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# From Bikinis to Boardshorts: *Wahines* and the Paradoxes of Surfing Culture

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Girls do fine when it comes to housework, raising children, doing office work, doing the twist and riding the small surf at Malibu. More and more girls are surfing, and I'm glad to see it. There's nothing more beautiful than a well-shaped girl riding a six-foot wave with the wind blowing through her hair. But one thing I can't stand is girls riding (or attempting to ride) big waves. Why? Well, you see, girls are much more emotional than men and therefore have a greater tendency to panic. And panic can be extremely dangerous in big surf. Girls are weaker than men and have a lesser chance for survival in giant wipeouts. Girls are better off and look more feminine riding average size waves.

—Pioneer big-wave rider Buzzy Trent<sup>1</sup>

A six-foot set came through and a surfer spun around, took off late and proceeded to carve re-entry after re-entry. We presumed it was one of the boys until Paul Burnett exclaimed "Hey, that's Jodie Cooper!" "Bullshit," replied Rob Hale, "girls can't surf [as good as] that." Closer inspection proved Burnett was right... and we didn't even have to clarify it with the suffix for a girl.

—Surfing journalist John Ellis<sup>2</sup>

Surfing currently rides a wave of popularity. The industry is enjoying unprecedented economic prosperity on rising consumption of high-fashion clothing and accessories with surfing monikers. One indicator of the booming industry is the purchase of leading surfwear manufacturers by multinational companies—Lightning Bolt and Hang Ten by Pacific Dunlop, and Mambo by Gazal Corporation—and the public listing of other major clothing and equipment companies, including Quiksilver and Billabong.<sup>3</sup> Surfing also continues to attract new participants, especially young women riders, or *wahines*. Lizzie Nunn, national women's director at Surfing Australia, claims that one-third of Australia's two million surfers are female.<sup>4</sup> In the United States, women made up just five per cent of the

surfing population in the mid-1990s but by the end of that decade the figure climbed to fifteen per cent.<sup>5</sup> Corky Carroll, the world's top-ranked male surfer in 1967, says that in the mid-1990s women made up between ten and twelve per cent of the clientele at his surfing school; today they make up as much as half.<sup>6</sup>

But does the consumption of surf-specific and related products by women and their forays into the water on surfboards portend a new gender order in surfing? The first half of this article outlines two key aspects of women's involvement in surfing prior to the early 1990s: representations of women boardriders by the surfing media including a drastic shift in the media's depictions in the 1980s, and the development of female surfing competitions in the 1970s and '80s. Against this background, the second half of the article analyzes the impact of women on surfing's male dominated culture in the 1990s. It identifies several paradoxes associated with the female boom before concluding that predictions of a more equitable gender structure in surfing are premature, notwithstanding some interesting technological advances and positive developments in women's professional surfing.

### *Wahines and the Surfing Tradition*

Women have a long tradition in the surf, dating back to ancient Hawai'i. However, in the second half of the twentieth century, and particularly at the beginning of the last quarter, women found themselves increasingly marginalized within surfing culture as it assumed a more fraternal structure. The clearest evidence of this fraternal structure, and corresponding female marginalization, emerges from the radical shift in the surf media's representation of women in the 1980s, and in the long struggle waged by female boardriders in the '70s and '80s to organize their own competitions.

Hawaiian legends are replete with tales of female surfers, while engravings and carvings feature women surfers. Hawaiians named some of their best surfing locations after women. Prior to coastal development, Ke-kai-o-Māmala produced some of the finest waves in the Honolulu area and was named after Māmala, an O'ahu chiefess and *kupua* (demi-god or hero with supernatural powers).<sup>7</sup> Surfing in Hawai'i declined after the 1830s due to the impact of zealous American missionaries, who attributed many evils to surfing and other sports. The principal source of these ills, wrote the missionary Sheldon Dibble, was the "constant intermingling, without any restraint, of persons of both sexes and of all ages, at all times of the day and at all hours of the night." The end result was that "the chiefs and the people became lean, dirty, and diseased, and were sunk in a dead lake of pollution—were even below the beasts of the field in utter shamelessness, and in the undisguised practice of every degrading vice."<sup>8</sup>

The missionary offensive against surfing resulted in a temporary hiatus, and women only returned to the waves in Hawai'i following the rediscovery of surfing in the early twentieth century.<sup>9</sup> Leading male exponents, including Duke Kahanamoku and Tom Blake, the innovative board designer of the interwar years, encouraged women to ride boards. During the Great War, Dorothy Becker, a young California woman, rode one of Kahanamoku's boards alone at Waikiki. Tom Blake believed that surfing would help women develop "beautiful" and "graceful" figures.<sup>10</sup> During a visit to Australia in 1914-15, Kahanamoku invited Isabel Letham, a fifteen-year-old bodysurfer, to ride tandem

with him at Freshwater Beach, Sydney. Over the following years, Lullie Hudson, Kathlene Musgrave, Gladys Corbett, May Bowery and Isma Amor followed Letham and regularly rode Sydney's surf.<sup>11</sup>

Victorian prudery forced local councils in New South Wales to segregate surf beaches by sex. But once off the sand and among the breakers, male and female bodysurfers and surfboardriders acknowledged each other as peers.<sup>12</sup> Australian swimming and diving sensation Annette Kellerman once described surfbathing as an exercise in egalitarianism: "there is nothing more democratic than [surfbathing]. Bathing is a society event but swimming out beyond the surf line is just plain social. Every one is happy and young and funny. No one argues. No one scolds. There is no time and no place where one may so companionably play the fool and not be called one."<sup>13</sup>

The surfing literature in the 1930s and '40s makes little reference to women boardriders. Photographic collections confirm that they were part of the broader beach culture, but pictures of women riding boards in this period are rare.<sup>14</sup> Surfing women reappear in numbers in the 1950s and early 1960s, simultaneously with the emergence of the lighter, more manoeuvrable Malibu surfboard.<sup>15</sup> Women from this era recall a supportive environment. As a young female surfer in New Zealand, Cindy Webb fondly remembers the constructive advice she received from two men as she struggled to master the art of boardriding and later, as an accomplished rider, she says that "men generally respected my dedication to the surf." Her peer, Lyn Humphreys, similarly describes the "guys and gals" as "one big family." "We loved each other's company," she adds.<sup>16</sup> According to Webb, the only source of animosity came "from the carefully groomed women who stayed on the beach" and resented her "surfing with their boyfriends."<sup>17</sup> Hollywood and specialist surf films confirm women's presence and acceptance.<sup>18</sup> *The Endless Summer* (1964) shows women surfing, and *Playgrounds in Paradise* (1978) includes footage of Lynne Boyer, "the top girl surfer in the world."<sup>19</sup> Boyer won consecutive world surfing titles awarded by the Association of Surfing Professionals (ASP) in 1978 and 1979. An advertisement in *Tracks* (an Australian-based surfing magazine) for *Stormriders* (1982) invited audiences to "see men and women pit their courage against the biggest waves ever filmed."<sup>20</sup> The broader surfing media also acknowledged women, albeit with limited coverage. *Tracks* included features on competitive female surfers,<sup>21</sup> and lent them editorial support in the 1970s and 1980s. Replying to two female correspondents struggling to learn the sport, one editor urged them to "keep trying" and not to "think of yourselves as 'females' but as surfers."<sup>22</sup> Male letter writers were equally positive: "I was really stoked to see that so many chicks are interested [in surfing]," "she really ripped... everyone was cheering," "don't hassle chick surfers... most of them are good," "there should be more women surfing today, the more the better."<sup>23</sup>

Surfing emerged as a fully-fledged sport in the early 1950s, and women initially competed against men. Women participated in the International Surfing Championships at Makaha, Hawai'i, until organizers created separate competitions for women and men. The International Surfing Federation (ISF), formed in 1964, also separated men and women; however, the rules of the ASR which were written in 1976, did not exclude women from entering men's events—or vice-versa. Directors of individual contests determined eligibility at ASP-sanctioned events.

Women were more than competitive in a sport that demands timing, balance and poise, and less strength than skill in positioning the body on a board and the board on a wave. In 1965, Margo Oberg beat 49 boys in a national age-group competition in America. Later, Oberg and Laura Blears from Hawai'i would achieve some success against men in the Surfabout contests in Australia.<sup>24</sup> Isabel McLaughlin, Jodie Cooper, and Wendy Botha regularly entered—and beat—men in local contests in Florida, Western Australia, and South Africa respectively.<sup>25</sup> Pam BurrIDGE competed against Australia's top junior men in the 1983 Panasonic Charity Classic in Cronulla (Sydney) and won her semifinal to advance into the last round.<sup>26</sup> However, these were exceptionally talented athletes. Oberg won the ISF women's world title in 1968 and three ASP women's crowns (1977, 1980 and 1981); Cooper finished in the ASP's top four women every year between 1984 and 1992; South African-Australian Wendy Botha won ASP women's world crowns in 1987, 1989, 1991 and 1992;<sup>27</sup> and Pam BurrIDGE held the ASP's women's world title in 1990.

Despite favourable treatment and positive representations of female boardriders in the surfing media and women's competitive successes in the third quarter of the twentieth century, one finds increasing evidence of the male surfing fraternity closing ranks. As we shall see, evidence of fraternal tendencies appear in the 1950s, although the fraternal structure of surfing did not fully consolidate until the late 1970s and early 1980s.

## The Surfing Fraternity

Displays of physical prowess—finely-honed combinations of skill, muscular strength, endurance, cunning, aggression, toughness and, above all, courage<sup>28</sup>—are the principal means by which surfers earn prestige and respect from their peers. But as Buzzy Trent reminds us in the quote at the head of the article, male surfers considered physical prowess a masculine trait and they deemed women comparatively frail, delicate, passive, and neurotic. Of course, these views were not confined to surfing, and were consistent with traditional social thinking about sport.<sup>29</sup> John Loy notes that among men who compete with each other in physical contests for prestige, women are not merely innocuous outsiders. Rather, their presence as objects of ridicule, humiliation, and abuse helps strengthen fraternal bonds and reinforce male domination.<sup>30</sup>

Male and female surfers themselves reveal the fraternal structure of surfing culture. In their biographies, legendary big-wave rider Greg Noll and Nat Young, the 1966 ISF men's world champion and surfing entrepreneur, admit that "scoring heavily" with women was an important means to build credibility among their male peers.<sup>31</sup> Margo Oberg remembers standing around fires to warm up after sessions in the early 1960s and "all the guys would be telling dirty, chauvinistic jokes."<sup>32</sup> In 1963, a group of boys approached a young Jericho Poppler (later a key organizer of women's professional surfing) and demanded to know where she was from: "I told them, 'Oh, I just live down there and I have three brothers' and they told me, 'You're pretty good, but why don't you come back when your tits are bigger.'"<sup>33</sup> Gail Couper, winner of five Australian women's titles between 1966 and 1975, says women surfers were regularly "harassed and put down" in the 1970s; she even claims to have been punched on one occasion.<sup>34</sup> Early female pioneers in New Zealand agree that gender first emerged as an issue in the late '60s when surfing became more male-dominated.<sup>35</sup> As a young teenager, Pam BurrIDGE thought she was one of the surfer boys.

She soon realized otherwise: “if they were being derogatory towards women, it was other women not me. Then it slowly dawned on me that [I was not really part of their world]. It’s like a family you’re not allowed to belong to.”<sup>36</sup> Paradoxically, the fraternal structure of surfing culture and its close association with the beach meant that women helped men define their masculinity, as Fred van Dyke, a big-wave rider in the 1950s and ’60s reveals in his reference to women as “props:”

You took the best looking woman you could find, sat her on the beach so she could watch everything you did, then you went out and bragged to your friends about her. So she’d sit on the beach all day, get sunburned and dehydrated, and the guy would come in and get pissed off because she didn’t see his best ride. That was the scene. It was machismo to the nth degree.<sup>37</sup>

Interestingly, not even the sexual revolution and the counterculture appear to have diluted male sexism.<sup>38</sup> Mark Stranger identifies persistent sexist attitudes among male surfers during the counterculture era: women who wanted equality in relationships quickly discovered that their expectations “clashed starkly with the pattern of a surfer’s life that prioritized the search for surf over virtually all else.”<sup>39</sup>

Two conditions provide strong evidence of surfing’s fraternal structure: the sudden representation of women as sex objects by the surfing media, and women’s long struggle to forge a viable professional circuit.<sup>40</sup> Sociologist Leanne Stedman identifies a change in the surf media’s presentation of women in the 1980s. She describes this change as “a progressive denial of the ‘presence’ and subjecthood of women.” According to Stedman, surf advertisers began to adopt new photographic techniques that prevented women from acting as “subjects” and “returning the gaze” of male viewers. Among her examples are the advertisements for the *Tracks*’ T-shirt. In the 1970s “the female model is looking straight back at the viewer, with an expression that challenges ‘his’ gaze,” but by the mid-1990s “the model’s head had been cropped out completely, she has had her back turned fully to the camera and her swimsuit hiked up.” As Stedman notes, it is an approach that has become standard fare in male surfing magazines that not only encourages male voyeurism, but reduces women to mere pieces that are nothing more than “symbols of [their] status as object[s].”<sup>41</sup>

The change has certainly not escaped correspondents, many of whom have voiced their opposition. “All I have learnt by reading *Tracks*,” declared “Lisa J,” “is that the surfing fraternity is dominated by men who view women as sexual commodities. The image I now have of surfers is a bunch of sexist, testosterone-dominated boys who have no idea what a woman is, let alone how to respect her.”<sup>42</sup> Male editors denied all and had no trouble finding correspondents who supported their own views. “Bev” happily replied to “Lisa J” on behalf of the surfing fraternity, offering her, and all the “other dorks” who had obviously “never surfed,” some constructive advice: “get fucked, write to *Cosmo*, or have a surf before you write.”<sup>43</sup>

Stedman attributes the change in the attitude of surf magazines to a “hostility” towards and “suspicion” of feminism. Feminists, according to at least one contributor to *Tracks*, are “lesbians and intellectuals” and ultimately “irrelevant to the debate because they’re so out of touch with their womanhood.”<sup>44</sup> A plethora of articles and letters, from men and women, reproduced these antagonistic sentiments.<sup>45</sup> Yet, while recognizing a

climate of misogyny within surfing, Mark Stranger insists it is “not ... a serious political position.” He argues that “the objectionable rhetoric” so prevalent in the surf media “is best understood as a petulant response to political correctness” and that the “denigration and exclusion” of women is ultimately a way to deal with the “uncertainties” associated with masculine identity in the contemporary era. Similarly, the “voyeurism is a symptom of... insecurity:”

Young male viewers... do not want to meet the gaze of these women. On what grounds would they do so? Not as equals, and certainly not as dominant. These women are beautiful and sexually desirable. The young men feel sexually inadequate and unsure of their status beyond their relatively unambiguous identity as a surfer.<sup>46</sup>

The embarrassing experience of one young surfer, recently thrown into the company of a bevy of scantily-clad female models during a photographic session for a magazine advertisement, adds some weight to Stranger’s argument: his visible state of sexual arousal—prominent for all to see through the thin neoprene of his wetsuit—limited the photographer to shots above the waistline.<sup>47</sup> Whether or not one accepts Stranger’s position that the rhetoric is politically neutral, from the perspective of a fraternal culture, it plays a critical role in male bonding.

Women’s long struggle to forge a viable professional circuit is further evidence of surfing’s fraternal structure. In the mid-1970s women established their own professional surfing tour.<sup>48</sup> Jericho Poppler decided that professionalism offered a vehicle for herself and other women to “design their lives around living the surfer’s life:” surfing perfect waves, travelling to romantic tropical islands, enjoying new experiences. In addition, she saw professional contests as a way to “contribute to the development of the sport and its subsidiary industries.”<sup>49</sup> Like their peers in golf and tennis, however, female surfers not only had to deal with negative stereotypes, they confronted chauvinistic sponsors and a skeptical public.<sup>50</sup> In 1974, Poppler and a group of her friends and peers—Mary Lou Drummy, Shannon Aikman, Mary Setterholm and Linda Westfall—formed the Women’s International Surfing Association (WISA) to oversee the formation of a professional circuit. WISA immediately organized one of the first contests to offer women prize money, the Hang Ten All Women’s Pro at Malibu. Television broadcasted the event although, as a portent for the future, a number of sponsors withdrew, citing their preference for men surfing big waves in Hawai‘i. WISA thus remained a California-based association hosting local events.<sup>51</sup>

Two years later, in 1976, Poppler, Bayer, Rell Sunn and Gwen Gross met in Hawai‘i with other female surfers and formed Women’s Professional Surfing (WPS) which set out to secure higher prize money and more events for women. The WPS immediately set up by-laws, contests, and sponsor committees, and moved to smooth relationships between surfers, contest directors, and the media. The following year, women competed in five professional events in Australia, Brazil, California, Hawai‘i, and South Africa to determine the first official professional female champion, Margo Oberg.<sup>52</sup>

Women’s professional surfing did not develop evenly around the world. Australia lagged behind America in terms of commercial and administrative support. Directors frequently cancelled events, often at short notice. Bill Bolman, director of the Stubbies

contest (sponsored by Stubbies clothing, part of the Edward Fletch Corporation), regularly cancelled the women's event. The reasons for cancellation varied—sometimes it was simply because contest promoters refused to lodge the \$500 sanctioning fee required by the ASP. Whatever the excuse, irregular competition in Australia prevented women from planning their season in advance and from producing attractive proposals for their potential sponsors. Women typically received only a fraction of what men earned. Men competed for A\$95,000 in the 1984 Beaufort Open, women for A\$5,000. The first placed man received A\$45,000, the winner of the women's event A\$1,500. Nonetheless, this was better than the miserly A\$500 that women competed for in the Rip Curl Bells Beach contest.<sup>53</sup>

Australian organizers discriminated against women in other ways too. At the 1978 Stubbies, organizers humiliated female surfers when they sent them into small sloppy surf while a bikini contest was in progress on the beach.<sup>54</sup> The program for the Beaufort contest made scant reference to the women's event and, in the absence of a public scorecard, only the judges knew who had advanced into the next rounds and who had been eliminated. Women were initially scheduled to surf on the first night of the Beaufort—the world's first night surfing competition held before a large crowd and a strong media contingent. In the end, the organizers gave contestants in the masters' and under-sixteen events priority.<sup>55</sup> While the apparently enlightened contest directors of the Surfabout allowed women to surf against men in the (qualifying) trials, no one expected the handful of women who accepted the invitations to advance into the main event.

Lack of sponsorship compounded the problems facing Australian women who aspired to live as professional surfers. Few Australian women could afford the costs of traveling to Hawai'i and California for a handful of paying contests. Even those who knew that they were surfing better than their American counterparts could not guarantee earning prize money abroad: unknown foreign conditions and the intense pressures of competition posed formidable obstacles. This situation further highlighted the importance of organizing contests in Australia: only local tournaments would draw sponsors willing to assist Australian women to compete overseas.

Some women surfers, and male surfing journalists, rejected the gender order. They publicly challenged contest directors who preferred to gratify and titillate male spectators with bikini contests rather than invest in women's competitive surfing.<sup>56</sup> Interviewed on the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's national news in 1978, Jericho Poppler demanded more respect, greater prize-money, and social equality for women pro-surfers. Jodie Cooper regularly criticized the ASP in the 1980s for employing bikini-clad women to "decorate" the podiums during victory ceremonies.<sup>57</sup> In 1978 Gail Austen, a surf shop proprietor, organized a meeting of female surfers who were unhappy with their treatment at the hands of male officials. The women immediately formed their own independent association, the Australian Women's Surfriders Association.<sup>58</sup> But the Association initially remained powerless in the face of men who continued to relegate women to the metaphorical kitchen of the contest scene.

Nonetheless, the political strength of men's professional surfing should not be exaggerated; it remained extremely fragile in the 1970s. Threats of poor surf and inclement weather, uncertainties over sponsorship, discontent over judging criteria, and personality

conflicts were always present, and constrained men's professional surfing—which simply did not have the institutional might to encourage women. Their first priority was consolidation. Debbie Beacham, winner of the 1982 ASP women's world title, also makes this point, claiming that Australian men were more concerned with organizing their own circuit than with putting down women. She also attributed the poor state of women's surfing in Australia to "American girls" who were "dominating the events and... fly[ing] away with the money."<sup>59</sup>

The WPS sought *rapprochement* with the men. At the ASP annual general meeting in 1984, Beacham implored Australian contest directors to consider women's interests and to add three "A" rated women's events to the calendar. This was not simply an emotional appeal: as a concession Beacham announced that women would compete for one-third less prize money—US\$5000 rather than the mandatory US\$7,500—needed to secure an event its "A" rating.<sup>60</sup> The carrot seemed to work; shortly after the ASP demanded that organizers of world championship contests conduct events for both men and women.

But well into the 1990s, women's professional surfing remained a poor cousin. And as far as men were concerned the problem was simple. According to James Brisick, who had recently retired from the men's professional circuit, "there's only a small number of girls surfing at a level that...will stand up as... 'good surfing' as opposed to 'good for a girl.'"<sup>61</sup> Brisick's widely shared and blunt assessment was wide of the mark. In blaming the poverty of their surfing on women themselves, Brisick and others ignored media hostility, lack of industry encouragement and administrative support, and the general fraternal structure of surfing culture.

## A New Dawn for Surfing Culture?

In the second half of the 1990s a number of conditions converged which some commentators believe herald a new culture in surfing, one less hostile to women. These conditions, examined in turn below, include the revival of longboards, dynamic new role models, resolution of women's surfing style, a shift in attitudes towards marketing female sexuality, a revitalized professional women's tour, and new dedicated products for female surfers.

*Longboards.* Linda Benson, one of the first women to tackle big waves in Hawai'i in the 1950s and '60s believes that the revival of the longboard explains the new popularity of surfing among women.<sup>62</sup> Certainly, the buoyancy and stability of longboards make it easy for the surfer to catch waves and to stand up, and the typically small waves of the major surf areas of Australia and North America favor the use of longboards.

*Role Models.* Other commentators point to the emergence of a new generation of female role models as an explanation for women's sudden attraction to surfing. Among the stars of this generation is American Lisa Andersen, winner of four consecutive ASP world titles between 1994 and 1997. Rochelle Ballard, the women's representative on the executive board of the ASP and the first woman to earn two perfect scores in one heat, calls Andersen the Billy Jean King of surfing. She credits Andersen with giving women legitimacy in a male-dominated subculture. Andersen "surfs better than a lot of the guys I know," says Ballard, and "that's one of the tracks that got laid down for us."<sup>63</sup>

*Surfing Style.* Andersen also helped resolve the long running debate among women surfers over an appropriate tiding style and allegedly won women credibility among male

colleagues. Andersen and her colleagues rejected the graceful manoeuvres performed by their predecessors, including Jericho Poppler, Margo Oberg and Rell Sunn. The latter considered aggressive surfing an exclusively male approach. Poppler believed that “men go out... to conquer. To conquer the waves and to show the[ir] power... Women go out there to dance and be part of this kingdom.”<sup>64</sup> “Instead of trying to surf tough and overly radical,” said Oberg, “I accepted a style that emphasizes control, speed and graceful manoeuvres... skimming, gliding and bending with the wave.”<sup>65</sup> Similarly, Judy Henderson from Australia, a contender for the world title in 1979 and 1980, confided that “ripping and tearing runs against my grain of surfing. I like being vertical and making the most of the wave but not doing unnecessary turns for the sake of them.”<sup>66</sup> By the 1980s, however, Debbie Beacham, Lynne Boyer and the American Frieda Zamba, a four-time ASP world champion (1984-86 and 1988), were experimenting with radical manoeuvres, performing hard cutbacks and hitting the lip. “Some people say I surf like a guy,” said Zamba, “but I don’t care if that’s what it takes to win.”<sup>67</sup>

The aggressive power approach had gained ascendancy in women’s surfing by the early 1990s. Wendy Botha urged her peers to “ride waves strongly with a lot of purpose,”<sup>68</sup> while her close rival Pam Burridge recognized that women would earn men’s respect by “work[ing] harder at their manoeuvres” and “go[ing] for it like men.”<sup>69</sup> Current professional surfer Serena Brooke believes that the shift to “critical, aggressive, controlled” moves is now complete:

It used to be slow, sweeping bottom turns, with the arms out—not as powerful. Except for the few, like Lynne Boyer, Margo Oberg and Frieda Zamba. They used to cruise along and if a section came up, they’d hit it. Now it’s more aggressive, faster, committed to radical moves, and hitting a section with power and ready to attack the next section. Girls can do airs, reverses, riding barrels.<sup>70</sup>

Lynette MacKenzie—the only surfer ever suspended by the ASP for brawling!—predicts that the current levels of competition will encourage heightened levels of aggressive surfing: “all the young girls are pushing the standard, tighter turns, airs.... They’re hitting the lip like there’s no tomorrow. They’re so amped and pushing each other.”<sup>71</sup>

*Feminine Athleticism.* The current generation of professional surfers has no qualms about marketing their sexuality in ways that, they claim, boost their public profile and image. In contrast to male athleticism, which conveyed a fairly standard set of positive traits—courage, composure, bearing and aggression—during the twentieth century and generally remained an unproblematic concept,<sup>72</sup> female athleticism posed contradictions for sportswomen. Athletic-looking females exposed tensions between notions of acceptable athleticism and femininity and found themselves derided as deviants and lesbians.<sup>73</sup> Betty Depolito, one of the early organizers of women’s surfing, witnessed first hand the double standards on Hawai‘i’s North Shore, the proving ground for surfing: “when a man gets all aggro out there it’s OK. With a woman, it’s like all of a sudden you’re a dyke, or something.”<sup>74</sup> Among professional women surfers, the management of their public presentation and social demands to convey acceptable images (especially to potential corporate sponsors) of the female body, was thus a major issue.<sup>75</sup>

In the 1970s and ’80s, female professional surfers down-played their sexuality and femininity and emphasized their athleticism and sporting skills. Debbie Beacham pre-

dicted a bold new future for women's pro surfing. It has, she boasted, "new personalities with clean images, it's no longer based on T&A."<sup>76</sup> Yet, even those who stressed their athleticism were not adverse to selling their sexuality. Beacham was part of a group (which included Shannon Aikman, Jericho Poppler, Lisa Tomb, Betty Depolito, Candy Woodward and Brenda Scott) who identified themselves as the "California Golden Girls" to secure better sponsorship and recognition for themselves.<sup>77</sup> Sexual appeal was an important marketing tool. "We were," boasts Poppler, "sexy, athletic, intelligent, pioneering women surfers."<sup>78</sup> The Golden Girls also used their femininity as a strategy to counter rumors and insinuations that athleticism was tantamount to female homosexuality.<sup>79</sup> But the California Golden Girls confronted grassroots opposition; ordinary women surfers objected to the sale of sexual images that were privileged over athletic performance.

By the 1990s, many younger sportswomen, more assured about their athleticism, no longer identified a tension in the concept of feminine athleticism. They genuinely believe that athleticism and feminine sexuality can co-exist.<sup>80</sup> Lisa Andersen is comfortable about linking the female body to sexuality in a surfwear advertisement campaign. "It's good to be recognized [as a woman]," she maintains. "It makes you feel good inside, that's what you are—a woman—so why try to hide it. I'm not trying to hide that just because I surf."<sup>81</sup>

But ASP veterans Alisa Schwartzstein and Wendy Botha maintain athleticism is insufficient on its own to sell female surfing and that women must manage their bodies to entice sponsors. Schwartzstein argues that "women need to promote... I don't want to say flaunt sex... but they need to look good to promote that aspect, to be fit and look really good in a bathing suit."<sup>82</sup> Botha appeared in *Australian Playboy* in 1992 and claims "99 per cent of the population went 'good on ya' because it was tastefully done....everyone's doing it. Everyone's done it in their sports... God, the firemen are doing it in New Zealand and they stand on the corner selling it!"<sup>83</sup>

*Professional Surfing.* In the mid-1990s, women admitted that lack of depth threatened the long-term development of professional surfing and in 1997 they reduced the number of competitors in World Championship Tour (WCT) events from sixteen to twelve. Competition immediately intensified and the ASP returned the four places to Championship Tour events for the 1999 season (compared with 48 places in the men's events).<sup>84</sup> Intensification of competition (and the associated resolution of the riding style issue) undoubtedly assisted the commercial and administrative development of the women's professional circuit in the late 1990s. Kahlua, the liqueur, sponsored the women's circuit (which comprised more events than the men's tour) in 1997 and 1998, and prize money escalated. In 1999, for example, the Newquay Pro in England offered the richest purse ever on the women's tour, US\$60,000—double the standard WCT purse of US\$30,000. At the end of 1999, the ASP board of directors formed a separate committee to steer the development of the women's pro circuit. Several new positions were created, including a productions officer, marketing director, sports development director and tour director, to give women more control over, and responsibility for, their own affairs. The new structures also afforded women an opportunity to celebrate and honor the founders of their sport. For example, the committee recommended that the ASP confer the title of *Na wahine hano hano o ke ka* (legendary woman of the sea) on Joyce Hoffman (who dominated amateur events in the mid-1960s and won the ISF women's title in 1966), Oberg, Poppler and Sunn.<sup>85</sup>

*Surfing Industry.* In the mid-1990s, the surf media began to produce new surfing magazines devoted entirely to women. In 1995, *Surfing* added *Surfing Girl* as an annual insert and in 2000 it produced six editions of the supplement. Similarly, *Chick* began as a two-page supplement in *Australia's Surfing Life*. *Chick* expanded to twenty pages before Morrison Media relaunched it as an independent magazine in 1998. Other surf magazines for women include *Whine* and *Shred Betty*. Silence is a form of discouragement, and the limited coverage of women in traditional male-dominated surfing magazines effectively denied them access to “the symbolic resources needed to identify as surfers.”<sup>86</sup> Women enthusiastically consumed the new magazines: “I am so thrilled to see this empowering magazine for women,” wrote one correspondent to *Wahine*. “Finally a magazine that portrays women as strong and capable rather than the usual images of us as wimpified, clueless and not to be taken seriously. *Vogue*, *Cosmo*[politian] and *Glamour* could learn something from your style.”<sup>87</sup>

On the clothing front, Quiksilver led the way launching Roxy, an exclusive line for women. Other established surfwear manufacturers and new independent labels quickly followed suit.<sup>88</sup> But one item of clothing, more than any other, has been identified for its positive influence on women’s surfing—the female boardshort.<sup>89</sup> Cultural perceptions of women as ornaments who merely decorated the beach meant that manufacturers did not consider producing appropriate clothing for active female surfers. Rather women’s beachwear—highcut bikini bottoms and flimsy bra-tops—were “inextricably linked to the commercialization of the female body and the commercialization of sexuality.”<sup>90</sup> “What do you do,” pleaded “Penis Envy” in a letter to *Tracks*, “when you’re out there trying to learn how to surf and all you can do is keep checking your costume to make sure its not up your crack?”<sup>91</sup> (To which an unsympathetic male editor replied: “occupational hazard I’m afraid.”) Boardshorts specifically cut for the female figure solved the problem instantaneously. “Now we can actually go surfing” and not have to worry about fixing costumes, enthused Lisa Andersen, adding that old-style swimsuits had prevented her from performing radical manoeuvres.<sup>92</sup> Observing the advance, Linda Benson dolefully mused, “I would have given anything to have the boardshorts that they are making now.”<sup>93</sup>

While individually and collectively these conditions imply sweeping social changes, closer analysis reveals little firm evidence of a new gender order within surfing culture. In short, women have a long way to go before they can declare that they have broken the bonds of surfing’s fraternity.

### Paradoxes of the “New” Surfing Culture

Re-examination of the longboard revival, the influence of new female role models and their claims that feminine sexuality can happily co-exist with athleticism, a revitalized professional women’s tour, and the surfing industry’s enticement of women with new dedicated products, expose several paradoxes and suggest that the bonds of fraternity remain deeply embedded in the social structure of broader gender relationships.

*Longboards.* While there is little doubt that they facilitate learning to ride a surfboard, longboards (or Malibus) do not enjoy absolute advantages. They are relatively heavy and cumbersome to transport, and they are impossible to duckdive (push under broken waves). Certainly there are no signs of them replacing shortboards as the dominant equipment.

On the contrary, longboarders live on the periphery of surfing culture with open tensions and hostilities simmering between them and shortboarders. Many longboarders in fact blame the introduction of shortboards for retarding the growth of surfing and corrupting the pastime. According to these critics, ultra-light shortboards with minimal flotation, which became standard equipment in the late 1960s, require considerable strength to paddle and catch waves, and must be continually turned (which also requires effort and skill) just to remain on the wave. Not only did they “sen[d] surfing down the wrong path,” writes Glen Hening, they destroyed “all sense of community and co-operation:”

Just take a look at the crew at many shortboard-only spots. You’ll find surfing’s original DNA muted into ‘dog-eat-dog’ sub-groups packed shoulder to shoulder, sinking up to their chests, snarling at each other and thrashing at the waves. It’s a corrupted gene pool of social repulsion...<sup>94</sup>

Thus, any notion that women longboarders might, somehow, penetrate surfing culture would appear grossly overstated.

*Role Models.* It is quite probable that high profile participants such as Lisa Andersen have encouraged individual women to pursue surfing. Yet, ironically, many industry insiders reject the role model argument. Lissa Zwahlen, a design director for Roxy, insists that the current generation of young women don’t have preconceived ideas of what girls do and don’t, should and shouldn’t do. They don’t wish they could surf, or snowboard or ride skateboards because they know they can, and they don’t need Andersen-type role models.<sup>95</sup> However, more problematic for those who consider professional surfers as role models is the traditional animosity between professional surfing and popular surf culture. The manicured images portrayed by professional surfers to win broad public appeal simply do not resonate with grassroots surfers, who are vitriolic in their opposition. “As soon as those assholes in the seventies tried to turn ‘surfing the artform’ into ‘surfing the sport’, surf culture suffered,” complains Kit, a correspondent whose words echo the sentiments of thousands.<sup>96</sup> Indeed, it is truly ironic that in their struggle for parity with men, women have pursued more-commercialized forms of surfing that are fundamentally at odds with its cultural norms.

*Feminine Athleticism.* While Andersen, Botha and other professional female surfers are relaxed and confident about their sexuality and see no contradictions in the concept of feminine athleticism, they have not resolved the historical legacies of the issue. In fact, they send contradictory messages to other women who are less sure of their femininity. Botha, for example, never explains what she means by “tasteful” displays of nudity. The line between “tasteful” and erotic is extremely fine, and even finer in the context of a male-dominated culture in which any emphasis on the female body as a sexual object merely reinforces negative stereotypes of women. While the use of female sexuality to “sell” professional surfing will undoubtedly increase visibility and thus sponsorship, it also sexualizes women’s bodies and detracts from their athleticism.

*Surfing Industry.* If professional female surfers send skewed and contradictory messages to young girls, so too does the surfing media. While correspondents praise the new magazines for women, referring to them as vehicles of empowerment and “breaths of fresh air,” and comparing them favorably to male-oriented magazines that cast women’s “naked rear ends” as the embodiment of female surfing,<sup>97</sup> others have criticized the incongruity of

fashion pages in surfing magazines, and advertisers' reliance on one particular body type. "I think the whole fashion thing is lame. If I wanted info on skincare and what kind of clothes I should wear to the beach and be 'hip', I'd read *Seventeen*," Jesska Carilli protested in a recent edition of *Wahine*. "Please stick to surf related articles, not girlie-surf related articles," she begged the editors.<sup>98</sup> Some disenchanted correspondents have even threatened to cancel their subscriptions:

I just got my new issue and there is an ad that has a naked cartoon woman butterfly on it. It is advertising some odd products and doesn't really explain very much. One thing for sure is that it has nothing to do with water sports. I hope this isn't the future of *Wahine*. If your magazine starts focusing on women as sexual objects in need of seduction brews and love potions, I will be canceling my subscription.<sup>99</sup>

The use of young, uniformly thin girls to model the new surfwear for women has also drawn fire. Kristin Borges accuses *Wahine* of maintaining the status quo:

For some women, I'm sure it's liberating to be empowered to be both "feminine" and athletic. But other women can not, or do not want to, meet restrictive cultural expectations. Meet the challenge, *Wahine*. Give the rest of us, the women who don't buy into so-called "femininity" some inspiration. Show us women from more diverse backgrounds ... At the very least, let's see gear made for a wider variety of body types and aesthetic preferences.<sup>100</sup>

Borges' disquiet is valid. Joan Brumberg's insights into the effects of mass manufactured bras on adolescent girls' feelings about their breasts illustrates how clothing styles produced only for specific body sizes and shapes actually increase anxieties. "So long as clothing was made at home," Brumberg begins, "the dimensions of the garment could be adjusted to the particular body intended to wear it." But mass produced clothing meant that

the body had to fit instantaneously into standard sizes that were constructed from a pattern representing the norm. When clothing failed to fit the body.. young women were apt to perceive that there was something wrong with their bodies. In this way, mass-produced bras in standard cup sizes probably increased, rather than diminished, adolescent self-consciousness about the breasts.<sup>101</sup>

Loose-fitting and baggy boardshorts are a long way from tiny, flesh-revealing bikinis and undoubtedly they hold little appeal for heterosexual male voyeurs. Yet, it is not clear that they represent a radical departure from the past. The fact that they are worn in advertisements by young models with firm and nubile bodies merely reinforces "narrow definitions of femininity and sexuality and marginalizes or masks alternatives." As Jennifer Hargreaves reminds us, the potential of diverse images to free women from a host of social constraints remains limited by "a powerful heterosexual code."<sup>102</sup>

Lastly, there is no evidence of a correlation between increased sales of female boardshorts and more active women surfboardriders, any more than there was a correlation between the production of sports-bras (that relieved chaffing and cutting the skin) and an increase in female runners in the 1970s. Just as many non-running women wear sports bras, so boardshorts are popular items of fashionable street-wear among girls and young women who don't identify with surfing culture or aspire to surf.

*Irreverent Culture.* As noted above, irreverence is a hallmark of surfing culture. Bodhi (Patrick Swayze) captures the spirit well in a scene from the film *Point Break* (1991). A member of a gang of surfers who sustain their thrill-seeking lifestyle by robbing banks, Bodhi reminds one of his wavering brigands that they are social bandits fighting “the system that kills the human spirit. We stand for something,” he preaches: “to those dead souls inching along the freeways in their metal coffins we show them that the human spirit is still alive.”<sup>103</sup> Diversification and expansion into new markets—the Roxy label includes fragrances, bedroom accessories and luggage; Mambo (the “bastard sons of surf culture”) produces swimwear, sunglasses, bags, wallets, watches, jewellery, ceramics and posters; Quiksilver moots plans to open travel agencies catering for the adventure market<sup>104</sup>; is perfectly consistent with the logic of capitalism.<sup>105</sup> But commercialization also threatens to undermine the cultural tenets of surfing.

What, asks Leanne Stedman, is the basis on which “real surfers express a collective identity” under conditions where “anyone can identify with the... culture by, for example, buying a surf brand T-shirt.”<sup>106</sup> In short, subscribing to its magazines and wearing its emblems and fashions is not tantamount to understanding the spirit of a culture, or even being able to interpret its nuances, much less living by its lores. As one Sydney-based advertising guru remarked, when little girls from the elitist Pymble Ladies’ College start wearing Mambo, it’s a sure sign the brand has lost its power to subvert.<sup>107</sup> Vipe Desai, former accounts director of The Shop (a marketing and creative agency) and currently marketing director for SMP (surf, snow, skate, motorcross and BMX clothing), reveals an industry on the verge of losing touch with its cultural traditions:

A lot of parents grew up in a culture of surf, skate and snowboarding. Now they not only want their kids to do those activities, they want them to dress as hip as they did. You have girls who want to dress as cool as their brothers. And younger kids who want to be as cool as their older brothers and sisters. Parents are willing to buy brand-name goods for their eight-year-olds, which helps establish consumer brand allegiance at an earlier age.<sup>108</sup>

Living differently and displaying irreverence are the essence of surf culture. As one surfer wrote recently in a surf magazine, “we [should] encourage surfing to be publicly damned ... People don’t have to fear us—they just have to not want to be us, not want to identify with a label that spells sick, perverted deviant.”<sup>109</sup> The new generation of surf wear manufacturers, with names such as Lost “...dysfunctional clothing” and Vermin “...untamed surfwear,” understand this only too well. In their hunger for market share they beseech the young to cast off the staid styles of their parents clothing. “Be unpredictable your parents won’t understand,” implores Loose Unit while the Umgawa International label carries a warning: “wearing the same tired old brands as your father can lead to loneliness and isolation.” There is no doubt that in their search for greater profits, the major manufacturers will at some point overstep that finest of lines between cultural authenticity and irrelevance. Thus, paradoxically, while women consumers of surf products promise the industry unprecedented economic prosperity, they also pose a threat to the very cultural authenticity on which the industry depends.

## Conclusion

Selected evidence suggests the possibility of a new gender order in surfing. "I've read many different surf magazines for girls and guys," declared a recent correspondent to *Chick*, "and am sorry to see that a lot of the girls have the opinion that guys are bastards and selfish pigs who don't give girls a chance. When I paddle out at my home break I'm usually the only girl out... As a chick surfer I'm stoked about how friendly and understanding most guys are."<sup>110</sup> After extensive fieldwork among surfing communities around Australia, Mark Stranger concludes that men "hold in awe" female surfers who "display courage and skill."<sup>111</sup> Surfer Shelly Appleby and surfer journalist John Elliss add weight to Stranger's position. "When you first paddle out," Appleby says, "all of the guys will be waiting to see what you do on your wave. Once you get a good one, they're like, 'OK, she's all right.'"<sup>112</sup> Similarly, John Elliss's quote at the head of the article suggests growing respect for women. At least two women, Maria Souza, a former gymnast and bodyboarder from Brazil, and triple world surfing champion Layne Beachley from Australia, have successfully tackled tow-in surfing (a variation involving finely-tuned jet-skis that pull surfers, like water skiers, into massive waves, some as high as fifty feet), while Santa Cruz resident Sarah Gerhardt regularly rides California's frighteningly powerful Mavericks wave.<sup>113</sup> These women have won the respect of male big-wave riders.

But, as this article has demonstrated, much of this evidence is superficial. There are no more than two dozen genuine big-wave riders and they mostly lead isolated and solitary lives. Even Lisa, the correspondent to *Chick* magazine above, concedes that she is "usually the only girl [in the water]." While she is apparently contented, other women find the gender imbalance daunting. One female correspondent recently called surfing "an intimidating sport" purely on the grounds of "the large number of male participants."<sup>114</sup> Women also continue to complain about the male-focused, sexist surfing media: "I was paging through (another surfing magazine) yesterday and while devouring those tasty travel pics, stumbled across (an advertisement) asking for photos of the 'Biggest Set in North America', and they weren't talking waves. How disappointing, how discouraging to be reminded again of how women are (often) perceived in male surf culture."<sup>115</sup>

This leads to the conclusion that the fraternal bonds that underscore sporting, recreational and physical lifestyle cultures have roots deeply embedded in the broader social structure of gender relationships. Local circumstances do not necessarily sever those bonds, even when a significant number converge at particular moments in time, such as in the late 1990s in surfing. Before any claims of a new gender order in surfing have validity, firm evidence of deep structural change is required. That change will emanate from well beyond the realm of surfing and, indeed, sport per se.

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1. Matt Warshaw, *Maverick's: The Story of Big Wave Surfing* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2000), 109.
  2. John Elliss, "Jodie Cooper," *Tracks* (Jan. 1985): 26. Objective measurements of wave heights are virtually unknown in the macho world of surfing, where feet measure increments of fear and surfers deliberately underestimate size. Heights are thus psychological indicators and depend on the experience and bravado of those describing the situation. Thus, while Trenr and Elliss both refer to six-

foot waves, the former means a small wave that engenders no fear while the latter means a wave with potential for fear.

3. "Mambo Duo Get Shirty With Cut and Thrust of Business," *Financial Review* (Australia), 7 Mar. 2000; "Skates on For Surfing Supremo," *Sydney Morning Herald* ("SMH"), 10 Mar. 2000; "Billabong Catches Boomer," *SMH*, 12 Aug. 2000; "Surf's Up But Will the Funds Bite," *SMH*, 30 Jun. 2000.
4. Jackie Dent, "Lifestyle Media For a New Wave of Chicks," *SMH*, 20 Nov. 1998.
5. Frank Schwab, "Inspirational Waters," *Los Angeles Times*, 22 Jul. 1999.
6. *Ibid.*
7. Ben Finney and James Houston, *Surfing: A History of the Ancient Hawaiian Sport* (Rohnert Park, CA: Pomegranate Artbooks, 1996), 33-35, 38-40.
8. Sheldon Dibble, *A History of the Sandwich Islands* (Honolulu: Thomas G. Thrum, 1909), 99, 101-02.
9. Finney and Houston, *Surging*, 51-63. For accuracy and as a mark of respect for Hawaiian language and culture, glottal stops (ʻ) appear throughout this article.
10. Lee Wardlaw, *Cowabunga: The Complete Book of Surfing* (New York: Avon, 1991), 56.
11. Sandra Kimberley Hall and Greg Ambrose, *Memories of Duke: The Legend Comes to Life* (Honolulu: Bess Press, 1995), 39-40; Isabel Letham, interviewed by Roslyn Cahill (1986): 2-8, transcript at held Manly Municipal Library, Sydney; "Surf Shooters and Sirens," *The Surf: A Journal of Sport and Pastime*, 1 Dec. 1917-27 Apr. 1918.
12. Sydney, "Surf Shooters and Sirens."
13. Lena Lenèk and Gideon Bosker, *The Beach: The History of Paradise on Earth* (New York: Viking, 1998), 191. For an overview of Kellerman, see John Lucas, "Making a Statement: Annette Kellerman Advances the Worlds of Swimming, Diving and Entertainment," *Sporting Traditions* 14(2): 25-35 (1998).
14. See for example, Donald James, *Surfing San Onofre to Point Dume, 1936-1942: Photographs by Don James* (Santa Barbara: T. Adler Books, 1996). Not one of the 112 plates in this book features a woman boardrider. One possible explanation for this absence is that the focus of surfing in this period shifted to paddleboard racing, rather than hedonistic wave-riding, and that success in the former required greater strength.
15. Named after the California beach where they were first developed. Douglas Booth, "Surfing: The Technological and Cultural Determinants of a Dance," *Culture, Sport, Society* 2(1): 40 (1999).
16. Luke Williamson, *Gone Surfing: The Golden Years of Surfing in New Zealand, 1950-1970* (Auckland: Penguin, 2000), 35-6, 84, 87.
17. *Ibid.*, 85.
18. For an overview of the two genres of surf films see, Douglas Booth, "Surfing Films and Videos: Adolescent Fun, Alternative Lifestyle, Adventure Industry," *Journal of Sport History* 23(3): 313-27 (1996).
19. These specialist surf films were produced for the dedicated surfing market.
20. Leanne Stedman, "From Gidget to Gonad Man: Surfers, Feminists and Postmodernisation," *ANZJS* 33(1): 82-3 (1997). "Stormriders" is a specialist surf film.
21. "Contests," *Tracks* (Jul. 1982): 28; Nick Carroll, "The Power Pro Junior," *Tracks* (Mar. 1983): 13; Kirk Willcox, "Stubbies '83," *Tracks* (Apr. 1983): 31; "Stubbies," *Tracks* (Apr. 1985): 22; Jen McCarthy, "Australian Titles," *Tracks* (Jul. 1985): 39; "Contests," *Tracks* (Nov. 1985): 49.
22. "How To Do It," *Tracks* (Apr. 1983): 2.
23. Stedman, "Gidget to Gonad Man," 83, 84; Letter, "Cutting Loose," *Tracks* (Apr. 1983): 2; Letter, "Jeff the Surfer Chick," *Tracks* (Jun. 1983): 5; Letter, "Sunburnt Sue," *Tracks* (Oct. 1994): 12.
24. Deb Hopewell and Elizabeth Glazner, "Margo Would Go," *Wahine* 3(2): 17 (1997); Jim Kempton, "Margo," *Surfer* (Jul. 1981): 42; Albie Thoms, *Surfmovies: The History of Surf Film in Australia* (Sydney: Shore Thing Publishing, 2000), 132.

25. Cory Glazer, "Women in the Waves," *Surfer* (Mar. 1984): 67; Elliss, "Cooper," 26; Craig McGregor, "The Waves and Wild Times of Wendy Woo," *SMH*, 5 Dec. 1992, *Good Weekend* (suppl.) 16.
26. Cory Glazer, "Pam Burridge: Number One on the Charts and a Show on the Road," *Surfer* (Oct. 1984): 80.
27. Lack of local competition and sponsors in her native South Africa led Botha to emigrate to Australia. As a South African citizen at the height of the antiapartheid sport boycott, some countries banned her from their surfing competitions; she accepted Australian citizenship in 1989.
28. Robert Morford and Stanley Clarke, "The Agon Motif," in J. Keogh and R. S. Hutton (eds.), *Exercise and Sports Sciences Reviews* 4: 167-68 (1976).
29. Susan Cahn, *Corning on Strong: Gender and Sexuality in Twentieth-Century Women's Sport* (New York: Free Press, 1994); Allen Guttmann, *Women's Sports: A History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991); Jennifer Hargreaves, *Sporting Females: Critical Issues in the History and Sociology of Women's Sports* (London: Routledge, 1994).
30. John Loy, "The Dark Side of Agon: Fratriarchies, Performative Masculinities, Sport Involvement and the Phenomenon of Gang Rape," in K. H. Bette and A. Rutten (eds.), *International Sociology of Sport Contemporary Issues: Festschrift in Honor of Günther Luschen* (Stuttgart: Naglschmid, 1995), 266-67.
31. Greg Noll and Andrea Gabbard, *Da Bull: Life Over the Edge* (Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 1989), 17; Nat Young, *Nat's Nat and That's That* (Angourie, New South Wales: Nymboida Press, 1998), 25-26. Later in life, however, Jericho Poppler (see below) fondly remembers Nat Young encouraging her to organize women's professional surfing. Elizabeth Glazner, "Portrait of a Surf Goddess," *Wabine* 2 (2): 13 (1996).
32. Kempton, "Margo," 39.
33. Theo Douglas and Elizabeth Glazner, "The Real Gidget," *Wabine* 5 (2): 25 (1999).
34. Mark Stranger. "Deconstructing Gender in the Pursuit of Thrills: An Alternative Approach to Sexism in Surfing Culture" (unpublished paper, 1998), 6-7. See also "Pauline Menczer," *Tracks* (Jul. 1989): 56.
35. Williamson, *Gone Surfing*, 88.
36. Marion Stell, *Pam Burridge* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1992), 91.
37. Matt Warshaw, *Above the Roar: 50 Surfer Interviews* (Santa Cruz: Waterhouse, 1997), 111.
38. While most historians hold the view that the sexual revolution facilitated the explicit expression of libidinous desire among women, David Allyn cautions that men remained the major beneficiaries and that women still struggled with double standards. For example, the counterculture was mostly a male trip, as the gender-biased slogan "Peace, Pussy, Pot" implies. To reinforce this point, Allyn cites a female interviewee who complained that "the guys fucked like rabbits—in, out, in, out. It was so boring you could die." David Allyn, *Make Love Not War: The Sexual Revolution: An Unfettered History* (Boston: Little Brown, 2000), 103.
39. Stranger, "Deconstructing Gender," 7.
40. At least one film critic challenges the view that Hollywood surf movies presented harmonious gender relations on the beach. According to Gary Morris, Hollywood surf films highlighted a tension between male and female surfers by typically casting women as "moral watchdogs who squashed male sexual advances with explicit messages about pre-marital sex (taboo) and fidelity (all important)." Gary Morris, "Beyond the Beach: Social and Formal Aspects of AIP's Beach Party Movies," *Journal of Popular Film and Television* 21(1): 9 (1993).
41. Stedman, "Gidget to Gonad Man," 83-84. For copious examples of the woman "from behind" in surf advertising see "MissReef" at [http://www.reefbrazil.com/reefgirls\\_index.html](http://www.reefbrazil.com/reefgirls_index.html).
42. Letter, "Lisa J.," *Tracks* (Jun. 1993): 10. See also Letter, "Ness," *Tracks* (Oct. 1993): 10. Of course, letters published in newspapers and magazines are not random comments. Rather they are conversations carefully constructed by editors. Nor surprisingly, given its marker orientation toward "bad-boy surfers" in the 15-25 age bracket, letters critical of *Tracks'* sexism are in the minority.

43. Letter, "Bev," *Tracks* (Nov. 1993): 10. See also, Letter, "Spence," *Tracks* (Aug. 1993): 8.
44. Mark Sutherland, "Sutho's Backside," *Tracks* (Apr. 1995): 139.
45. See, for example: R. J. Kegg, "Snow Tales II," *Tracks* (Aug. 1992): 51; Gary Dunne, "The Rip Curl Pro," *Tracks* (May 1994): 72; Mark Sutherland, "Sutho's Backside," *Tracks* (May 1994): 105; Mark Sutherland, "Surf Trippin'," *Tracks* (Sep. 1995): 115; Letter, "Jackie Dibbs," *Tracks* (Mar. 1991): 11; Letter, "Anon," *Tracks* (Jul. 1992): 9; Letter, Mark Charez, *Tracks* (Dec. 1993): 15; Letter, "Non Feminist," *Tracks* (Dec. 1993): 15; Letter, "DS," *Tracks* (Mar. 1994): 8; Letter, "Julie," *Tracks* (Apr. 1994): 10; Letter, "Non-feminist," *Tracks* (Jul. 1994): 9.
46. Stranger, "Deconstructing Gender," 15-16. Journalist Richard Glover makes the identical point with respect to teenage boys at a suburban swimming pool in Sydney. "Guys Watch, Girls Walk: Summer's Here," *SMH*, 2 Dec. 1989.
47. "Buzz," *Tracks* (Jan. 2000): 22.
48. This basically coincided with the launch of the men's tour. For a history of the latter see, Douglas Booth, "Ambiguities in Pleasure and Discipline: The Development of Competitive Surfing," *Journal of Sport History* 22(3): 189-206 (1995).
49. Jericho Poppler. "Interview," *Surfer* (Sep. 1980): 56; Glazner, "Surf Goddess," 13.
50. For an overview of developments in women's golf and tennis, see Cahn, *Coming on Strong*, and Guttman, *Women's Sports*.
51. Glazner, "Women in the Waves," 73; Wardlaw, *Cowabunga*, 58, 62; Glazner, "Surf Goddess," 14. WISA organized its last contest in 1991. "Whatever Happened to Wisa?," *Wahine* 1(1): 4 (1995).
52. Stell, *Burridge*, p. 9.
53. Cory Glazer, "Women's Pro Surfing: A Rough Ride for the Distaff Side?," *Surfer* (Oct. 1984): 76-7, 82-5.
54. *Ibid.*, 76.
55. *Ibid.*, 76-7, 82-5.
56. See, for example, Nick Carroll, "The Power Pro Junior," *Tracks* (Mar. 1983): 15; Stell, *Burridge*, 10.
57. Frank Robson, "The Greatest Show on Surf," *The Australian Magazine* (supplement to *The Australian*), 20 Jan. 1990, 17.
58. Stell, *Burridge*, 10, 38-41.
59. Donna Oakley, "Debbie Beacham: A Champion for Women's Pro Surfing," *Surfer* (Dec. 1982): 46.
60. Stell, *Burridge*, 91.
61. James Brisick, "Editorial," *Tracks* (Feb. 1995): 35.
62. Greg Ambrose, "Water Women," in Chris Bystrom, ed., *The Glide: Longboarding and the Renaissance of Modern Surfing* (Palm Beach, Queensland: Duranbah Press, 1998), 84.
63. Schwab, "Inspirational Waters." See also Brisick, "Editorial," 35; Lisa Andersen, "Interview," *Tracks* (Mar. 1996): 867; Lisa Andersen, "Interview," *Wahine* (Premier issue, 1995); Jodie Young, "Lisa Andersen's Inner Victory," *Pro Surfing* (Summer 1999): 40-5; Debra Witt, "Girl Power," *Pro Surfing* (Summer 1999): 83. Andersen herself, however, does not associate style with gender: surfing "powerfully and radically doesn't have to be feminine or masculine, it's just the energy and the grace of surfing really good." Andersen, "Interview," *Tracks*.
64. Poppler, "Interview," 59. For elaboration of the two styles of surfing and their historical origins see, Booth, "Determinants of a Dance," 48-50.
65. Margo Oberg, "Strategy for Females," in Brian Lowden, ed., *Competitive Surfing: A Dedicated Approach*, 2d ed. (Torquay, Victoria: Mouvement Publications, 1994), 87.
66. Kirk Willcox, "Judy Henderson: Iron Maiden," *Tracks* (Mar. 1981): 12.
67. Glazer, "Women in the Waves," 69. See also Steve Pezman, "Alisa Schwarstein: Profile of an Achiever," *Surfer* (Feb. 1981): 60.

68. McGregor, "Wendy Woo," 12.
69. Graham Cassidy and Geoff Luton, *Greats of Australian Surf* (Sydney: Lester-Townsend, 1989). 81.
70. Elizabeth Glazner, "Breaking Down the Barriers," *Wahine* 3(3): 40 (1997).
71. *Ibid.*, 4. See also, Betty Depolito, "North Shore Woman: Rochelle Ballard," *Wahine* 3(1): 41 (1997). Interestingly, the literature contains few examples of women discussing a uniquely female approach to surfing. Sandi Stanfield and Karin Nickola entertain this possibility although they do not make any suggestions as to what form that may take. Sandi Stanfield and Karin Nickola, "Ocean Gardens: The Feminine Influence in Surfing," *Surfer* (Jul. 1981): 72.
72. Sociological references to different types of masculinities do not transcend masculine athleticism. R.W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995).
73. Cahn, *Coming on Strong*, 164-84; Guttman, *Women's Sports*, 209-11; Hargreaves, *Sporting Females*, 169-73, 260-64.
74. Bruce Jenkins, *North Shore Chronicles: Big Wave Surfing in Hawai'i*, 2d ed. (Berkeley: Frog, 1999), 123.
75. In this sense, professional sport is a political system of embodied ethical values and attitudes. Sociologist Bryan Turner calls this system "managerial athleticism." All professional athletes, including surfers, must demonstrate that they are self-disciplined, hard working, conscientious and determined. Bryan Turner, *The Body and Society* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984), 111-2.
76. Glazer, "Women in the Waves," 74-5.
77. Kate McKnight, "Women's Surfing: You've Come a Long Way," *Surfer* (Jul. 1981): 67-8. The "California Golden Girls" appear to have mimicked the Bronzed Aussies, an ostentatious marketing venture orchestrated by Sydney journalist Mike Hurst consisting of surfers Ian Cairns, Peter Townend, Cheyne Horan and Mark Warren. Derek Hynd, "The Bronzed Aussies," in Nick Carroll, ed., *The Next Wave* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1991), 48-9.
78. Glazner, "Surf Goddess," 14.
79. *Ibid.*
80. Belinda Wheaton and Alan Tomlinson, "The Changing Gender Order in Sport?," *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 22(3): 260 (1998).
81. Andersen, "Interview," *Tracks*, 87. See also, Brisick, "Editorial"; Rose Jones, "Girls Surf Market Overview," *Tracks World Surf Business Magazine* 1(2) (1999).
82. Brisick, "Editorial," 35.
83. Wendy Botha, "Editorial," *Tracks* (Feb. 1995): 35. See also McGregor, "Wendy Woo," 17.
84. "The Expanding Tour," *Pro Surfing* (Spring 1998): 18.
85. "Innovations in Women's Professional Surfing," *Trans World Surf*; 21 Nov. 1999.
86. Stedman, "Gidget to Gonad Man," 77.
87. Letter, Terri Clay, *Wahine* (Fall 1999): 12.
88. Jones, "Girls Surf Market."
89. Editorial, "To our readers," *Wahine* 2(2): 2 (1996); Jones, "Girls Surf Market."
90. Hargreaves, *Sporting Females*, 159.
91. Letter, "Penis Envy," *Tracks* (May 1995): 15.
92. Andersen, "Interview," *Tracks*: 87. Surfers are not the only sportswomen to identify this problem. Beach volleyball champion (and international model and television sports show host) Gabrielle Reece plays in a jogging bra and men's running tights: "that way I can dive, spread my legs and not worry about it at all." Michael Silver, "Beauty and the Beach," *Sports Illustrated* (Winter 1997 special issue): 228.
93. Ambrose, "Water Women," 84.
94. Glenn Henning, "Foreword," in Bystrom, *The Glide*, 9. See also, Dave Parmenter, "Epoch-alyse Now: Postmodern Surfing in the Age of Reason," *The Surfer's Journal* (Winter 1995): 117.

95. Witt, "Girl Power," 78, 83.
96. "Forum: Derek Hynd's New Tour," *Trans World Surf*, 8 Aug. 1999. See also, "Surfers on Pro Surfing," *Tracks* (Oct. 1991): 90-1.
97. Letter, Clay; Letter, Allen Mitchell, *Wahine* 2(1): 5 (1996); Letter, Jeanne Robertson, *Wahine* 2(1): 5 (1996).
98. Letter, Jesska Carilli, *Wahine* 5(3): 18 (1999).
99. Letter, Ronee Shea-Tyler, *Wahine* (Spring 2000): 16. A courteous editor assured Shea-Tyler that "we are listening."
100. Letter, Kristin Borges, *Wahine* (Fall 1999): 12.
101. Joan Brumberg, *The Body Project: An Intimate History of American Girls* (New York: Random House, 1997), 110.
102. Hargreaves, *Sporting Females*, 165, 169.
103. *Point Break*, prod. James Cameron (Twentieth Century Fox, 1991).
104. Aaron Checkwood and John Stouffer, "Chairman of the Boards: Bob McKnight Believes in Surfing," *Trans World Surf Business Magazine* 1 (2) (1999); Jones, "Girls Surf Market;" Kathryn Bold, "A Big Wave in Bedding Design," *Los Angeles Times*, 5 Aug. 1999; Leslie Earnest, "Quicksilver's Truly Endless Summer," *Los Angeles Times*, 29 Oct. 1999; Mambo webpage, <http://www.mambo.com>.
105. In *Capital*, Karl Marx demonstrated that three conditions, and three only, determine the capitalist mode of production: capitalism requires continuous economic growth: the quest for accumulation by the owners of the means of production (capitalists) leads them to extort maximum surplus-value from those who own only their labor (workers); and accumulation of capital fuels competition between capitalists and impels them to seek new technology and new ways of organizing and controlling labor.
106. Stedman, "Gidget ro Gonad Man," 80.
107. Deborah Cameron, "The Mambo Kings," *SMH*, 12 Dec. 1992.
108. Jones, "Girls Surf Market."
109. Stedman, "Gidget to Gonad Man," 81 (emphasis in original).
110. Letter, "Lisa," *Chick* (Nov./Dec. 1999): 10.
111. Stranger, "Deconstructing Gender," p. 15. See also Wheaton and Tomlinson, "Gender Order in Sport?" 257-58, 269.
112. Schwab, "Inspirational Waters."
113. Bruce Jenkins, "Laird Hamilton: 20th Century Man," *The Australian Surfer's Journal* (Summer 1997-8): 104; Roy Fleming, "The Next Plateau," *Sports Australia* (Apr./May 2000): 94-97; Chris Mauro, "People Who Surf: Sarah Gerhardt", *Surfer* (Aug 1999): 188.
114. Letter, Youm Tran, *Wahine* 4(4): 18 (1998).
115. Letter, Desyl Wood, *Wahine* 4(4): 19 (1998).