play and what more exposure to forms of play facilitates: a desire for, an interest and a pleasure in play with structure. Adams traces the increasing binding of forms of play to gender, and shows us where and when in these studies effeminacy emerges as a gender problem. This essay is, I think, the most painful to read for the history of effeminophobia that it recounts. It is also an important reminder of how much work there is for us to do in attending to "gender-y" lines of athletic flight, in the development of a language that might do justice to the transformative pleasure of watching an athlete like Caster Semenya, for example, run.

Notes

1. Monique Wittig, *The Straight Mind: And Other Essays* (Boston: Beacon, 1992), 8.
2. Mandy Merck's essay is one of the most cogent on the subject of the gender differences raised by Semenya's story: "The Question of Caster Semenya," *Radical Philosophy* 160 (2010): 1–7; Tavia Nyong'o's essay "The Unforgivable Transgression of Being Caster Semenya," bullybloggers.worldpress.com (September 8, 2010), responds to the tendency to align Semenya's body with a wounded femininity at complete odds with her gender variance, with her "exuberance embodiment" that made her a spectacle in the first place. The 11:4 (2010) issue of *Safundi: The Journal of South African and American Studies* features a series of important essays inspired by the Semenya affair. See, for example, Brenna Munro's "Caster Semenya: Gods and Monsters" (383–96) and Neville Hoad's " 'Run, Caster, Run!,' Nativism and the Translations of Gender Variance" (397–405). The same issue features two photo essays on black lesbian life by the artist Zanele Muholi.
3. See, for example, Andrew Malone, Emily Miller, and Stewart Maclean, " 'She Wouldn't Wear Dresses and Sounds Like a Man on the Phone': Caster Semenya's Father on

His Sex-Riddle Daughter," *Daily Mail*, August 22, 2009, www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1208227/She-wouldnt-wear-dresses-sounds-like-man-phone-Caster-Semenyas-father-sex-riddle-daughter.html; Oren Yaniv, "Caster Semenya, Forced to Take a Gender Test Is a Woman . . . and a Man," *New York Post*, September 10, 2009, www.nydailynews.com/news/world/caster-semenya-forced-gender-test-woman-man-article-1.176427; Tomas Rogers, "Caster Semenya Is Not a Hermaphrodite but Rumored Test Results Reveal the Controversial Runner Is Intersex — a Shocker, Likely Even to Her," *Salon*, September 10, 2009, www.salon.com/2009/09/10/caster_semenya/.

4. For a definitive statement on new administrative policies for enforcing gender binarism in sports, see Katrina Karkazis, Rebecca Jordan-Young, Georgiann Davis, and Silvia Camporesi, "Out of Bounds? A Critique of the New Policies on Hyperandrogenism in Elite Female Athletes," *American Journal of Bioethics* 12, no. 7 (2012): 3–16.
5. Ben Waldron, "US Soccer Player Robbie Rogers Comes Out as Gay, Retires," *ABC News*, February 15, 2013, abcnews.go.com/blogs/headlines/2013/02/us-soccer-player-robbie-rogers-comes-out-as-gay-retires/.
6. Hortense Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book," *diacritics* 17, no. 2 (1987): **00**.
7. Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe," 67.
8. Fred Moten, "The Case of Blackness," *Criticism* 50, no. 2 (2008): 180.
9. Patricia Nell Warren reviews (and argues with) this take on Semenya's silver medal for SB Nation in "Did Caster Semenya Intentionally Lose the 800 Meter Final to Mariya Savinova?," August 12, 2012, www.sbnation.com/london-olympics-2012/2012/8/12/3237713/caster-semenya-2012-olympics-gender-south-africa-lose-800-meter-final-mariya-savinova.
10. Munro, "Caster Semenya," 387.
11. Munro, "Caster Semenya," 393, citing Meg Samuelson, *Remembering the Nation, Disremembering Women: Stories of the South African Transition* (Scottsville: KwaZula Natal Press, 2007).
12. Tracey Rose, conversation with author, March 2011.
13. Dimitris Papadopoulos, Niamh Stephenson, Vassilis Tsianos, *Escape Routes: Control and Subversion in the Twenty-First Century* (Ann Arbor, MI: Pluto, 2008), 74.
14. Robert Perinbanayagam, *Games and Sport in Everyday Life: Dialogues and Narratives of the Self* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm, 2006), 231.
15. Clifford Geertz, "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight," *Daedalus* 101, no. 1 (1972): 1–37.
16. Kathleen Yep, *Outside the Paint: When Basketball Ruled at the Chinese Playground* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009), 10.
17. See Scott Brooks, *Black Men Can't Shoot* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); and Stanley Thangaraj's forthcoming *Man Up! Indo-Pak Basketball and*

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Embodying South Asian American Masculinity (New York: New York University Press).

18. FreeDarko, *The Macrophenomenal Pro Basketball Almanac: Styles, Stats, and Stars in Today's Game* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2008); and FreeDarko, *The Undisputed Guide to Pro Basketball History* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2010). Both books grew from a blog (freedarko.blogspot.com) devoted to the politics of style in men's basketball.
19. Tiffany Muller, "The Contested Terrain of the Women's Basketball Arena," in *Sport and Gender Identities: Masculinities, Femininities, and Sexualities*, ed. Cara Carmichael Aitchison (New York: Routledge, 2007), 37–52.
20. The groundbreaking *Sport, Sexualities, and Queer/Theory* gathers sociological research anchored in queer theory's bibliographies. That work seeks to "illustrate the blatant, and stubborn, [hetero]normative practices of competitive sport," and it is an important reference point for scholars interested in what queer theory might contribute to sports studies. See, in particular, Jayne Caudwell, introduction to *Sport, Sexualities, and Queer/Theory*, ed. Jayne Caudwell (London: Routledge, 2006), 7. Within sports studies, scholars working in LGBITQ studies routinely draw from diverse foundational texts in queer studies. For example, Heather Sykes relies on Judith Butler's writing in calling for an ethics of generosity in which local sports communities might accept their capacity to operate as spaces of conversation and exchange in which participants "constantly rebuild the notion of the human" (Sykes, "Transsexual and Transgender Policies in Sport," *Women in Sport and Physical Activity Journal* 15, no. 1 [2006]: 12). For another recent discussion of the application of queer studies to sociological research in sports studies, see Karrie J. Kauer, "Queering Lesbian Sexualities in Collegiate Sporting Spaces," *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 13, no. 3 (2009): 306–18. Pat Griffin's *Strong Women, Deep Closets: Lesbians and Homophobia in Sport* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 1998) is foundational to lesbian sports studies. Griffin's insights into the aggressive homophobia that characterizes women's sports (a problem minimized by media attention to homophobia in sports that centers exclusively on men's sports) are informed by her years as an athlete and college-level basketball coach.
21. Two important contributions on gender and sport from sociology: Toby Miller, *Sport/Sex* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001); and Michael Messner, *Taking the Field: Women, Men and Sports* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002). Although both are centered on gender, and both are antihomophobic, neither work quite as "queer": queer sports studies scholars (e.g., Muller, Kauer), in my view, seek out the interconnections between sexuality, pleasure, disciplinary practices, and sports cultures — in which cases sports cultures are not only sites through which sexuality is understood as a site of discipline but also spaces through which sexuality is *produced*.
22. Sykes gives a useful overview of the relationship of queer sports studies to Foucault's

work in “Queering Theories of Sexuality in Sports Studies,” in Caudwell, *Sport, Sexualities, and Queer/Theory*, 13–32, 20–22.

23. Perinbanayagam, *Games and Sport in Everyday Life*, 49.
24. She explains: “to the extent that feminine bodily existence . . . lives itself as object, the feminine body does not exist *in* space” (151) but “in discontinuous unity with both itself and its surroundings” (147) (Iris Marion Young, “Throwing Like a Girl: A Phenomenology of Feminine Bodily Comportment,” *Human Studies* 3, no. 2 [1980]: 137–56).
25. Quoted in David Templeton, “Girlfight: A Female Fighter Goes a Few Rounds with *Girlfight*,” *Northern California Bohemian*, October 19–25, 2000, metroactive.com.
26. Susan Leigh Foster, *Choreographing Empathy: Kinesthesia in Performance* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 2.
27. Amit Rai, *Untimely Bollywood: Globalization and India’s New Media Assemblage* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009).
28. Young, “Throwing Like a Girl,” 148.
29. Marion Laval-Jeantet, “Self-Animality,” *Plastik: Art et Science,* June 3, 2011, art-science.univ-paris1.fr/document.php?id=559.
30. Jennifer Doyle, “ESPN Makes a Mare’s Nest of Women in Sport,” *Guardian*, January 3, 2011. ESPN’s “Top 10 Stories in Women’s Sports,” December 31, 2010, was republished on its website for women, espnW.com. It has since been removed from both sites.
31. Johnny Weir-Voronov (@JohnnyGWeir), March 5, 2013, 2:11 p.m.
32. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, “How to Bring Your Kids Up Gay: The War on Effeminate Boys,” in *Tendencies* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), 154–64. Originally published in *Social Text*, no. 29 (1991): 18–27.
33. Sedgwick, “How to Bring Your Kids Up Gay,” 156–57.
34. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, “‘Gosh Boy George, You Must Be Awfully Secure in Your Masculinity,’” in *Constructing Masculinity*, ed. Maurice Berger, Brian Wallis, and Simon Watson (New York: Routledge, 1995), 11–20, 15, 16.

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