

# Gender Relations, Women's History and Sport History: A Decade of Changing Enquiry, 1983-1993

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## Introduction

"Gender is a set of cultural roles. It is a costume a mask, a straight jacket in which men and women dance their unequal dance"<sup>1</sup>... (and, one might add play their unequal sport).

A decade ago, in the Special Review Issue of the *Journal of Sport History*, (1983), the Editor addressed the prospects and promise of sport history and lamented that "despite the fact that sport has been embedded in, and contoured by, patriarchal relationships, we have still to see an adequate analysis of women and sport. Overall, sport history remains the history of man's involvement in sport."<sup>2</sup> Indeed, it is a truism that sport history has traditionally been gendered-focusing upon masculinity and men's history to the exclusion of serious attention to the "other" sex. The fact that all the review essays in the 1983 special issue were composed by men was a ready confirmation of this fact, at least to the extent that traditional historiography has tended to exclude women from a "universal" history which is most often rendered in the male voice.<sup>3</sup> In the same

*The author is grateful to the Social Science and Humanities Council of Canada for its generous support of this research.*

1. Gender Lerner, *The Majority Finds Its Past—Placing Women in History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 238.

2. Jack Berryman, "Preface," *Journal of Sport History*, 10:1 (Spring 1983) 5.

3. Almost from its inception, the historical profession has been dominated by white male practitioners. In 1921, Arthur Schlesinger commented that it should not be forgotten that all our great historians have been men and were likely, therefore, to be influenced a sex interpretation of history all the more potent because unconscious. See his *New Viewpoints in American History* (NY: Macmillan, 1921). During this century, women have confronted many difficulties as they attempted to gain scholarly credibility and respect from male historians. The intellectual and social isolation imposed by sexual discrimination has been a powerful deterrent to sustained scholarly and professional activity. Until 1970, there were few academic women historians at the rank of full professor and only 12 percent of doctoral degrees awarded in history went to woman. Jacqueline Goggin, "Challenging Sexual Discrimination in the Historical Profession: Women Historians and the American Historical Association, 1890-1940," *The American Historical Review* 97:3 (June 1992): 769-802. In 1973, the title of a new University course in Paris, "Do women have a history" converted, perhaps, the general state of women's history, but it also marked the beginning of a trend toward a much more receptive climate for women's history (i.e. the development of historical anthropology, and the study of the family and sexual and the history of everyday ideas and behaviors. On the whole, however, women's history through the 1970s and into the early 1980s was largely treated as marginal; Michelle Perrot (ed.), (trans. Felicia Pheasant), *Writing Women's History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983).

issue, Mel Adelman noted that the current literature on women and sport (exemplified by the largely narrative-descriptive articles included in a recently published anthology, *Her Story in Sport*) had unfortunately remained mainly descriptive, meliorative and focused largely upon attitudes. "Other issues must be explored," he noted, "if a more comprehensive picture is to be constructed."<sup>4</sup>

While these remarks about the extant studies of sporting women may have accurately reflected the state of sport history at the time,<sup>5</sup> a more general and striking change was already becoming evident in the humanities and social sciences concerning the rise of gender as a category of analysis. The early 1980s saw the development of gender theory in feminist thought in a variety of disciplines, "marking a shift from the women-centered investigations of the 1970s such as women's history,<sup>6</sup> gynocriticism<sup>7</sup> and the psychology of women, to the study of gender relations involving both men and women."<sup>8</sup> To many feminist scholars what seemed to be required at this time was not simply a focus upon women but "the integration of the study of gender differences into the central pursuits of the social sciences."<sup>9</sup> In the field of history, Natalie Zemon Davis argued that the aim of feminist history was:

to understand the significance of the sexes, of gender groups in the historical past. Our goal is to discover the range in sex roles and in sexual symbolism in different societies and periods, to find out what meaning they had and how they functioned to maintain the social order or to promote its change.<sup>10</sup>

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4. Melvin L. Adelman, "Academics and American Athletics: A Decade of Progress," *Journal of Sport History*, 10:1 (Spring 1983): 96-97.

5. In her review of Reet Howell (ed.), *Her Story in Sport: An Historical Anthology of Women in Sport* (Champaign, IL, Human Kinetics, 1982). Catriona Parratt noted that many of the contributions were "all too representative of the narrative-descriptive genre of sport chronicles beyond which the discipline must progress." Nevertheless, she suggested, "*Her Story in Sport* contains a wealth of the kind of descriptive material on women's sport in North America upon which a more sophisticated analysis must rest. . . . The task of making sense of the evidence and drawing together the all too separate areas of sport and women's history has yet to be undertaken." Review, *Canadian Journal of the History of Sport*, 17:1 (1986): 93.

6. By the end of the 1970s, said Joan Kelly, women's history had begun to restore women to history and to restore our history to women but, more than this, it had also begun to stimulate the questioning of the most basic foundations of historical study. Joan Kelly, *Women, History and Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 1.

7. Gynocriticism, the feminist study of women's writing, had assumed that all writing by women must be marked by gender since women could not transcend their gender when they wrote. It recognized that women's writing necessarily took place within, rather than outside, a dominant male discourse hence generating a double-voiced discourse. Prior to the 1980s, the tendency had been to treat historical writing by men as free from gender constructs, apart from its problematic or misogynistic representation of women. The decade of the eighties, however, saw the beginning of a renewed feminist interest in reading male texts, not as documents of sexism and misogyny but as inscriptions of gender and renditions of sexual difference: Elaine Showalter (ed.), *Speaking of Gender* (London: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, 1989), 5. These years also saw the beginning of male critics attempting to understand feminist criticism—though not, as yet, beginning to think and write about masculinity. Early male feminists resisted the challenge to investigate either their masculinity or their own critical practice.

8. Showalter, *Speaking of Gender*, 2; Sport historians, however, were slower than women's historians to be influenced by the women's movement and the ideology of feminism. The dominance of traditional male-centered approaches to sport history meant that gender was conspicuously absent from most analyses of sport during the 1970s and early 1980s.

9. See for example, Judith Shapiro, "Anthropology and the Study of Gender," in Elizabeth Langland and Walter Cow (eds.), *A Feminist Perspective in the Academy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 112.

10. Natalie Zemon Davis, "Women's History in Transition: The European Case." *Feminist Studies*, 3:3-4 (1976): 90.

Shifting a focus onto gender, however, presented historians with many puzzles.<sup>11</sup> As questions of gender versus sexual difference became widely debated, feminist historians insisted that gender was not simply a question of sexual difference but also a question of power (sexual hierarchy) “since in looking at the history of gender relations we find sexual asymmetry, inequality and male dominance in every known society.”<sup>12</sup> In history, as in the present, the question of power seemed to be very much at the heart of relations between men and women.<sup>13</sup> For women’s historians the recognition that the relations of the sexes were socially rather than naturally constituted, embedded in and shaped by the social order, demanded new assessments of historical change, the questioning of traditional periodization and the development of a new generation of historical inquiry around social practices. It was persuasively argued that events and processes that had traditionally preoccupied historians must now be revisited from a gender perspective—reexamined, reanalyzed and in some cases, rewritten.<sup>14</sup>

### Gender as a Category of Analysis

The notion of gender as a broad and powerful category for analysis was brilliantly explored by Joan Scott in *Gender and the Politics of History*. “Gender,” noted Scott, “offered a good way of thinking about history.” Defining gender as the social organization of sexual difference, she pointed out that feminist scholars have typically been informed by one of three main theoretical positions, each of which pose certain difficulties for the historian. The first attempts to explain the origins of patriarchy by directing attention to reproduction and/or sexuality as keys to the subordination of women as a group. Whether the focus is on the bitter trap” of reproduction or of sexuality, however, theories of patriarchy rest on a single variable of physical difference and tend to assume a fixed form of male oppression over women. This assumes “a consistent or inherent meaning for the human body—outside social or cultural construction—and thus the ahistoricity of gender itself.”<sup>15</sup>

Marxist writing, with few exceptions, has tended to be fairly silent on the question of gender relations and human agency. Thus Marxist theories are also problematic for the feminist historian since the causality of the economic context takes primacy, leaving the concept of gender to be treated as a byproduct of changing economic structures. Consequently it is difficult to see historically how economic systems directly determine gender relationships. As Messner and Sabo argue, “dominant classes place structural and ideological constraints around people’s thoughts and actions but these constraints do not fully determine the

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11. Leonore Davidoff, Editorial, *Gender and History*, 4:2 (1992): 133.

12. Showalter, *Speaking of Gender*, 4.

13. Perrot, *Writing Women’s History*, 172.

14. Joan Wallach Scott, “Re-writing History,” in Margaret Higonnet et al. (eds.), *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 22.

15. Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 10, 34.

outcome-people retain the ability to act as historical agents."<sup>16</sup> Gender, therefore, tends to lack an independent analytic status of its own in that Marxist analysis seems unable to accommodate the complexities of the relationship between patriarchal and capitalist relations, or to reconcile Marxism with psychoanalysis.<sup>17</sup> We discover that we cannot "add women" to existing categories of Western thought without deeply challenging Marxist categories themselves.<sup>18</sup>

A third theoretical position, psychoanalytic theory, which can be viewed as fundamentally divided between French post-structuralists like Jacques Lacan and Anglo-American object-relations theorists such as Nancy Chodorow and Carol Gilligan, draws on both perspectives to explain the production and reproduction of the subject's gendered identity.<sup>19</sup> Each focuses upon different processes by which the subject's gendered identity is created in early childhood. Post-structuralists emphasize that gendered identity is constructed through language (systems of meaning). Object-relations theorists place more stock upon the influence of actual childhood experience upon gender construction. Problems arise for the historian in the case of the latter, since one must accept that gender construction is entirely fixed in early childhood through family and household experience without reference to either social or economic systems. Object-relations theorists such as Carol Gilligan have, therefore, been accused of promoting an essentialist notion of women which is basically ahistorical (even though it has been widely used by historians of "women's culture" who have organized their evidence to support Gilligan's theory about female's "universal" preference for relatedness). Lacanian theory also elicits a reductive reading of evidence from the past in favor of psychic and linguistic determinants (for if sexual antagonism is always latent in the acquisition of sexual identity, the binary opposition of male and female must be permanent and history can offer no resolution). One answer to this difficulty, suggested Scott, could be sought in Derrida's notion of deconstruction which demands a constant reappraisal and contextual analysis of the way in which any binary opposition between male and female operates, hence also a deconstruction of the terms of sexual difference.<sup>20</sup>

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16. Michael A. Messner and Donald F. Sabo (eds.), *Sport, Men and the Gender Order: Critical Feminist Perspectives* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 1990), 8.

17. Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*, 37.

18. Nancy C.M. Harstock, "The Feminist Standpoint: Developing the Ground for a Specifically Feminist Historical Materialism," in Sandra Harding (ed.), *Feminism and Methodology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 157.

19. Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose (eds.), *Jacques Lacan and the Ecole Freudienne* (New York: Norton, 1983); Nancy Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978); Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982).

20. Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*, 41; see also, Jonathan Culler, *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1982), 156-79; Messner, for example, suggests that instead of viewing personality as an onion, with gender identity as the fixed and causal core, it is more accurate to view personality as a never-completed tapestry and gender identity as a thread running through the entire weave—always shaping but infinitely flexible. Michael A. Messner, *Power at Play: Sports and the Problem of Masculinity* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992). 21.

Traditional texts come undone in Derrida's hands and he rebinds them, inserting his own pages. . . . We live by texts. We are written by them and some we write. . . . To write as to speak is to feel the limits of a certain set of codes; it is to push against their form . . . to talk back. . . to reject art's claim to direct representation . . . to show critical regard to mapping the cultural processes by which some gain and others find their losses.<sup>21</sup>

These shifts "from scientific to literary paradigms among social scientists, from an emphasis on cause to one on meaning," as well as current critiques of science, empiricism and humanism by post-structuralists have coalesced to present fresh lines of enquiry for feminist historians seeking ways of representing gender as both a constitutive element of social relationships and a primary way of signifying relationships of power (despite the protest by Habermas that postmodernism has recklessly overemphasized the play of difference, contingency and language against all appeals to universalized and transcendent claims).<sup>22</sup> In particular, the shifts outlined by Scott have underscored the historian's active role as producer of knowledge while attempting to understand the production of knowledge and power as multiple and conflictual processes engendering theories of "multiplicity" rather than theories of "the woman."

### Women's History and Gender Relations

As a consequence of the groundwork laid by leading feminist historians such as Gerder Lerner, Natalie Zemon Davis and Joan Kelly, in addition to Joan Wallach Scott, women's and gender history during the last decade shifted steadily away from a preoccupation with the need to rediscover and render visible the contributions of heroines and women reformers from the past.<sup>23</sup> New themes were introduced and old ones subjected to revisionist interpretations as the diverse nature of women's historical experience was explored and documented.<sup>24</sup> The strategy of viewing women and men historically through a separate sphere's perspective, which had proved to be particularly useful in enabling historians to move the history of women into the realm of analytical social history, was also questioned for its tendency to emphasize difference rather than elucidating the reciprocity between gender and society.<sup>25</sup> Feminist-Marxist historians in the late 1960s and early 1970s

21. John Willinsky, "Postmodern Literacy a Primer:" *Interchange*, 22:4 (1991): 56.

22. Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*, 41-42; Jurgen Habermas, *The Chronological Discourse of Modernity* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987); Linda Hutcheon, too, has pointed out that postmodernist theory can present a major problem to feminists by denying the existence of "women" as a meaningful category of analysis, rejecting the validity of analytic concepts such as patriarchy and rendering problematic individual agency and collective action; Linda Hutcheon, *The Politics of Postmodernism* (London and New York, 1989).

23. Lerner, *The Majority Finds Its Past*; Davis, *Women's History*; Kelly, *Women, History and Theory*; Joan Wallach Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *American Historical Review* (November 1986), 1068.

24. Gail Cuthbert Brandt, "Postmodern Patchwork: Some Recent Trends in the Writing of Women's History in Canada." *Canadian Historical Review*, 72:4 (1991): 442.

25. Linda K. Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History." *Journal of American History*, 75:1 (June 1988): 37-38.

had focused upon delineating women's sphere as separate from and subordinate to men, and sought to show how women were restricted to their reproductive function and excluded from the male world of production. From the 1970s, the metaphor of separate spheres was utilized substantially as an organizing device to examine ideologies which oppressed women, investigate female cultures created by women to support each other, as well as to explore the nature of the boundaries of those spheres that were expected to be observed by women. By the 1980s, women historians were focusing less upon the history of female misfortune and were taking an interactive view of social processes, trying to be more sensitive to matters of class, ethnicity and race as well as gender and sexual orientation. While the phrase separate spheres had become "a metaphor for complex power relations in social and economic contexts" it was also increasingly used as a descriptor of a domain, a physical space in the most literal sense where female success could be measured by the ability to command actual physical space which could be defined and controlled.<sup>26</sup> (This, of course, further exaggerated the equating of the man's sphere with the public and the woman's sphere with family and home.) Yet women's history in the 1980s, said Pascale Werner, was inviting attempts to draw up a new geography, an historical landscape in which feminist research could lead historians to people space in different ways and move the boundaries around.<sup>27</sup> No longer, then, was the focus predominantly on exceptional women who had participated in the male-dominated public arena, or upon the ways in which women uniformly conformed to the ideological dictates of public and private spheres. Women historians were encouraged to reassess, from a wide variety of perspectives, the extent to which women's lives actually corresponded to idealized versions of womanhood prescribed for them and to focus upon women's culture and women's experience rather than women's place.

Currently, the question of diversity, of differences between and among women stands as a continuing and thorny theoretical problem for feminist historians. While some continue to conceptualize women as a unitary category which can be recognized and described in history there are others who insist that this tends to ignore the many differences that divide women. Clearly, women do not all have the same history, nor have they had the same opportunities to give voice to their own experience. As Teresa de Lauretis has argued, "a feminist frame of reference must be built from women's own experience of difference, of our differences from *Woman* and of the differences among women."<sup>28</sup> Similarly, Crosby has warned that as long as women are seen in terms of their sameness rather than their differences, feminist history will remain within the space of formation of a male historical

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26. Kerber, "Separate Spheres," 17, 28.

27. Pascale Werner, *Introduction to L'Histoire Sans Qualites*, quoted in Perrott, *Writing Women's History*, 154.

28. Teresa de Lauretis (ed.), *Feminist Studies/Critical Studies* (Bloomington: Indiana Press, 1988), 14.

discourse.<sup>29</sup> For feminist historians, therefore, talking about gender has become a constant reminder of other (perhaps at times, more compelling) categories of difference such as class, race, ethnicity and sexual orientation. There is a realization that analyses of social reality are incomplete or inaccurate if they do not include critical accounts of women in every race, class and culture.<sup>30</sup> bell hooks, for example, has argued that the perspectives of women of color must move to the center of feminist theory and the feminist movement, and that white feminist definitions of feminism must be transformed by the view from below or from the margin.<sup>31</sup> Hence, important among attempts to reconfigure the field of history and gender relations have been recent efforts to encourage the writing of histories “from below” and to give primacy to the vision of the oppressed.

These . . . histories of women of the working class, of Africans and African-Americans, of South Asians, and of all colonized peoples . . . are efforts to calculate and redress the high costs of a history predicated on their silence and invisibility. Just as marginalization was (and is) fully political in its impetus and effects, these histories are driven by a logic which insists that all history is imbricated with the political . . . as event and representation, as the event which is representation.<sup>32</sup>

The issue of representation is especially problematic as a number of women’s historians feel compelled to ask—who is entitled to speak on behalf of women of different classes, races and ethnicity, how can the voices of “other women” be recovered, and how should the evidence of their experience be interpreted? Evidence, suggests Joan Scott, should be seen as “at once always already an interpretation and something that needs to be interpreted.”<sup>33</sup> The historian can never, therefore, be satisfied with the reproduction of knowledge about personal experience, needing rather to attempt to analyze how that knowledge was produced and represented in the first place. Giving voice, explains Gorelick has its own limitations, for while the use of such techniques as interviews and oral history helps to describe the world as perceived by the participant, “it may remain confined within their perceptions and thus not be able to provide them with much that they do not already know.”<sup>34</sup> The conjunction of history and politics necessarily reconfigures knowledge and how it is produced.

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29. Christina Crosby, *The Ends of History: Victorians and “The Woman Question”* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 153.

30. Black feminist criticize the value of portraying a racially and culturally homogenous “woman”—who is in reality a white, bourgeois, Western woman—as the agent of a more progressive history and culture; Bonnie Thornton Dill, “The Dialectics of Black Womanhood,” in Harding (ed.), *Feminism and Methodology*, 97.

31. bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (Boston: South End Press, 1984).

32. Crosby, *The Ends of History*, 150-51.

33. Joan Wallach Scott, “The Evidence of Experience,” *Critical Inquiry*, 17:4 (Summer 1991): 797.

34. Sherry Gorelick, “Contradictions of Feminist Methodology,” *Gender and Society*, 5:4 (December 1991): 463.

Relations among men and studies about men, in addition to those between women and men have also become an emerging focus of historical enquiry “for the history of men as men becomes visible only when seen in relation to women’s history.”<sup>35</sup> As Cott has pointed out, there is a great need to situate men’s history in an explication of the sex/gender system for we know far too little about the social construction of masculinity and manhood.<sup>36</sup> Focused work in men’s history can enhance the history of the social relations of the sexes by acknowledging the gendered nature of men’s activities, particularly in sport. Studies of men’s thinking on gender initially highlighted the problematic character of an historiography that focused unduly and with a kind of fascination upon the misogynous pronouncements of male writers over the centuries.<sup>37</sup> The new genre of men’s history which makes male gender matter has been influenced by the path-breaking work of Eve Sedgwick, who has brought a woman-centered and feminist view to the study of homophobia and male homosexuality, and enabled a much fuller discussion of the construction of gender.

The importance—an importance—of the category ‘homosexual,’ comes not necessarily from its regulatory relation to a nascent or already-constituted minority of homosexual people or desires, but from its potential for giving whoever wields it a structuring definitional leverage over the whole range of male bonds that shape the social constitution.<sup>38</sup>

Considerable tension, however, centres around the difficulty men may have in sharing women’s standpoint. Advocates of men’s studies have argued that feminist scholarship can not reach its fullest potential without the addition of perspectives gained from men’s studies.<sup>39</sup> On the other hand, women’s studies supporters have been concerned that the addition of men’s studies might encourage a depoliticization of the grassroots feminism underlying women’s studies.<sup>40</sup> Hearn has suggested that although men and those wishing to critique men’s social practices should recognize and utilize feminist work,

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35. Gisela Bock, “Women’s History and Gender History: Aspects of an International Debate.” *Gender and History*, 1:1 (Spring 1989): 18.

36. Nancy Cott, “On Men’s History and Women’s History,” in Mark C. Games and Clyde Griffen (eds.), *Meanings for Manhood: Constructions of Masculinity in Victorian America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 206. On the other hand, suggests Hoff, “the growing acceptance of the word gender and its use as an analytic category among historians of women may, unfortunately, sanction the study of masculinity before the study of femininity—let alone the history of women—is anywhere near complete; Joan Hoff, *Law, Gender and Injustice* (New York: New York University Press, 1991), 352.

37. Bock, “Women’s History,” 18.

38. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 86.

39. Henry Brod, “The New Men’s Studies: From Feminist Theory to Gender Scholarship,” *Hypatia*, 2:1 (1987): 179-96.

40. Mary Libertin, “The Politics of Women’s Studies and Men’s Studies,” *Hypatia*, 2:2 (Summer 1987): 143-52.

it is not their concern to engage feminism on its own terms.<sup>41</sup> Messner and Sabo, on the other hand, describe the emerging feminist study of men and masculinity as one that should aim at developing an analysis of men's problems and limitations compassionately yet within the context of a feminist critique of male privilege.<sup>42</sup>

### Women's Sport History

While women's history and sport history both emerged in the 1970s. Roberta Park has shown that each developed rapidly during the 1980s with women's history taking the lead. "New sources were explored: new and more densely textured questions were asked: and more comprehensive analyses were offered."<sup>43</sup> In the domain of sport history, Nancy Struna was among the first to begin to ask prescient questions about "that sub-field of ours which intersects with women's history—women's sport history," in 1984.<sup>44</sup> Her analysis of the available body of literature concerning the history of American sporting women was that it was limited in terms of quality and limiting in an interpretive sense. Far from following the example of women's history in questioning traditional periodizations and reassessing notions of historical change "explanations are imposed . . . and questions, which might have resulted in new insights, are unasked."<sup>45</sup> A major cause for this state of affairs, Struna suggested, could be attributed to the restrictive assumptions derived from uncritically applying a contemporary characterization of sport as male, modem and athletic to the past. Noting that women's sporting experience could neither be understood apart from other behaviors and attitudes redolent in society nor adequately explained through a male prism on sport she called upon scholars to move beyond "compensatory" measures such as mapping particular women's experiences and to explore such themes as identity, conflict and the relativity of equality.<sup>46</sup>

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41. Jeff Hearn, *The Gender of Oppression: Men, Masculinity and the Critique of Marxism* (Brighton, England: Wheatsheaf, 1987), 182.

42. Messner and Sabo (eds.), *Sport, Men and the Gender Order*, 13; Michael Messner, in his most recent work, *Power of Play*, focuses upon the question of diversity among men's experiences of sport and shows how sport should not be seen as simply and unambiguously reproducing men's existing power and privilege. Just as for women, "men's experience of athletic careers, and the meanings they assign to these experiences, are contextualized by class, race and sexual orientation" (155).

43. Roberta J. Park, "Guest Editor's Introduction," *Journal of Sport History*, 18:1 (Spring 1991): 5. The state of the history of women and sport generally prior to the 1970s has been described by Mangan and Park as consisting of a few popular biographies of female athletes. some relatively obscure dissertations about influential physical educationists and highly specialized studies of specific physical education colleges and departments; J. A. Mangan and Roberta J. Park (eds.), *From "Fair Sex" to Feminism: Sport and the Socialization of Women in the Industrial and Post-Industrial Eras* (London: Frank Cass, 1987), 1.

44. Nancy Struna, "Beyond Mapping Experience: The Need for Understanding the History of American Sporting Women," *Journal Sport History*, 11:1 (1984): 120-133.

45. Struna, "Beyond Mapping Experience," 121, 129.

46. Struna, "Beyond Mapping Experience," 129.

Catriona Parratt agreed with Struna's assessment of women's sport history in North America but called for a more radical agenda for change such as that suggested by Teresa de Lauretis. She proposed an agenda for a new scholarship in women's sport history which proceeded from women's experiences and which placed women at its center.<sup>47</sup> In Germany during the 1980s, the richly documented work of Gertrud Pfister placed female experience in sport at the heart of a burgeoning women's sport history movement and demonstrated the pressing need for further research on many aspects of women's sports in Europe.<sup>48</sup> In Australia, as Cashman and Weaver noted later, the number of books written on Australian sport was immense, but almost all of them were about men, not women, with books about animals in sport forming the next largest category. The paucity of contributions by sports historians to the field of women and sport up to and during the 1980s led Lois Bryson to call for a deeper examination of the role of sport in the historical maintenance of male cultural hegemony.<sup>49</sup> This was critical she asserted since sports have been "so thoroughly masculinized that it seems unlikely that [they] can be reclaimed to serve women's interests."<sup>50</sup>

The same theme was sounded throughout the 1980s by feminists seeking to provide a theoretical framework and broad research agenda for the study of women in sport. Arguing for a feminist social science which could be both sensitive to women's experience and activist in its orientation, Boutilier and San Giovanni questioned the institution of male sports itself and called for an examination of other possibilities for women. Without a radical transformation of sporting activity, they claimed, women would forever remain "the other."<sup>51</sup> Nancy Theberge examined some of these transformative possibilities in "Sport and Women's Empowerment," her article in a special issue of *Women's Studies International Forum* dedicated to a feminist analysis of sport.<sup>52</sup> Her voice joined others such as M. Ann Hall, Jennifer Hargreaves and Helen Lenskyj calling for deeper study of the ways in which sport had historically perpetuated male dominance and female oppression—especially through male strength and power over female sexuality—and for a determined

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47. Catriona M. Parratt, "Women's History and Women's Sport History: Exploring the Connections," paper presented at annual meeting of North American Society for Sport History, 1989, 8-10.

48. For example, Gertrud Pfister, *Zurück zur Mädchenschule? Beiträge zur Koedon Kation* (Pfaffen-Weiler: Centaurus, 1988; Gertrud Pfister, *Fliegen-Ihrleben* (Berlin: Orlanda Frauenverlag, 1989); Christine Peyton and Gertrud Pfister, eds., *Frauensport in Europa* (Ahrensburg: Czwalina, 1989); Marie-Louise Klein and Gertrud Pfister, *Goldmadel, Rennmiezzen und Turnkucken* (Berlin: Bartels und Wernitz, 1985).

49. Richard Cashman and Amanda Weaver, *Wicket Women: Cricket and Women in Australia* (Kensington: New South Wales University Press, 1991), vii; Lois Bryson, "Sport and the Oppression of Women," *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology*, 19:3 (1983): 413.

50. Lois Bryson, "Sport and the Maintenance of Masculine Hegemony," *Women's Studies International Forum*, 10:4 (1987): 350.

51. M. Boutilier and L. San Giovanni, *The Sporting Woman* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 1983).

52. Nancy Theberge, "Sport and Women's Empowerment," *Women's Studies Intentional Forum*, 10:4 (1987).

emphasis upon women-centered questions which might begin to erode the foundations of patriarchal control.<sup>53</sup>

Have these calls been answered by sport historians? In 1990, Steven Reiss, a leading sport historian, wrote an article for *Reviews in American History* in which he drew attention to veritable flood of high-quality sports history research, creating what he called a “new sport history.” In the penultimate paragraph of his article, Reiss noted that, where sport history books were concerned, “perhaps no topic has been as neglected as women in sport.” He went on to suggest that Larry Engelmann’s recent dual biography about tennis stars Suzanne Lenglen and Helen Wills was “a major step in correcting this deficiency” since it “rescued these heroines of the 1920s from the dust bins of history.”<sup>54</sup> It is doubtful that any one book could go far in addressing the neglect he saw in women’s sport history, let alone reaching deeply into questions about sport and gender relations in historical perspective, but it is interesting to examine the perspective taken by the author in *The Goddess and the American Girl: The Story of Suzanne Lenglen and Helen Wills*. Popular ignorance of the feats of Wills and Lenglen, said Engelmann, represented a curious consequence of the tunnel vision of historians who had not recognized the importance of the pioneering efforts of these two women in sport.<sup>55</sup> He may have been referring to the search for heroines in sport history that characterized the early years of women’s history and sport history, and the growing sense among a number of sport historians that they had not tried hard enough to make women visible, to describe them and portray them as able actors in the world of sport or as model representatives of the progress of women. On the other hand, as he noted in his preface,

I am still not sure why American historians have ignored these two extraordinary women. . . . I found that many other sport figures had in fact been examined at length by historians and biographers and held up as central figures of American culture and values of the past—Ruth, Gehrig, Dempsey, Jim Thorpe, Joe Louis and Jackie Robinson among others. I was left with no answer to the mystery of the omission of Lenglen and Wills from the standard chronicles of the past.<sup>56</sup>

Thus, for Engelmann, as for Reiss, the role of women in sport remained an understudied area and focused most successfully on the struggle in which a few exceptional women had achieved notable accomplishments in sport

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53. M. Ann Hall, “The Discourse on Gender and Sport? From Femininity to Feminism,” *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 5:4 (1988): 330-340; Jennifer Hargreaves, “Where’s the Virtue? Where’s the Grace? A Discussion of the Social Production of Gender Relations In and Through Sport,” *Theory, Culture and Society*, 3:1 (1986): 109-121; Helen Lenskyj, *Out of Bounds: Women, Sport and Sexuality* (Toronto: Women’s Press, 1986).

54. Steven A. Riess, “The New Sport History,” *Reviews in American History*, 18:3 (September 1990): 321.

55. Larry Engelmann, *The Goddess and the American Girl: The Story of Suzanne Lenglen and Helen Wills* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), vii.

56. Engelmann, *The Goddess*, viii.

despite the odds. Feminist historians, of course, have some rather obvious explanations as to why biographers have largely ignored women as subjects, in sport, as in most other endeavors. As well, they have articulated a number of problems about the writing of a woman's life, examining carefully what a woman's biography should look like, the relation of the author to the work, and how the fiction and potential romanticizing of her life may be constructed to become what Roland Barthes has called "a novel that dare not speak its name."<sup>57</sup> Too often, says Heilbrun, biographers of women feel it necessary to make extraordinary efforts to justify female ambition and describe the landscape of their unique achievement as though such accomplishments were outside of the bounds of a womanly domain.<sup>58</sup>

Not infrequently this has been the case in women's sport history. Vignettes about the historical experiences of women, in particular sporting and recreational activities, are often framed around the "contrariness" of women at play and their exceptional efforts to defy traditional femininity and the conventions of their day. The notion of "sporting woman" as an anomaly, if not an oxymoron, remains at the fulcrum of many "personal triumph" stories in women's sport history and colors the production of historical information about gender relations and sport in a very special way.<sup>59</sup> In particular, such women's stories tend to confirm the notion that sporting women belong in a separate category or sphere. This then emphasizes sexual difference and the inequalities that go along with it.

Nevertheless, from my perspective, the last decade has been far from neglectful of women and sport or historical feminist analyses of sport, having brought forth, to use Nancy Struna's terms, a "'glorious disarray" of literature related to gender and sport history.<sup>60</sup> Just as women's and gender history has sought to use the many methods and approaches available to historians (e.g. biography, cultural, anthropological, economic and political history, history of mentalities, and of ideas, oral history, studies of mobility, historical demography and family history),<sup>61</sup> women-centered sport historians have increasingly described and rendered visible the experiences, and successes and failures of particular women in sport and physical education, while others have gradually begun to ask more probing questions about the concrete, manifold and changing forms of women's and men's sporting and exercise experiences in the historical past.

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57. Roland Barthes, quoted in Carolyn G. Heilbrun, *Writing a Woman's Life* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1988), 28.

58. Heilbrun, *Writing a Woman's Life*, 22.

59. Cathy Peiss, Review of Boutilier and San Giovanni (eds.), *The Sporting Woman*, in *Journal of Sport History*, 12:1 (1985): 71.

60. Nancy Struna, "In Glorious Disarray: The Literature of American Sport History," *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 56:2 (1985): 151-160.

61. Bock, "Women's History and Gender History," 9.

### Toward Sport History and Gender Relations

Mangan and Park's collection of essays in *From Fair Sex to Feminism: Sport and the Socialization of Women in the Industrial and Post-Industrial Eras* (1987) marked perhaps a watershed in scholarship on women's sport history during the 1980s by focusing substantially upon analysis rather than description.<sup>62</sup> The book became a useful text for post-secondary courses dedicated to the history of women and sport. It was also a barometer of an emerging trend in the application of feminist analysis to the sporting arena, especially the focus upon the role of sport in the emancipation of western middle-class women.

The authors sounded the theme of sport as a source of social tension and the question of power in the history of sport-frameworks for analysis shared by historians of women in all sorts of other endeavors. *From Fair Sex* also incorporated a broad range of issues related to women's involvement in sport-medical beliefs, education, media perceptions, health issues and cultural traditions and conventions. It thus provided a model for future thematic studies.<sup>63</sup>

While some reviewers criticized the organization of *From Fair Sex*, its chapters nevertheless were representative of specific and significant themes emerging in the history of sport and gender relations at the time. I will follow a number of these themes as they developed until what I consider the next watershed in gender relations and sport history—Roberta Park's special issue on gender and sport in the *Journal of Sport History* in 1991.

Not surprisingly, *From Fair Sex* focused substantially upon the Victorian period which has held a particular fascination for sympathetic female historians of sport and exercise since it 'has been seen as a period crucial to the formation of gender attitudes and practices we have inherited in the twentieth century.'<sup>64</sup> The nineteenth century stressed the harmonious rationality of a sexual division where each sex had its own function, roles, tasks, spaces and appropriate forms of physical activity. Within this context, the rise of modern sport could be explored as a major vehicle for defining and reinforcing gender differences-differences which were supported by a scientific and medical discourse that idealized women as reproductive vehicles and focused upon limitation and disability. Indeed the Victorian preoccupation with female bodies, the range and effects of somatic determinism in nineteenth-century society, especially the fluidity of thought between science and medicine in matters of health, exercise and sport has become a seductive focus of enquiry for those seeking to understand the nature, meaning and

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62. The idea for Mangan and Park's *From Fair Sex* arose from a 1985 special issue of the *British Journal of Sports History* dedicated to women and sport.

63. Debbie Cottrell, "A Broadening Common Ground in Women's History and Sport History," paper presented at 107th Meeting of the American Historical Association, Washington, D.C., 1992, 6.

64. Julia Swindells, *Victorian Writing and Working Women: The Other Side of Silence* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985).

determinants of the social and cultural restrictions which were constructed around the female body at different stages of the lifecycle.<sup>65</sup>

Ten out of the twelve essays in *From Fair Sex* explored the central theme that Victorian social convention rather than biological potential had constrained women's participation in sport and healthy exercise. Paul Atkinson, for example, built upon Carroll Smith-Rosenberg's ground-breaking work on biological and medical thought about women in the nineteenth century by focusing upon the ways in which the medical profession mobilized powerful arguments about the inherent weaknesses of young women to surveil and control their bodies, bar their entrance into higher education, and ration their participation in sport. Supporters of women's educational institutions responded to such arguments by accepting medical inspection as a necessary part of the academic and physical education of girls. Said Atkinson, "the feminist pioneers of educational reform took medical opposition to heart, and their collective response to it became thoroughly characteristic of the ethos and organization of school life."<sup>66</sup> The result of their efforts was a new form of medicalized ideology and social control over female physicality that has since been carefully analyzed by a number of sport historians.

In other chapters, Kathleen McCrone and Sheila Fletcher looked at modes of institutional accommodation and resistance to women seeking to become physically and intellectually educated in nineteenth-century Britain. McCrone examined the growth of the games playing ethos at girls' public schools and the ways in which it allowed girls some physical freedom while accommodating traditional Victorian bourgeois mores. Her essay was part of her soon-to-be-published book, *Playing the Game: Sport and the Physical Emancipation of English Women, 1870-1914*, which examined more fully the relationships between women's physical emancipation and sport by explaining Victorian women's entrance into sport as an important consequence of women's fight for higher education. Locating the English sportswoman as a transitional figure between opposing views of womanhood, McCrone placed her within the context of a general movement for female emancipation. Female sport, she concluded, was a symbol of the women's cause and, in the end, more important than any other symbol of liberation.<sup>67</sup> Sheila Fletcher traced the social construction of gender in nineteenth-century England through the introduction of Swedish gymnastics into the physical education curriculum for girls. She showed how the principals of women's physical education colleges developed a female tradition in British physical education

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65. Patricia Vertinsky, *The Eternally Wounded Woman: Women Doctors and Exercise in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990).

66. Paul Atkinson, "The Feminist Physique: Physical Education and the Medicalization of Women's Education," in Mangan and Park (eds.), *From Fair Sex*, 53.

67. Kathleen E. McCrone, "Play Up! Play Up! And Play the Game! Sport at the Late Victorian Girls' Public School," in Mangan and Park (eds.), *From Fair Sex*, 97-129; *Sport and the Physical Emancipation of English Women, 1870-1914* (London: Routledge, 1988).

which, in turn, resulted in a perpetuation of separate spheres in single-sex training institutions.<sup>68</sup> Fletcher's essay was part of a larger study, *Women First: The Female Tradition in English Physical Education 1880-1990*, which examined the remarkable making and breaking of a distinctly female physical education profession in England over the last century.<sup>69</sup>

Martha Verbrugge's *Able-Bodied Womanhood: Personal Health and Social Change in Nineteenth Century Boston* built upon the illuminating study of Fletcher in *Women First*. In conjunction with Betty Spear's *Leading the Way: Amy Morris Homans and the Beginning of Professional Education for Women*, we now have a deeper understanding of the context in which some remarkable pioneering women in, early professional physical education for women on both sides of the Atlantic fashioned a unique conception of womanhood to deal with issues of female physicality, autonomy and authority.<sup>70</sup> Though Verbrugge maintained that hers was not a book about gender, her carefully traced study about how women conceived of themselves as healthy and able-bodied in nineteenth-century Boston, and how notions of able-bodied womanhood were advanced by first-generation physical educators from the Boston Normal School of Gymnastics, enhanced an awareness of the historical relationships among 18 dominant ideas about gender and social and institutional practices related to health, exercise and sport. There is clearly much more to be learned from detailed studies of the lived experiences of extraordinary women in physical education who built institutions, developed curricula and, through measured accommodation and resistance, molded the lives and physical activity patterns of their female charges according to particular views of femininity.<sup>71</sup> Some of them articulated the separatist view of women's sports called for by those feminists today who remain unconvinced that there will ever be a place for women in the male-dominated institution of competitive sport. Others, such as Senda Berenson Abbot and Clara Gregory Baer, who devised women's basketball rules, had an enormous impact upon the development of competitive and recreational sport for women as has been shown, by Joan Hult and Marianna Trekell in *A Century of Women's Basketball: From Frailty to Final Four*.<sup>72</sup>

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68. Sheila Fletcher, "The Making and Breaking of a Female Tradition: Women's Physical Education in England, 1880-1980." in Mangan and Park (eds.), *From Fair Sex*, 145-160.

69. Sheila Fletcher, *Women First: The Female Tradition in English Physical Education, 1880-1990* (London: Lounds, 1984).

70. Betty Spears, *Leading the Way: Amy Morris Homans and the Beginning of Professional Education for Women* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1986).

71. Martha H. Verbrugge, *Able-Bodied Womanhood: Personal Health and Social Change in Nineteenth-Century Boston* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); see also work on early female physical educators in colonial Malaya; Janice N. Brownfoot, "Emancipation, Exercise and Imperialism: Girls and the Games Ethic in Colonial Malaya." *International Journal after History of Sport*, 7:2 (1990): 61-84.

72. Joan S. Hult and Marianna Trekell, *A Century of Women's Basketball: From Frailty to Final Four* (Reston, Virginia: American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, 1991).

In order to examine female sport through the lens of the cult of the family, Jennifer Hargreaves, in "Victorian Familism and the Formative Years of Female Sport" shifted the focus from sport in institutions to the Victorian bourgeois family. She showed how what was viewed as a legitimate use of the female body was gradually redefined within the family to symbolize a more active, yet nevertheless subordinate role when compared with men. Sporting women learned early that they should behave like ladies even while playing like gentlemen!<sup>73</sup> Her study, along with those of Scott Crawford and Ray Crawford concerning, respectively, women in colonial New Zealand and Australia in the early twentieth century, demonstrated the point that middle-class girls' and women's relationship to sport was surprisingly similar across the English-speaking world.<sup>74</sup>

Helen Lenskyj and I explored matters which, since *From Fair Sex*, have come to be seen as central to the history of women's sport-sexuality, female physicality, and the long-standing hegemonic control that men have claimed over women's bodies. In *Out of Bounds: Women, Sport and Sexuality*, published in 1986, Lenskyj explicitly used feminist analysis to examine sport, sexuality and forms of male control. Her analytical and provocative study of women and sport in Canada since the late nineteenth century placed the "political institution of compulsory heterosexuality" central to her analysis.

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 co-opted for the purpose of male control over female sexuality and the female reproductive function, women will be strengthened in the struggle for autonomy in sport.<sup>75</sup>

Lenskyj was at her best, noted one reviewer, when discussing the dominating influence of the medical establishment, the media, modern psychiatry and psychology upon women's bodies and sporting lives.<sup>76</sup> She raised issues about sport and sexuality which are currently being debated by sport historians. Allen Guttman, for example, has explored the topic of eros and sport, arguing that the erotic appeal of the female athlete should be recognized as a simple truth known for thousands of years—a physical expression of beauty and sensuality which must surely be admired by men. Feminists see another side to the issue and suggest that Guttman's claims that an erotic response to sportswomen will not result in violence toward women is demonstrably untrue. They have argued persuasively that the media has long sexualized and trivialized the sporting performance of female athletes and that the eroticization of movement in certain

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73. Jennifer A. Hargreaves, "Victorian Familism and the Formative Years of Female Sport," in Mangan and Park (eds.), *From Fair Sex*, 130-144.

74. Scott A.G.M. Crawford, "Pioneering Women: Recreational and Sporting Opportunities in a Remote Colonial Setting" in Mangan and Park (eds.), *From Fair Sex*, 161-181; Ray Crawford, "Moral and Manly: Girls and Games in Early Twentieth-Century Melbourne." in Mangan and Park (eds.), *From Fair Sex*, 182-207.

75. Lenskyj, *Out of Bounds*, 14.

76. Jan Todd, Review of Helen Lenskyj, *Out of Bounds*, in *Journal of Sport History*, 16:1 (1989): 89.

sports and fitness arenas has led to voyeurism and male sexual violence.<sup>77</sup> Don Morrow, in his portrait of Canadian ice-skating champion Barbara Ann Scott has graphically shown how physical appearance and attention to sexuality historically took precedence over athletic talent in portrayals of female athletes to the public. Using *Time* magazine's description of the figure-skating champion in 1948, he showed just how the media could be a tool for encouraging traditional femininity at the expense of competitive athletic involvement.

She weighs a trim, girlish 107 pounds, neither as full-bosomed as a Hollywood starlet, nor as wide-hipped as most skaters. She looks, in fact, like a doll which is to be looked at but not touched.<sup>78</sup>

Richard Cashman and Amanda Weaver in *Wicket Women: Cricket and Women in Australia* and Marion Stell in *Half the Race: A History of Australian Women in Sport* have recently provided ample and colorful evidence of the way in which the Australian media' traditionally sexualized women and marginalized their sporting achievement and activities. Early media accounts of "sweet girl cricketers," large-bosomed forwards and fat-bottomed full-backs such as:

All pirates bold would give much gold to pack in when they scrum,  
Midst girls with charms and rounded arms, the plump, the short, the tall,  
Oh, things will hum, that's should time come.  
when girls play on the ball.<sup>79</sup>

continue in different form in the 1980s and '90s to promote a "dolly-bird" style of sporting journalism emphasizing body appearance over athletic achievement.<sup>80</sup>

In my own essay, "Body Shapes: The Role of the Medical Establishment in Informing Female Exercise and Physical Education in Nineteenth Century North America," I focused substantially upon the historical influence of late-nineteenth-century medical beliefs on the physical capabilities of women and drew a clear correlation between medical prescription and the social construction of femininity.<sup>81</sup> "Body Shapes" was a precursor to The

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77. Allen Guttmann, "Eros and Sport," in Donald G. Kyle and Gary D. Stark (eds.), *Essays on Sport History and Sport Mythology*, 138-154 (Arlington: Texas A&M Press, 1990); critiques of his point of view have been expressed for example, in Leonie Randall, "Women's Sport: A Review of Three Works," *Sporting Traditions*, 8:2 (1992): 210-225; Lenskyj, *Out of Bounds*; and Margaret MacNeill, *Active Women, Media Representations and Ideology*, in J. Harvey and H. Cantelon (eds.), *Not Just a Game* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1988), 195-212.

78. Don Morrow, "Sweetheart Sport: Barbara Ann Scott and the Post World War II Image of the Female Athlete in Canada," *Canadian Journal of History of Sport*, 18:1 (May 1987): 36-54.

79. *Sydney Sportsman*, March 1912, 13.

80. Cashman and Weaver, *Wicket Women: Cricket and Women in Australia*, 185; see also, Marion K. Stell, *Half the Race, A History of Australian Women in Sport* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1991).

81. Patricia Vertinsky, "Body Shapes: The Role of the Medical Establishment in Informing Female Exercise and Physical Education in Nineteenth-Century North America." in Mangan and Park (eds.), *From Fair Sex*, 256-281; Patricia Vertinsky, "Feminist Charlotte Perkins Gilman's Pursuit of Health and Physical Fitness as a Strategy for Emancipation," *Journal of Sport History*, 16:1 (Spring 1989): 5-26.

*Eternally Wounded Woman: Women, Doctors and Exercise in the Late Nineteenth Century* in which I illustrated how biological determinism was a pernicious ideology that established and reproduced gender divisions in sport and society, and showed how the medical profession was instrumental in its application. Not only male doctors, but early pioneering female doctors, a group one might have expected to dissent from male views, were shown to uphold basic Victorian stereotypes about female health and exercise. In an extended (and to me, a particularly intriguing) study of female resistance, I analyzed Charlotte Perkins Gilman's lifelong preoccupation with physical fitness and personal freedom and the frustrations of her inability to realize ideals of physical emancipation.<sup>82</sup>

It was Roberta Park, however, in "Sport, Gender and Society in a Transatlantic Victorian Perspective" who provided the impetus for sport historians to look more closely at gender from a comparative perspective and to show how commentators on both sides of the Atlantic employed the rhetoric of robust health and athletic prowess to portray masculine excellence and depict sport as the natural province of males. The notion of gender, said Park, "makes little sense in human societies unless male and female are compared and contrasted."<sup>83</sup> Using a separate spheres perspective, she showed how sport in the Victorian era came to be forcefully and graphically described as the natural province of male sport, hence contributing to the maintenance of ideologies about the proper sphere of middle-class women. The entrepreneurial, individualistic, urban and expansionist cultures of the nineteenth century required "manly men" to consolidate the Empire, push back the frontier, and demonstrate their moral and physical superiority through prowess in strenuous outdoor sports.<sup>84</sup>

Tony Mangan and James Walvin also brought together gender and sport studies in *Manliness and Morality: Middle-Class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940*.<sup>85</sup> This "happy volume" (as Sheldon Rothblatt put it), focused upon the phenomenon of manliness, and the relationship of gender to ideology and power.<sup>86</sup> In particular, the essays demonstrated that though the concept of masculinity was functional, to both Britain and America, each nation borrowed its models from different traditions stemming from very different circumstances.

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82. Vertinsky, *The Eternally Wounded Woman*.

83. Roberta J. Park, "Sport, Gender and Society in a Transatlantic Perspective," in Mangan and Park (eds.), *From Fair Sex*, 59.

84. See, also, J. A. Mangan (ed.), *The Games Ethic and Imperialism* (New York: Viking Press, 1987), and *The Cultural Bond: Sport, Empire, Society* (London: Frank Cass, 1990) for a discussion of the ways in which sport propagated imperial sentiments and values related to masculinity and femininity.

85. J. A. Mangan and James Walvin (eds.), *Manliness and Morality: Middle-Class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987).

86. Sheldon Rothblatt, Review of Mangan and Walvin (eds.), *Manliness and Morality* in *International Journal of History of Sport*, 6:1 (1989): 142.

In addition to these works, theoretically informed studies on men, masculinity and sport have burgeoned in the last few years to include some fine historical articles,<sup>87</sup> as well as the collection of essays brought together by Michael Messner and Donald Sabo in *Sport, Men and the Gender Order*.<sup>88</sup> Spurred by feminist scholars' pleas to establish gender as a fundamental category of analysis in the study of sport, Messner and Sabo utilized critical feminist perspectives to try to forge new understandings of the old relationship between men and sport—a relationship Cames and Griffen describe as freighted with combative and aggressive phrases and images.<sup>89</sup> Philip White and Anne Vagi, for example, offered a feminist psychoanalytic interpretation for the historical male attraction to legitimized violence in the game of rugby.<sup>90</sup> Michael Kimmel, in his essay on baseball and masculinity, showed how male sport at the turn of the twentieth century was a central element in fighting off perceived feminization, and how, of all sports in American culture, baseball was seen to be good for the bodies and souls of men. It provided the space where manhood could be earned and the character traits required by industrial capitalism developed. Kimmel showed how the masculinity reconstituted on the ball field was a particular kind of white, middle-class masculinity that reinforced the unequal distribution of power based on class, race and gender.<sup>91</sup> For sport historians, the institution of sport was becoming properly viewed as a gendered, cultural space.

In 1991, Roberta Park edited a special issue on sport and gender in the *Journal of Sport History* which provided the second watershed in this decade of inquiry by further displaying the growing maturity of scholarship in the area of gender relations and sport history. Dedicated to balancing male and female perspectives, Park sought to include both male and female constructions, interests and events, and to extend gender analyses to race, ethnicity, class, location and aging. Following Connell and others, she showed that it is not enough to simply juxtapose social categories of gender, class and race and apply them to sport. They must be woven together by an inductive analysis of sport, beginning with the most basic element of sport, the human

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87. See, for example, Eric Dunning, "Sport as a Male Reserve: Notes on the Social Sources of Masculine Identity and Its Transformations," *Theory, Culture and Society*, 3:1 (1986): 79-90; Anthony Rotundo, "Body and Soul: Changing Ideals of American Middle-Class Manhood, 1770-1920," *Journal of Social History*, 16 (Fall 1983): 23-38; Elliot J. Gorn, "Gouge and Bite, Pull Hair and Scratch: The Social Significance of Fighting in the Southern Back Country," *American Historical Review*, 90 (February 1985): 18-43; Bruce Kidd Sports and Masculinity," *Queen's Quarterly*, 94:1 (Spring 1987): 116-131; Amd Krüger, "There Goes This Art of Manliness: Naturism and Racial Hygiene in Germany," *Journal of Sport History*, 18:1 (Spring 1991): 135-158; Joe Maguire, "Images of Manliness and Competing Ways of Living in Late Victorian and Edwardian Britain," *British Journal of Sports History*, 3:3 (December 1986): 265-287; Steven A. Riess, "Sport and the Redefinition of American Middle-Class Masculinity," *International Journal of the History of Sport*, 8:1 (May 1991): 5-27.

88. Messner and Sabo (eds.), *Sport, Men and the Gender Order*.

89. Cames and Griffen (eds.), *Meanings for Manhood*, 3.

90. Philip G. White and Anne B. Vagi, "Rugby in the 19th Century British Boarding School System: A Feminist Psychoanalytic Perspective," in Messner and Sabo (eds.), *Sport, Men and the Gender Order*, 67-78.

91. Michael S. Kimmel, "Baseball and the Reconstitution of American Masculinity, 1880-1920," in Messner and Sabo (eds.), *Sport, Men and the Gender Order*, 55-66.

body, and an investigation of its social meanings.<sup>92</sup> “Bodies,” Park pointed out, “are used to convey a host of deep-seated cultural beliefs and values” and Victorians were enormously concerned with bodies of both sexes, constantly playing off dialectical tensions in their representations of each.<sup>93</sup> In her own essay on iconographic and metaphorical representations of male and female bodies in late-nineteenth-century North America, she drew upon medical, educational, gynecological, exercise, athletic and physical culture literature to examine the ways in which science was invoked to sanction established dogma.

Other articles in the special issue included, “Old Age, Gender and Physical Activity: The Biomedicalization of Aging,” where I looked beyond the young female athlete to focus upon concepts of the aging process and the role that shifting medical paradigms of the workings and treatment of the body played in shaping cultural images of old men’s and women’s physical capabilities.<sup>94</sup> Gwendolyn Captain traced the formation of ideals of African-American manhood and womanhood and assessed the double oppression of African-American women who had to confront the prejudice of race and gender.<sup>95</sup> George Eisen examined the role recreation, exercise and sport played in the lives of Jewish immigrant women in the United States at the turn of the century. Not only were gender relations based on a particular Jewish conception of the role of women in family and community, but physical culture held a distinct and rather low place in the hierarchy of Jewish values. Thus religion and cultural traditions created a different dynamic for female Jewish immigrants seeking to escape confinement through sport and recreation.<sup>96</sup> By contrast, Arnd Krüger looked at gender and the ideology of social nudity in trying to understand the complex biosocial construction of gender in Germany. He postulated that the acceptance of social nudity, underpinned with racial hygiene theories, may have removed much of the mystique of sexual pretense, symbols and imagination and allowed a certain leveling of the sexes. On the other hand, he pointed out, it provided support for virulent Nazi doctrines of ranking by race and ethnicity, elevating the cult of fatherhood and virility and reducing women to their reproductive function. Racism, he implied, cannot be understood without understanding its gender dimension.<sup>97</sup>

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92. Todd Crosset, “Masculinity, Sexuality and the Development of Early Modern Sport,” in Messner and Sabo (eds.), *Sport, Men and the Gender Order*, 48; R. W. Connell, *Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987).

93. Roberta J. Park, “Physiology and Anatomy are Destiny!? Brains, Bodies and Exercise in Nineteenth Century American Thought,” *Journal of Sport History*, 18:1 (1991): 63.

94. Patricia Vertinsky, “Old Age, Gender and Physical Activity: The Biomedicalization of Aging,” *Journal of Sport History*, 18:1 (1991): 64-80.

95. Gwendolyn Captain, “Enter Ladies and Gentlemen of Color: Gender, Sport and the Ideal of African American Manhood and Womanhood During the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century,” *Journal of Sport History*, 18:1 (1991): 81-102.

96. George Eisen, “Sport, Recreation and Gender. Jewish Immigrant Women in Turn-of-the-Century America (1880-1920),” *Journal of Sport History*, 18:1 (1991): 103-120.

97. Krüger, “There Goes This Art of Manliness.”

Kathleen McCrone, in "Class, Gender and English Women's Sport, 1890-1914," built upon the path-breaking work of Catriona Parratt by exploring the relative influences of class and gender upon working-class women's sport in England. Parratt and Peiss have both shown how class is a critical and under-explored element in discussions about gendered behavior and the gendered construction of the body.<sup>98</sup> McCrone, too, demonstrated that:

Historians of women must never be blinded by illusions of sisterly solidarity, and so neglect distinctive class differences in a gender context. There was even less semblance of gender identification in the world of women's sport than in that of men.<sup>99</sup>

Nancy Struna, in her study of "Gender and Sporting Practice in Early America," underscored the diversity of, women's experiences and the constantly shifting nature of gender relations. Urban women, farm women, slave women and white servants, women in villages and on the frontier, all had very different opportunities to construct their own recreational forms, as well as differing relationships with men. Heeding her earlier call in 1984 to seek fresh source material about what sportswomen actually did (as opposed to being told what they should do), Struna used innovative evidence about patterns of popular consumption to further explore the gender dimension in sporting practices, and emphasized the importance of revisiting and rewriting events, processes and historical periods from a gender perspective.<sup>100</sup>

By giving prominence to issues related to gender relations, sport and representations of the body, the special issue on gender and sport history underscored the potential of reflecting upon the many ways that articulating differences onto sex have affected gendered practices in sport and exercise. I would especially agree with Roberta Park in her suggestion that "Athletics, physical culture, and exercise, which intentionally and explicitly give prominence to the body, offer rich and still untilled soil for historical investigations of icons and metaphors of male as well as female bodies."<sup>101</sup> Recent scholarship has drawn attention to the curious neglect of the body side of explorations of the mind-body relationship and has included a lively discussion on the inadequacies of histories and sociologies of the body. The works of Mikhail Bakhtin, Norbert Elias, and, more recently, Michel Foucault have begun to dislodge the Cartesian privileging of the subject in arguing that the

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98. Parratt, "Women's History and Women's Sport"; Catriona Parratt, "Athletic Womanhood: Exploring Sources for Female Sport in Victorian and Edwardian England," *Journal of Sport History*, 16:2 (1989): 140-57; Peiss, *Cheap Amusements*.

99. Kathleen E. McCrone. "Class, Gender and English Women's Sport, 1890-1914," *Journal of Sport History*, 18:1 (1991): 159-182.

100. Nancy Struna, "Gender and Sporting Practice in Early America, 1750-1810," *Journal of Sport History*, 18:1 (1991): 10-30.

101. Roberta Park, "Guest Editor's Introduction," *Journal of Sport History* 18:1 (1991): 6. Miles concurs that the use of visual images as historical evidence, rather than incidental illustration (often disassociated from the text) is particularly promising in explaining the history of the gendered body. Margaret R. Miles, *Camal Knowing: Female Nakedness and Religious Meaning in the Christian West* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989).

true object of the disciplines has been the body-focal point of the prison, clinic, parade ground, school and asylum. They and others have underscored the need to contextualize the human frame within specific sociocultural frames of reference, sensitive to experience, representations and meanings.<sup>102</sup> The new genre of body history, exemplified by Ludmilla Jordanova, Barbara Duden, Martha Banta, Thomas Laqueur, Sander Gilman and others, raises provocative issues for the sport historian about how the sporting body has been inscribed with the stigmata of gender, as well as age, race, class and ethnicity.<sup>103</sup>

My final comments on this decade of enquiry about sport history and gender relations focus upon recent syntheses of the female sporting experience. Marion Stell's *Half the Race: A History of Australian Women in Sport* presents an interesting and inclusive history of Australian women in sport from the colonial period to the present day, the dominant theme being the deliberate attempts by Australian men to keep sport within the male domain. She covers a vast canvas with sports of every kind, using the record of female achievement in these sports as a backdrop against which to examine ongoing efforts by men to discourage, ban, ignore or trivialize sporting women.<sup>104</sup> Richard Cashman and Amanda Weaver explore similar long-standing prejudices in *Wicket Women: Cricket and Women in Australia* by using women's cricket as an intriguing historical case study.<sup>105</sup>

Another synthesis is Allen Guttmann's recent history of women's sporting experience. Bock has pointed out that the originality of women's and gender history lies not so much in its methods, as in the questions it asks and its perspectives. These questions and perspectives are never neutral, based as

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102. See, for example, M. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. H. Iswolsky (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1968); Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983); Foucault's main relevant works are *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (London: Tavistock, 1967); *The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences* (London: Tavistock, 1970); *The Archeology of Knowledge* (London: Tavistock, 1972); *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archeology of Medical Perception* (London: Pantheon, 1973); *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Harmondsworth, 1979); *The History of Sexuality, Vol. I, An Introduction* (Brighton: Harvester, 1980). Turner, in his overview of these and other works related to the body, explains how the rationalization of western society found a new object of exploration and control in the human body itself. Bryan Turner, *The Body and Society: Explorations in Social Theory* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984).

103. See, for example, Ludmilla Jordanova, *Sexual Visions: Images of Gender in Science and Medicine Between the Eighteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989); Barbara Duden, *The Woman Beneath the Skin* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991); Martha Banta, *Imaging American Women: Ideas and Ideals in Cultural History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987); Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1990); Catherine Gallagher and Thomas Laqueur, eds., *The Making of the Modern Body* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); Sander Gilman, *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race and Madness* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985); *The Jew's Body* (New York: Routledge, 1991); Barbara M. Stafford, *Body Criticism: Imaging the Unseen in Enlightenment Art and Medicine* (Wesleyan University Press, 1991). Loonda Schiebinger, *The Mind Has No Sex? Women in the Origins of Science* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989); Joseph S. Alter, *The Wrestler's Body* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); Susan Rubin Suleiman, ed., *The Female Body in Western Culture: Contemporary Perspectives* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986).

104. Stell, *Half the Race*.

105. Cashman and Weaver, *Wicket Women*.

they are upon personal, political or theoretical decisions “and it is in reference to them that the sources begin to speak to us.”<sup>106</sup> It is in this light that we can consider Allen Guttman’s *Women’s Sports: A History* which is a popular, wide-ranging and scholarly portrayal of the female sporting experience.<sup>107</sup> Guttman uses a broad brush to trace the evolution of women’s sports from antiquity to the twentieth century, and he brings to bear a wealth of evidence from art, literature, religious chronicles, popular magazines and professional journals to spotlight female sporting practices in different cultures, ages and across class boundaries. The result “is a fast-paced, upbeat and optimistic kaleidoscope of Diana’s daughters and Atalanta’s sisters, participating in their various sports with Mistress Makejoy, Muscle Moll, Fortuna and the Gibson girl.”<sup>108</sup> For sport historians of women and gender relations, *Women’s Sports* is one of the last decade’s special bounties, but it also poses a particular challenge for the future. Guttman’s inability to view the work of feminist sport historians as anything but radical and militant, and his ready acceptance of the historical arguments of male anti-feminists such as Edward Shorter, underlines the difficulty male historians may have in sharing women’s standpoints about sport as a contested domain.<sup>109</sup> Feminist sport historians may prove to be unwilling to accord this kind of women’s history a high priority in their teaching.

Should women—no matter what their race, class or culture—find it reasonable to give up the desire to know and understand the world from the standpoint of their experiences **for the first time?** As several feminist literary critics have suggested, perhaps only those who have had access to the benefits of the Enlightenment can “give up” those benefits.<sup>110</sup>

The burgeoning scholarship in sport history and gender relations aims at much more than simply writing women into sport history. It seeks to forge new understandings of the historical relationship between sport and the social construction of gender by examining gender as a dynamic, relational process through which unequal power relations between women and men have been continually constructed and contested. While the criticism leveled recently at an American Historical Association meeting by one of its members—“you can’t do anything now without making reference to gender”—could hardly be aimed at our Sport History Associations, nevertheless a growing number of

106. Bock, “Women’s History and Gender History,” 8.

107. Allen Guttman, *Women’s Sports: A History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991).

108. Patricia Vertinsky, Review of Guttman, *Women’s Sports: A History* in *Canadian Journal of History of Sports*, 12:2 (December 1991): 91.

109. In my opinion, Guttman’s reliance upon Edward Shorter’s *A History of Women’s Bodies* (New York: Basic Books, 1982) is unfortunate. Shorter is somewhat unique among social historians in his celebration of the achievement of modern scientific medicine, refuting feminist “oversimplified accounts of nineteenth-century medical altitudes and claiming that medical development enhanced the quality of the sexes.

110. See Nancy K. Miller, “Changing The Subject: Authorship, Writing and the Reader,” in de Lauretis (ed.), *Feminist Studies/Critical Studies*. Quoted in Harding, *Feminism and Methodology*, 189.

sport historians are accommodating the “new history” with its stress on women and minority groups, the lives of ordinary people in the past, and the experiences of immigrants, homosexuals and people of color.<sup>111</sup> This is not to argue for a history that should encompass everything and everyone, but to suggest that we should make the effort to calculate and redress the high costs of a history predicated on the silence and invisibility of those who have been hidden from history.<sup>112</sup> Particularly promising is a growing compendium of personal accounts of men’s and women’s “lived” experiences in the world of sport, their past and present stories of “being” men and women in the gendered institution of sport. One of the more delightful accounts of women’s lived experiences in a sport popularly perceived to be very much a male domain can be found in *Uncommon Waters: Women Write About Fishing*. Women, in fact, have fished since antiquity, and there are millions of unknown women whose personal and diverse experiences could make up a collective fishing history of a successfully contested, if watery, sporting domain.

We have. . . settled for ill-fitting waders (marketed, for the most part in men’s sizes only); . . . waded not only pushy rivers but also into crowds of good old boys and withstood their staring and their braggadocio—all so that we could get to the water, that diamond—studded, liquid metaphor that blinds one’s eyes while allowing one to see ever more clearly; that makes us forget woes big and little; that offers us watery gurgles and the flash of a living wild thing from another world.<sup>113</sup>

Mary Kuss fished most of her life. She was sure she was born a fly fisher. She could not imagine life without it. But, most of all, she remembered the male angler shouting as she passed: “Jesus, Pete, would you look at this! It’s a woman fly fishing! Now I’ve seen everything.”<sup>114</sup>

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111. Dr. Gertrude Himmelfarb, quoted in Richard Bernstein, “History Convention Reflects Change from Traditional to ‘Gender’ Studies,” *New York Times*, Jan. 9, 1988, p. 6.

112. Crosby, *The Ends of History*, 150-51.

113. Margot Page, Preface, in Holly Morris (ed.), *Uncommon Waters, Women Write About Fishing* (Vancouver, The Seal Press, 1991), ix-x.

114. Mary Kuss, “Jesus, Pete, It’s a Woman Fly Fishing!” in Morris, *Uncommon Waters*, 65.