

Transsexual Bodies at the Olympics: The International Olympic Committee's Policy on Transsexual Athletes at the 2004 Athens Summer Games

SHEILA L. CAVANAGH AND HEATHER SYKES

> Sport exists on the premise that males and females are radically different. (Barnes, 2004)
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> Thus sex gradually became an object of great suspicion; the general and disquieting meaning that pervades our conduct and our existence, in spite of ourselves; the point of weakness where evil portents reach through to us; the fragment of darkness that we each carry with us: a general signification, a universal secret, an omnipresent cause, a fear that never ends. (Foucault, 1978: 69)

In May 2004 the International Olympic Committee (IOC) implemented a policy enabling transsexual athletes to compete at the summer Olympic Games in Athens. The IOC Medical Commission proposed that transsexual athletes who had Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS) before puberty shall be admitted to competition; that all other transsexuals must be post-operative (SRS including external genitalia and gonadectomy); must have legal and governmental recognition of

Body & Society © 2006 SAGE Publications (London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi),
Vol. 12(3): 75–102
DOI: 10.1177/1357034X06067157

their gender conferred by their country of citizenship; hormonal therapy administered by medical personal to minimize 'gender-related advantages' in competition; and live for a minimum of two years in their newly assigned gender.[1] The guidelines proposed by the Medical Commission were accepted by the Executive Board of the IOC and it was also decided that individual cases would be assessed for eligibility. If the gender of an athlete is questioned the IOC reserves the right to carry out a sex-test. Although mandatory sex-testing of athletes was discontinued at the 2000 Olympic Games, the IOC is presently authorized to implement what has been called 'suspicion based testing' (Pilgrim et al., 2002–3: 511). In suspicious cases where the gender identity of an athlete is called into question an authorized medical delegate would be called upon to perform a sex-test.[2]

The new policy, referred to as the Stockholm Consensus, designed to admit transsexual athletes into elite sporting competition, has been controversial. Those who refuse to recognize the right to gender self-determination lament what they contend to be an unfair competitive advantage given to male-to-female transsexuals in women's competition. For example, one columnist with *The Sunday Telegraph* in London offered the following transphobic overview of the policy:

> Male athletes aiming to win Olympic medals without resorting to banned drugs could soon have a new, legal way of gaining an advantage over their rivals – wear a dress for two years and then compete as a woman. (Hart, 2004)

As exemplified in this vitriolic report, transphobia is based upon an intolerance or hatred of a subject changing sex or identifying with a gender seen by some to be at odds with his or her sexed body. In an editorial published in the *National Post*, a contributor wrote an inflammatory piece about Michelle Dumaresq, a Canadian male-to-female transsexual who represented Canada in the 2002 World Mountain Biking Championship in Austria:

> What we can't understand is how Ms. Dumaresq gets satisfaction from chalking up victories against natural-born female competitors. (In six races this year, she has twice finished first and twice finished second.) Though Ms. Dumaresq has not broken any rules, she reminds us of those able-bodied athletes who occasionally get caught feigning disabilities so they can compete in the Special Olympics – or parents who lie about their 14-year-old's age so he can be the leading goal-scorer in a hockey league for 10-year-olds. What's the point? Is there any glory in collecting a trophy when the people you're beating have been programmed by nature to lose? (*National Post*, 2002)

Some genetically born female athletes on Canada's mountain biking team also protested Dumaresq's position on the team and wore t-shirts which read 'biological women'. The petitioners believed that Dumaresq had an unfair advantage as a transsexual woman because she, allegedly, retained 'masculine' muscle mass.

The advantage thesis permeates public debate and discourse about transsexuality in sport and, due to the Stockholm Consensus, the IOC has become the official arbitrator of this debate. The Stockholm Consensus regulates access to binary gender identifications (male or female) when the IOC cannot agree – without equivocation and dispute – on what it is precisely that is being regulated. If male and female bodies are not natural (but social, culturally specific and thus mutable) the IOC is faced with the problematic of having to police (through medical and visual technologies) a categorical gender binary that cannot be shown to exist. In this article, we argue that the IOC policy – with its fluency in post-operative transsexuality – is a new disciplinary technique designed to manage binary gender designations. Using psychoanalytic theory, we contend that the almost obsessive attempt to manage gender and to cast a definitive mould on to the sex of bodies examined, in Olympic sporting competition, is indicative of a refusal to accept the changeability of bodies and to acknowledge the spectre of human mortality. Death and dying are precisely what Olympic bodies are supposed to countervail. We contend that muscular bodies in Olympic competition serve as fetishistic devices used to neutralize the otherwise overwhelming fear of annihilation.

The IOC policy on transsexuality is concerned with the medical creation of sex, the 'transition' if you will. Transitioning refers to the process through which one alters the sex of the body to bring it into alignment with an internal sense of what the sexed body should have been. In other words, a transsexual woman changes sex to make her body congruent with a psychically invested wish to be a woman. Jay Prosser (1998: 5) defines the transitioning process as involving the 'physical, social, and psychic transformations that constitute transsexuality' . The very notion of transitioning or changing sex has, historically, been regarded as a scientific, social and phenomenological impossibility within the world of elite sport. Transsexuals and intersexed athletes – the groups most often subject to discrimination and disqualification – have always confounded a static and unchanging two sex model based on biology, and so their gendered subjectivities were erased (Namaste, 2000) and/or largely ignored in competitive sport prior to the 21st century.

While the Stockholm Consensus has been hailed as a progressive access policy designed to admit transsexual athletes (rather than bar them from Olympic competition as has been done in the past), we argue that it is more consistent with the original sex-tests used to police gender and to disqualify a significant number of female athletes. As Myron Genel, a Yale professor and member of the IOC committee, said: 'In a sense, this [Stockholm Consensus] was a continuation of that effort [to sex-test athletes]' (Hui, 2004: para. 17). The technology designed

to test sex, which is now focused upon transsexuals, is a disciplinary regime only appearing to be based upon a spirit of inclusion. The Stockholm Consensus adopts a very narrow definition of transsexuality which, as we demonstrate later in the article, excludes a large segment of the international transsexual community. It also does nothing to admit intersexed athletes into Olympic competition. Transsexual men in sporting competition are rarely mentioned in conjunction with the IOC policy. Moreover, given that many transsexual men take testosterone injections, it is curious that the Olympic community does not consider that they may have an advantage over genetic men. We suggest that this omission is symptomatic of a refusal to see trans men as men and that it also provides an illustration of the popular compulsion to see gender as determined by nature, not culture (made men are, thus, not to be seen as legitimate competition).

The policy *appears* to be about the maintenance of a level playing field for genetic women. As Patrick Schamasch, Director of the IOC Medical Commission, said without apology, the Stockholm Consensus was designed 'more to protect the athlete who has not been sex reassigned than to help the person who is' (Marech, 2004a: para. 5). The IOC's determination to provide access to fair, equitable competition for genetic women is, curiously, coming at a time when transsexuals and intersexed peoples are gaining access to basic civil rights. We suggest that the IOC commitment to neutralizing an alleged masculine competitive advantage in women's sport is only manifestly about the rights of genetic women. The latent anxiety is driven by a compulsive attempt to validate the age-old western, categorical gender binary. We argue that the policy functions to manage a categorical gender binary in the face of social, medical and legal uncertainty; gender identifications, anatomical, genital and chromosomal variations that aren't intelligible to those committed to a bio-centric two sex model; so-called gender 'purity' in women's sport; and to mask a fetishistic engagement with athletic bodies – as media spectacles – that are hyper-muscular, sculpted, highly toned, enervated, streamlined, and appear to be death defying.

The Stockholm Consensus is, also, symptomatic of a refusal to recognize self-identification with respect to gender. Priority is given to sex-testing regimes and narrow, medically governed, definitions of sexed bodies. The IOC policy reveals what Judith Butler (1990) refers to as 'gender trouble'. Bodies entered into Olympic competition have always seemed larger than life. Such idealized bodies seem to defy gravity, have immortal powers of concentration, and display superhuman strength, endurance, balance, coordination, speed and agility. The Olympic motto of *citius, altius, fortius* (faster, higher, stronger) is quintessentially about a metamorphosis into ever-increasing levels of bodily performance. Olympic bodies, as visual spectacles, transcend everyday conceptions of gender and exhibit

physiques that cannot be easily seen as 'natural'. Much like the transsexual body, which is sometimes (though not always) surgically or hormonally induced, Olympic bodies are acquired through rigorous training and, in many instances, injections of steroids and other performance enhancing substances. While both transsexual and Olympic bodies have unique histories and vastly different experiences in the social and political realms, psychoanalysis helps us to see that the presence of transsexual bodies in sport reminds the IOC, and the Olympic community in general, that the fascination with athletic bodies is, in part, about a psychic investment in Olympians who already transcend the boundaries of binary gender categories, ideas about mortal human strength, aging and, finally, death.

To develop our argument we first discuss the history and politics of the Olympic sex-test and how it has been impossible to develop adequate testing mechanisms to measure a categorical gender binary that cannot be evidenced in biology. Sadly, the effect of decades of mandatory sex-testing (also known as the femininity test) was to discriminate against biological women and intersexed athletes identifying as women. The second section, 'Gender Troubles at the Olympics', reviews a number of high-profile female Olympic athletes who failed the sex-test (despite having lived their entire lives as women) in order to show how the policing of gender negatively impacts upon athletes who do not identify as transsexual. The article then introduces a psychoanalytic reading of the anxieties underpinning both the sex-test and the new sex-reassignment policy. We contend that as the sex of the body is, increasingly, seen to be unstable (or, at the very least, not determined by biology), new efforts to manage the gender of Olympic athletes comes into being. Focusing on female muscularity and the transitioning process for male-to-female transsexual athletes, we demonstrate how normative gender identifications – and the muscularities they depend upon – mask underlying fears about human mortality. In section three we offer a genealogy of the Stockholm Consensus and provide a context for its development by reference to well-publicized cases of transsexual discrimination in Olympic sport. These latter cases, involving transsexuals, are not unlike the earlier mentioned cases involving bio-women (some of whom later came to identify as intersexed) who failed the sex-test, but differences exist in terms of the way the two populations have been treated: both involve gender-based discrimination but transsexuals (unlike bio-women) have been subject to sex-testing motivated by transphobia. Third, we focus upon international panic about female muscularity in and out of Olympic competition to highlight psychic anxieties about gender indeterminacy. Using psychoanalytic theory, we argue that muscles are fetishistic objects used to manage a society-wide fear of death and dying in modern western, Christian nations and cultures.

The IOC Sex-Test

The gender of Olympic athletes has always been subject to question and anxiety. Dating back to ancient Greece male athletes engaged in competition without clothing to demonstrate that they were not female. As Laura Wackwitz (2003: 1) explains, it was believed that women would deplete the strength of a male warrior so they were rigorously barred from competing at Olympia (and could not even attend the festival as spectators). Wackwitz claims that the requirement for men to compete in the nude was the earliest manifestation of the Olympic sex-test. The modern incarnation of the sex-test focused not on genetic men, but on genetic women. Athletes entering into the women's Olympic competition were subject to mandatory sex-testing from 1968 to 1998. In both manifestations of the sex-test (in the Ancient Greek and the 20th-century Olympics) it is the genetic female body that is the site of anxiety. In Ancient Greece, the female body was thought to be a polluting body (capable of crippling male athletes) and in the 20th century the female Olympic body was the one that could be a genetic male in disguise.

In the UK, despite the inclusion of transsexual people in the 1975 Sex Discrimination Act, sex-testing was permitted under section 44, which enabled discrimination in sport on the basis of gender so long as it could be shown that the 'physical strength, stamina or physique of the average woman puts her at a disadvantage to the average man' (CHANGE et al., 2000: para. 4.3.1). This legislation allowed for gender segregation in sporting competition. Thus transsexual and intersexed athletes could legally be disqualified from competition. Transsexual advocates argued that the policy should be re-written to prevent discrimination against transsexual women and men who have initiated or completed the transition process. Even Myron Genel, a committee member of the IOC, said that a 'lot of us feel that the IOC was much too slow in eliminating gender verification' (Hui, 2004: para. 19) and expressed his views about the need to be proactive by including transsexuals in Olympic competition.

During the 1990s there was 'growing resentment and controversy amongst the athletes regarding having to submit to these tests' (CHANGE et al., 2000). The scientific technologies used to test sex were developed in the hope of clarifying the boundary between male and female bodies (although it was only female bodies that were subject to testing) and yet 'each advance in screening technology has failed to provide a definitive and undisputable marker of the category "woman"' (Wackwitz, 2003: 555). Using a range of sex-tests including the visual test,[3] the Barr Body test, and the Polymerase Chain Reaction test, the IOC could not ascertain beyond a shadow of doubt who was and was not genetically female.

Some women had XY chromosomes typical of genetic men. For example, Spanish runner and hurdler, Maria Jose Martinez Patino, failed the sex test because she was found to have XY chromosomes. Although her body did not produce testosterone on par with the average genetic man she was banned from competition in 1985 but reinstated in 1988 following the first successful petition of the IOC disqualification policy.[4] Each chromosomal variation could not be shown to lead to an anomalous muscle mass for either men or women.

The IOC tried to make a categorical gender binary self-evident through medical technologies but each version of the test revealed subtle differences between male and female genders, as opposed to clearly delineated 'opposite' sexes. As feminist critic Laura Wackwitz contends:

> . . . sex testing is an injurious practice – one applied only to women – that is predicated upon the assumption that there are two and only two forms of the human body – male and female – and that the identification of these two forms constitutes objective observation of naturally occurring biological realities. (Wackwitz: 2003: 554)

The Barr Body test, for example, is used by medical doctors to prove that an athlete is not a man (as opposed to proving genetic femaleness), which suggests that the test is used to arrive at a gender diagnosis through exclusion (Wackwitz, 2003: 557). According to the modernist logic of sex-testing, an athlete was female because they were not male; yet sport scientists could not develop an accurate measure of gender per se. Visual inspections of external genitals and internal microscopic inspections of chromosomes (Barr Body) – including gene counts – could not produce what Foucault (1978) has called a truth about sex.

The scientific quest for a universalizable sex-test obscures the 'presence of what Lyotard calls aethesis: the singularity, difference and heterogeneity of particular bodies that resist discursive systems such as techno-science' (Curtis cited in Featherstone, 1999: 8). Increasingly, scientific and sporting technologies zoom in to categorize and reorganize chromosomes and genes (Miah, 2004) in order to shore up the fragile epistemological certainty offered by biological universalism and technological progress. For example, in one version of the sex test, the presence of the SRY gene on the Y chromosome was selected to demonstrate an essential femaleness in the presence of an anatomical range of external genitalia found in elite athletes. Sex-testing was designed to make the non-visible axiom of binary gender visible to the scientific eye and to sporting authorities, yet gender theorist Riki Wilchins (2004: 94) argues that the visual language of bodies isn't transparent: 'We learn to see things in a certain way, and by seeing them that way, we rely on our belief in that vision to inform us about what is ultimately real and out there.'[5]

The effect of the sex-test was to discriminate against intersexed and male-to-female transsexual athletes. Although the IOC claimed that the sex-test was not intended to 'differentiate between sexes but to prevent male imposters from participating in female competitions', the test banned athletes who had unusually high levels of androgen or testosterone from women's events because it was believed that they had an unfair competitive advantage (Simpson et al., 2000: 1569). In essence, intersexed peoples and those with atypical chromosome counts, testosterone levels, genital and skeletal configurations have been interrogated, scrutinized and, sometimes, disqualified from competition in order to protect the 'purity' of women's sport. Sex-testing was an attempt to produce gender differentiation when it was not self-evident in the realm of biology.

Gender Troubles at the Olympics

> What seems to be about gender is not always about gender but may be about something more primitive and persistent that masquerades as gender and for which current psychoanalytic theory is revising the term 'drive' (as in 'sex drive' or 'death drive') in order to name that elusive intransigent something that makes insight difficult to sustain and personal and political change difficult to effect. (Ian, 2001: 77)

Gender trouble at the modern Olympic Games can be found throughout the 20th century. For example, in 1936, Helen Stephens, an American runner, was accused of being a man after winning the women's 100 meter run at the Olympics in Berlin. Stephens ran the 100 meters in 11.5 seconds in 1936 (a record that stood for over 19 years), which fuelled controversies about her gender. Few could believe that a genetic woman could run that fast. In response to accusations that Stephens was not a 'real' woman the runner was given a sex-test, which she passed. Tragically, Stella Walsh, the Polish runner who came second in the same race in Berlin (who also accused Stephens of being a 'man') was shot dead by a stray bullet in 1980 (44 years after the infamous race) during a robbery in Cleveland. The Olympic community was startled to hear that the autopsy revealed that Walsh possessed male and female chromosomes, a tiny penis, testes and no female hormones. The second place runner was intersexed, Stephens was not. Walsh was an intersexual who would, by contemporary medical standards, be seen to have a congenital disposition called mosaicism (Diadiun, 1991). Her reputation as an Olympic athlete and supporter of women's sport was tarnished by sensational press refusing to attend to the complexities of her case with sensitivity. Headlines of the time read that 'Stella was a Fella'.[6]

Accusations abounded about men masquerading as women to win Olympic medals in the international press throughout the 20th century. For example, in

1936, German high-jumper Hermann Ratjen was said to have masqueraded as a woman under coercion by the German government. The press reported that this athlete bound his penis and testes, assumed a false name (Dora) and, despite his 'masculine' advantage finished fourth in the women's high-jump (Beveridge, 2004). Kdena Koubkova, a Czechoslovakian high-jumper who won a world record in the women's event, was also accused of being a man because of her unprecedented athletic achievement. Ukrainian athletes Irina Press and Tamara Press (sisters) who won cumulatively five Olympic titles in the shot put and hurdles stopped competing in 1968, the year sex-testing at the Olympic Games in Mexico City was implemented. The disappearance of these women from Olympic competition in 1968 fueled rumors that they had been men posing as women. It was believed that their powerful physique was unfeminine and that without male hormones, a masculine physique and male muscular capacity their accomplishments were improbable. It is important to note that the panic about Eastern Bloc female athletes (and their – allegedly – 'unnatural' feminine form) gestures to the extent to which gender was shaped by ideas about nation in the Cold War era and how the Olympics is a spectacle in which bodies are subject to western imperialist scrutiny.

Although it is possible that some genetic males did masquerade as female to gain what they believed to be a 'masculine' competitive advantage (under duress or by choice), the certainty through which the Olympic community appeals to their natural advantage as men is problematic. Feminist scholars of women's sport have argued that sex-testing was imposed (not to even the playing field for women in the face of an unfair 'masculine' competitive advantage as IOC officials contended) but to manage the inconsistency between female athletic achievement and dominant beliefs about female athletic capacities (Kolata, 1992; Wackwitz, 2003). There is an incompatibility between conventional ideas about genetic women and femininity, and the idealized muscular Olympic body. Because muscles and muscularity (key ingredients of the most valorized Olympic bodies) have been gendered masculine, there is a psychic need to regulate female bodies entering into the masculinized arena of sport. Laura Wackwitz (2003: 556) argues that 'despite active measures taken to prevent women from participating in and excelling at athletic competition . . . the gap between elite male and elite female athletes is remarkably slight'. A science correspondent with the *Guardian* wrote an alarmist news story based on a study conducted by researchers at Oxford University who attempted to analyze the decreasing gap between male and female athletic achievement. The reporter wrote that if 'female athletes continue to close the gap on their male counterparts . . . they will push the men into second place within 150 years' (Adam, 2004). The study predicted that sometime after 2064 women will be out-running men at certain track events.

Genetic women are encouraged to train their bodies to their maximum capacities but held accountable to strict gender prototypes and conventions. This is especially the case in female bodybuilding. For example, Marcia Ian (2001: 70) contends that bodybuilding plays a trick: while seeming to encourage men and women to exceed the norm and achieve heroic, outrageous physiques of increasingly 'monstrous' proportions, it actually uses these subjects to maintain, even more rigidly than does mainstream culture at large, reactionary norms, themselves 'ideals', of masculinity and femininity. Ian goes on to explain how female bodybuilders are subject to ridicule when their bodies develop on par with male bodybuilders, a form of ridicule that intersects with transphobia. In essence, their gender is called into question. 'Ann-Marie Crooks, a professional bodybuilder, reported . . . [that the] vice-president of the IFBB (the International Federation of Bodybuilders, the sport's governing body) . . . [said] he couldn't care less about female bodybuilding because "they're all he-she's"' (Ian, 2001: 73). Ian observes that female bodybuilders lose competitions (and corporate sponsorship) because they are seen to be too muscular, not feminine. Referring to the Ms International contest sponsored by the International Federation of Bodybuilders (the governing body of the sporting event), Ian explains that the contestants are 'judged according to an (undefined) standard of "femininity," beyond which muscularity was not to be rewarded' (2001: 74). Viewers complain that the female bodybuilders are 'grotesque' spectacles. This complaint is launched as 'women have shown that they can become as muscular, for their stature, as many top male competitors' (Ian, 2001: 73). Cultural theorist Cindy Patton argues that the anxiety about female muscularity is no longer expressed as a problem of prohibition (women do not belong in bodybuilding), but in terms of muscular management:

> In the 1970s and 1980s, male complaints about women's participation in sports came as a misplaced protection of women: Ladies, they asserted, would be harmed by competition or defeminized by training . . . [Presently] this argument . . . has been replaced by the question of how much mass women should build. (Patton, 2001: 121)

In female bodybuilding there is an attempt to re-femininize competitors in order to ensure that they are able to be positioned as both feminine and heterosexual for white, male, heterosexual viewing pleasure. Patton explains that in Women's Physique World the female bodybuilders are depicted as 'fresh-faced girls who seem to have accidentally produced their specialized shape' (2001: 127), and so there are no intentional transitions into masculinity or manhood. Patton contends that it is not coincidental that the female bodybuilders presented as 'the girl next door' look very much like the 'presumably male models who populate ads for transsexual phone sex lines in heterosexual male

and gay male sex magazines' (2001: 127),[7] the implication being that heterosexuality cannot (or not without trouble) sustain itself in the face of transsexual subjects (or those who look very much like them). Ken Saltman[8] makes a similar argument in his discussion of bodybuilding:

> While bodybuilding, in some ways, reinforces gendered body norms and maintains the lines between gender categories, it also subverts itself, creating gender confusion, blurring the lines between gender and sexual categories . . . Heterosexuality depends upon firmed-up notions of masculinity and femininity. (Saltman, 1998: 49)

The following section develops our psychoanalytic claim that elite sport evokes anxieties about gender instability, the changeability of the human body and, ultimately, death. Judith Butler (1995) argues that heteronormative gender identifications are responses to object loss. Due to cultural taboos (incest and homosexuality being the two primary taboos) the child cannot have the object of primary desire (usually the mother in psychoanalytic theorizing) and so at least two accommodations are made: the girl maps the gender of the mother onto her body as a way of incorporating that which she cannot have in the service of heterosexual identity formation; the boy, similarly, incorporates the father by assuming a masculine demeanor. Both accommodations are about the preservation of heterosexuality and binary gender (the staple ingredient of heterosexuality) and are accomplished by mapping the prohibited sex on to the body's surface. The compulsion through which athletes engage with one another (on the field, in the ring or in the pool) is energized by something more primal than good-natured competition. Perhaps the impulse to win is about an attempt to move through the gendered imperatives imposed on bodies in the name of heterosexuality. If gender is a melancholic subject formation as Butler contends, than competitive sport might be an arena in which the despondency (defeatism) is felt most keenly.

In the sociology of sport, competitive play has been understood in terms of homophobia towards men (Pronger, 1999) but not transphobia. Similarly, gender has been theorized as an attempt to manage object loss (Butler, 1995) and to support normative heterosexualities (Patton, 2001) but not transphobia. This is a curious refusal; one that permeates sport theorizing and one that we suggest is precipitated by a white Judeo-Christian refusal to come to terms with the inevitability of death. In other words, the refusal to talk about transsexual transitions in sport sociology mirrors the difficulty we have in the West in acknowledging human mortality, death, aging and human frailty. This is not to say that transsexual subjectivity is linked to death but that sex changes (like gay outings) ignite what some have called the bereavement effect (Stockton, 2004: 285). Parents sometimes feel that their child has died after 'coming out'. It is also common to hear about parents grieving when they learn that their child is intersexed or

transitioning into the so-called 'opposite' sex. Transsexuals are also, like those who depart from heterosexual mandates, subject to violent hate-crimes leading, sometimes, to death or to disability in the public sphere. The changeability of the body (along with the rupture of a heterosexual mandate) is psychically linked to human mortality and death in ways that queer theorists and those who study transsexuality are only beginning to understand.

Similarly, it is important to understand how Olympic competition and sport in general rallies against death and dying. As Pronger (2002) suggested, death has 'disappeared' in modernity but its power is felt because of the need to repudiate it.[9] We are keenly aware of the inevitability of death but distract ourselves so as to ease psychic anxieties surrounding it. With respect to fitness regimes, Pronger explains:

> The technology of physical fitness is part of the project . . . marshalling the forces of life, it tries to muffle the clap of death, the shattering significance, the terrible tear, that death inevitably makes in the push for the sovereignty of the human ego. (Pronger, 2002: 170)

The quest for sovereignty, along with a wish (however latent) to overcome or circumvent death is to be found in the refusal to admit or attend to human mortality in everyday life. Olympic competition is a more particular example in which the games are populated by bodies that are shockingly well-equipped to compete against the threat of death. The Olympian competes against death; the athlete lives by 'attempting to erase death' (Pronger, 2002: 171) and all that is associated with it (human disability, frailty, aging, infantility, obsolescence) and, most importantly, the failure to become a sovereign subject. Sovereignty, in this instance, is understood as the capacity to ascend from the earthly kingdom and to rise above the mundane cessation of life that plagues us all.

We contend that the hyperbolic discourse about muscles on Olympic athletes (transsexual and non-transsexual) is a ruse, a cover, a mask for a more insidious angst about human mortality. Although the Olympian (and the Olympic community) is invested in a symbolic victory over Thanatos (God of Death) he or she or he/she cannot contend with the latent content of the wish for transcendence,[10] immortality and mastery over nature.

In contemporary sport, the worry about impotence in the face of God, the primal Father or the universe is triggered by the spectacle of muscle. Muscles stand in for the lost object (immortality, omnipotence and mastery over nature) and are thus central to the wish for transcendence (liberation, sovereignty or freedom from the primal Father). The patriarchal wish for succession is given refuge in the well-muscled athlete. Muscles ward off death. But when muscles bulge or metastasize, appear in the wrong region or on the wrong body altogether (in the case of the genetic female Olympian who competes like a 'man' or

the transsexual woman who shifts her muscle mass to accommodate a newly gendered physique, or the intersexed who cannot be – without contestation and confusion – designated 'male' or 'female' by existing genetic and chromosomal testing regimes) the Olympic community is reminded of the precariousness of the Olympic defense. Like Butler's (1993) lesbian phallus,[11] which provides an alternative imaginary to the hegemonic imaginary, muscles have plasticity and mobility in the imaginary realm. Muscles move, they atrophy and are subject to indeterminate forces. This is not to say that transsexuals, those who are intersexed or live with variegated chromosomal and genetic compositions are, essentially, associated with death but that they are metonymically associated with death (in the Olympic community) because they upset a defensive regime adopted in the white, western, Olympic, patriarchal and able-bodied psychic structure. The female Olympian, like the intersexed or the transsexual, brings to the surface a fear of death – well documented in modern western, Christian nations and cultures (here symbolized by a failure of Olympic mastery) – because their bodies appear to be malleable and not essential or statuesque (as the Olympian immortalized on the podium can appear to be). The malleable body is the one that populates the life-world; the idealized Olympic body is the mythological body that cannot, no matter what training regime is adopted, overcome the certainty of death.

The Stockholm Consensus

> What an Olympic Drag; These Queens will be Kings for a Day. (*Canberra Times*, 2000: 26)
>
> But it's funny … the sight of women, who were once men, winning Olympic gold. (Goff, 2004: 7)
>
> Unless the IOC establishes clear medical criteria for sex-change athletes, the new rules would make a mockery of sport. (Hart, 2004: para. 8)

The biocentric two sex model of gender was thrown into crisis during IOC talks about transsexuality. In October of 2003, an ad-hoc committee convened by the IOC Medical Commission met in Stockholm to discuss the entry of transsexual athletes into Olympic competition. This committee formally recommended the existing guidelines for entry into Olympic sporting events, including: SRS, legal recognition of gender conferred by country of citizenship (and all other appropriate legal and governmental authorities), hormone injections administered under medical supervision for a specified period of time, gonadectomy (where appropriate), and a two-year waiting period. Each case is to be evaluated independently and the IOC is to reserve the right to implement a sex-test if it deems

appropriate. It is reprehensible that the Stockholm Consensus does not refer to intersexed athletes, let alone develop criteria for their inclusion in Olympic sport.

The IOC voted to admit transsexual athletes into Olympic competition (pending a medical review of the impact of hormone injection) and details regarding the policy were expected to be worked out in a matter of weeks. Patrick Schamasch, the IOC medical director proclaimed, 'We will have no discrimination … The IOC will respect human rights' (365Gay.com, 2003). The IOC heard from a panel of medical experts who agreed that post-operative transsexuals should be able to compete in their newly assigned genders. The IOC executive was convinced but decided to hold out for what they took to be indisputable proof that a male-to-female transsexual would not retain the testosterone levels and muscle mass they had prior to the transitioning process.

The Olympic community was caught off-guard when in February 2004 the IOC put the decision to admit transsexual athletes on hold. Discussions broke down because members of the IOC executive board failed to comprehend SRS and the hormonal injections accompanying the transition process for Olympic athletes. IOC president Jacques Rogge was quoted as saying that the discussion about transsexuality at an executive board meeting, in Athens in February 2004, was 'between people who knew what they were saying and people who did not understand what they were saying' (*The Star Online*, 2004). As indicated by another reporter, the executive 'failed to grasp the issues' (365Gay.com, 2004). Jacques Rogge, IOC president and medical doctor, and Patrick Schamasch could not make the transitioning process intelligible to the executive board. 'We need to do a better job in explaining to people what this is about and explain to people in general what is underlying this issue – also to expel fears' (365Gay.com, 2004). Rogge claimed that the medical language used to explain the transitioning process (involving surgery and hormonal injection) was esoteric and too sophisticated for lay-persons. He explained that the proposal would be re-worked in non-medical language and again presented to the board at the next meeting scheduled to take place in Switzerland in May.

Strong indications were also given that the board was transphobic and so the committee defaulted into a defensive insistence upon the advantage thesis: 'Men have higher levels of testosterone and greater muscle-to-fat ratio and heart and lung capacity' (*The Star Online*, 2004) so how can male-to-female transsexuals compete with genetic women without having an unfair competitive advantage? Sergei Bubka, chairman of the athletes' commission, reported that transsexuality was a 'little bit scary' (cited in *The Star Online*, 2004) for people serving on the IOC executive. Despite the confusion, the main concern continued to be about 'whether male-to-female transsexuals would have physical advantages competing

against women' (*The Star Online*, 2004). But the IOC continued to support the proposal in principle. The outstanding issue was how to set up guidelines to govern the transition process and to ensure that transsexual athletes did not have an unfair competitive advantage.

After the Stockholm Consensus was adopted, Olivier Rabin, director of science for WADA (World Anti-Doping Agency), said that 'transgender athletes – like any other athletes requiring therapeutic treatment – will have to have their hormone substances approved by their respective sporting federations and national anti-doping organizations' (Willing, 2004: A1). Transsexuality is now recognized by WADA as a legitimate 'medical'[12] condition and so provisions regarding the use of hormones are allowed. Rabin explains that the 'hormone levels that appear in transgendered athletes' bodies will be compared and measured against what are designated as normal readings' (Willing, 2004).

The Stockholm Consensus is important because, until recently, most sport governing bodies either had no policy designed to admit transsexual or intersexed persons into competition or defaulted into a reactionary 'female at birth' policy. As recently as 2000 many sport governing bodies in the UK had not publicly addressed issues pertaining to transsexual athletes (CHANGE et al., 2000). The Stockholm Consensus stands to become the default policy for mainstream sport governing bodies yet, in the current moment, the range of policies being developed by sport organizations indicate different commitments to human rights protection for transgendered/transsexual/intersexed persons.[13]

Prior to the Stockholm Consensus, human rights transgender legislation provided the main source of national and regional guidelines for sport organizations to update or introduce policies. However, sport governing bodies have tended to seek exemption from this type of transgender non-discrimination legislation. For example, sport is exempt from 1996 Transgender Provisions Bill in New South Wales (Australian Sports Commission, 2005). In 2004 sport organizations also sought exemption from new legislation in the UK. In 2002 the European Court of Human Rights found that the UK had breached the entitlement of two transsexual people's right to privacy and the right to marry (*Goodwin* v. *The United Kingdom*). To comply with the European Court of Human Rights the UK government quickly introduced a Gender Recognition Bill to give full legal status to people in their acquired gender (UK Government, 2004). UK sporting bodies immediately requested exemption from the Gender Recognition Bill (UK Government, 2004). Lord Filkin (Lords Hansard, 2004a) tabled an amendment to allow UK sport governing bodies to 'prohibit or restrict the participation as competitors in the event or events of persons whose gender has become the acquired gender' to ensure 'fair competition' and the 'safety of

competitors'. A heightened level of governmental awareness about the difficulty of defining sex, resulting from the passage of the Gender Recognition Bill, was illustrated in this speech by Lord Moynihan:

> It is not just a matter of the simplicity of XX or XY chromosomes. There are XXY chromosomal people. It is not just a matter of testosterone levels. Some women have very high levels of testosterone, in addition to those who undertake gender reclassification, and there are competitors who have very high testosterone levels. Equally, it is not possible to match chromosomal patterns with testosterone levels and estrogen levels. One would probably achieve a fair definition of what conventionally would be determined as male or female for fair competition by matching those three, but the issue is enormously difficult for any governing body to undertake. (Lords Hansard, 2004b: col. GC117)

Debate in the House of Lords, ultimately, came down to whether or not sport should continue the role of defining binary sex for competitive purposes in light of the government's recognition of its impossibility. During debate, one minister emphatically stated 'that it is not for sport to define male and female' to which Lord Fiklin replied:

> I would strongly argue that that is precisely what sport must do. Sports bodies must define who may and may not compete in male and female sporting competitions . . . [they] will have different criteria because of the differences between sports. There is a huge difference between the criteria necessary for fair competition in a contact sport, as opposed to fair competition in darts. (Lords Hansard, 2004c: col.GC119)

It is a matter of concern that the British Paralympic Association also supported the exemption of competitive sport from the UK Gender Recognition Bill, because of 'grave concerns over the protection of vulnerable adults and children and the implications for volunteer supervisors in the world of disability sport, in relation to the issues presented by a pre-operative individual' (Lords Hansard, 2004b).

Some sport governing bodies have been forced to adapt their policies in response to individual transsexual athletes fighting for their right to compete. For example, in Canada the Canadian Cycling Association accepted Michelle Dumaresq's birth certificate – which she changed to indicate her newly assigned status as a woman – as a rationale to admit her into the women's competition (Hui, 2004). Sport governing bodies do not always accept birth certificates and it is, too often, the case that female-at-birth policies are implemented. For example, at the start of the 2004 golf season Mianne Bagger was not eligible for the Ladies' European Golf Tour even though both her birth certificate and passport attest to her status as female. She was, however, accepted into other tours – notably in Sweden – because the Danish Professional Golfers' Association had no transgender regulations and decided to admit her (Kelso, 2004).

Throughout 2004 Baggar urged professional women's golf tours in Australia and USA to adopt the IOC Stockholm Consensus (Middleton, 2004a) which they eventually did. Consequently, in November 2004 Baggar earned her card for the Ladies' European Tour (Middleton, 2004b).

Relatively few policies in sport protect transsexual athletes from discrimination over the 'fair play' policies (read advantage thesis) implemented to – allegedly – level the playing field for genetic women. Despite the gender-inclusiveness and attention to regional differences, even the Gay Games continues to be invested in the need to police gender through a gender policy (Gay Games Board, 2002). One exception to the rule has been the pro-active policies developed in Australia. Women's Golf Australia dropped its female-at-birth policy to allow Baggar to compete in the 2004 Women's Australian Open (Fields, 2004) and revised its policy on transsexual golfers despite considerable regional differences in the non-discrimination legislation across Australia (such as the aforementioned New South Wales exemption from the 1996 Transgender Provisions Bill). The revised WGA policy states that 'members must presume that a person is of the sex they assert themselves to be' and that members 'must not require any person to take biological or chromosomal tests to demonstrate their birth gender' (Women's Golf Australia, 2004). Unfortunately, proof of gender identity in the form of a birth document or equivalent is still required which is, in many countries, difficult for transsexual people to attain. Unlike the Stockholm Consensus, the Australian policy is predicated on the assumption that '[genetic] women are not disadvantaged by permitting transgender persons to participate in the playing and administration of the game of golf' (Women's Golf Australia, 2004).

During the 2002 Sydney Gay Games, indigenous traditions regarding gender identifications were respected and testimony from indigenous community leaders (and organizations) were accepted as verification of an athlete's gender. By contrast, the 1st World Outgames in Montreal initially adopted the IOC policy. Due to mounting criticism of the Stockholm Consensus, World Outgames recently revised the policy which now distinguishes between 'transitioned athletes' and 'transgender athletes', and is accompanied by a statement expressing uncertainty about whether anti-doping rules will apply to transitioned male athletes (1st World Outgames, 2006).

The Gender of Muscles and Olympic Bodies in Transition

> Bodybuilding has the potential to serve as an example of gender multiplicity and the potential to challenge dominant binaries of masculine–feminine and straight–gay. (Saltman, 1998: 49)

> Muscles can be 'yours' and yet not quite of you, individual muscles or muscle groups inspire a sexual response, and they become agents of magical potency. They possess power of transformation: they are able to bring you, or make you, what you desire. In the gym muscles are fetishized. (Davidson, 1998: 39)

The Stockholm Consensus is chiefly concerned with the psychic management of muscles. Sex-testing and the Stockholm Consensus are, in essence, attempts to manage muscularity and the illusions of binary gender in and between Olympic bodies, bodies that have already by definition transformed from the common non-Olympic body. The difficulty managing gender in bodies that swell and enlarge is not unrelated to transphobia (the irrational fear or hatred of the gendered subject in transition). Transsexual bodies are bodies that are in or have undergone transition. Sheila Cavanagh (2003) has argued that transphobia is, in part, incited by the threat posed to stable body boundaries and genital configurations governing (and giving shape to) two bi-polar, gender positionalities. 'Bearing witness to the transsexual body threatens the mechanisms of repression used to consolidate the fantasmatic presumption of [binary] sexual difference' (Cavanagh, 2003: 380). Both Olympic and transsexual bodies are made, not born. But the hyperbolic concern about muscle mass, testosterone and chromosome counts (indicative of the advantage thesis and drug testing) are not only about gender. As Ian contends, 'muscle does not have gender' (2001: 75) and it can thus undermine the psychic defenses employed to cultivate the fantasy of gender.

Female muscularity, as argued previously, is difficult to reconcile with conventional definitions of femininity and is thus thought to be either 'inappropriate' or grotesque. But it is, also, a focus of excitement and enticement. The Olympic community (and spectoral viewers in particular) are simultaneously enthralled and disgusted by female muscularity. Saltman demonstrates how female bodybuilders are objects of desire:

> Reconfiguring the feminine as dominant or at least as strong and self-sufficient, they appeal to those of any sex or gender who want to be either dominated, engaged by an equal, or to dominate someone stronger. The expansion of female norms expands the intelligibility of multiple forms of identification and desire. (Saltman, 1998: 55)

There is, in the same way, a persistent desire to look at the muscular female Olympic body (like the transsexual body) because she is the site upon which the skin expands and threatens to tear, exposing an interior muscle mass that cannot be assimilated into the domain of gender or normative heterosexual desire:

> Female bodybuilders develop bodies that are hard to distinguish from men's. Their breasts shrink and are replaced by pectoral shields, veins bulge from the neck, paunch disappears. Steroids make the jaw muscles protrude, facial hair develops, more body hair sprouts, and the clitoris enlarges, likening itself to a penis. (Saltman, 1998: 50–1)

The genetically male Olympic body also morphs but as Kristeva (1982) argues, it is the female body that symbolizes excess and is thus particularly difficult to contain. The exposed interior is frightful because it is a painful reminder of the inevitability of death, the threat that the mythology of gender is supposed to contain. Gender is here shown to be a psychic defense used to off-set the fear of mortality (Ian, 2001) and the product of heterosexual melancholy (Butler, 1997), both of which are realities the Olympian desires to transcend through the accomplishment of super-human strength, agility and powers of endurance.

Muscles are the site upon which gender territories are mapped and border crossings (extreme female muscularity being one example) incite anxiety. This is the result of what psychoanalysts call a fetishistic engagement with an anxious spectacle. Psychoanalysts have traditionally understood a fetish to be an object (or an allegedly 'non-erogenous' body part) that is endowed with sexual significance.[14] The fetish is invested with multiple meanings and stands in for something that is lacking, threatening or socially prohibited. Fetishes are, thus, ways of coping with anxiety (lack, threat, prohibition) by not admitting to them. Fetishism deals with ambivalence, that is, it reminds us that what is culturally desirable also covers over a cultural anxiety stemming from a lack, a fear or a need to protect the self from punishment. As Freud (1984 [1915]) proposed, 'we can understand how it is that the objects to which men give most preference, their ideals, proceed from the same perceptions and experience as the objects which they most abhor' (p. 150). The psyche deals with objects ambivalently, with one part undergoing repression and the remainder undergoing idealization. Muscles are fetishized objects and as Heather Sykes (2001) argues in 'Of Gods, Money, and Muscle', they are also irresolute fixations giving way to fear and repulsion on the one hand, desire and adoration on the other. As Slavoj Žižek contends in *The Plague of Fantasies*, a fetish is not unlike a phobia:

> . . . ambiguity of the object which involves the reference to the two lacks becomes visible in the guise of the opposites between the fetish and phobic object; in both cases we are fascinated, our attention is transfixed, by an object which functions as the stand-in for castration; the difference is that in the case of the fetish the disavowal of castration succeeds; while in the case for the phobia object, this disavowal fails and the object directly announces the dimensions of castration. (Žižek, 1997: 103)

When the anxiety surrounding muscles is not recognized, it is disavowed and those muscles can be desired as fetish objects. When the threat of castration is recognized in the sight of muscles, the anxiety is acknowledged and those muscles become phobic objects. This ambiguity is evident in Doug Aoki's (1996) Lacanian analysis of female bodybuilding where he argues that the ambivalence of female bodybuilding is more complicated and disturbing than meets the eye:

'it is at once fascinating and repellent . . . whether one views [it] and is convinced or appalled, what will not be willed away is a vividly conflicted sexual presence – even in the farthest reaches of repulsion or fetishization' (Aoki, 1996: 73). Referring to the hypermuscularity of female bodybuilders, Aoki highlights how the same body may generate contradictory responses in the public eye: phobic and fetishistic.

The Stockholm Consensus illustrates how, in a transphobic sporting imagination, the transsexual body occupies the phobic side of the fetishistic engagement and the phobia manifests itself in hyperbolic discourse about male-to-female transsexual muscularity (central to the advantage thesis); and paranoia about genetic men infiltrating 'women's' competition. The anxiety about muscles (including testosterone production, heart and lung capacity) permeated public debate and IOC discussions leading up to the formation of the Stockholm Consensus. For example, during their consultations with medical 'experts' on SRS, IOC officials were 'concerned that without genital reconstruction surgery, transsexual women may still enjoy the benefits of testosterone because they will still have testes that produce the hormone. The presence of testosterone may give those athletes a slight advantage over non-transsexual competitors' (Letellier, 2004), and the remaining muscle mass would, therefore, sustain the competitive advantage. The news coverage surrounding the first transsexual woman to qualify for the Ladies' European Tour in golf, Mianne Bagger, also underscores the preoccupation with an 'un-natural' competitive advantage stemming from leftover muscles. Andy Salmon, speaking of Mianne Bagger, a transsexual woman golfer competing for Denmark, said that he would refuse her entry to the Women's British Open at Sunningdale because this 'lady would have a physiological advantage over the woman who had been the same sex all her days' (Mair, 2004: 9). People also worry that the IOC policy on transsexuality would encourage genetic men to transition in order to pursue an Olympic medal. Transphobic imaginations envisioned hundreds of men donning dresses to compete in women's sporting competition.

We wish to make the seemingly obvious prediction that an athlete will not change sex in pursuit of an Olympic medal and even if he or she did the athlete would not have an advantage over genetic female competitors. Top IOC medical consultants agree that post-operative transsexual women do not have a muscular advantage over genetic women. Second, an athlete who transitioned in pursuit of an Olympic win would experience gender dysphoria: a feeling of being at odds with the sex of the body and the mind's imagination of it, which would undermine balance, coordination, and agility (all of which are necessary for superior athletic performance). Many male-to-female athletes who have been accused of

having a physiological advantage over bio-women explain how the process of adjusting to a new anatomical form alone is a disadvantage, not to mention balancing hormone injections, dealing with transphobia and other medical complications associated with surgery. Given the disadvantages associated with transsexuality in a transphobic culture; the paucity of transsexual athletes in Olympic competition; the impossibility of testing or determining sex; the long history of gender-based discrimination and exclusion in the Olympic Games; and because the Olympics should be accessible to all we contend that the IOC should respect an athlete's chosen gender and drop rigid and exclusionary policies regulating access to women's sport.

Also challenging the idea that genetic men would undergo SRS to gain a competitive advantage, Bagger was quoted as saying, 'People often just do not understand the struggle that you go through in your daily life. The idea [that] a man would go through this to be a pro golfer is a total misunderstanding of who and what we are' (Kelso, 2004). She also explained that her surgery and drug cocktail 'left her with less testosterone than a "normal woman" and that it was "preposterous" to suggest that men would change gender simply to play on the women's tour' (Middleton, 2004a). Similarly, Renee Richards, an American amateur tennis champion (whose transsexuality became a world-wide focus of debate in 1976) explained that 'When I was a man, I was at the height of my powers. All of a sudden, it was all gone, and I became a woman at 40' (cited in McNeil, 2003: 26). Michelle Dumaresq also reported that after her SRS and hormone treatment 'her body was greatly weakened': 'I needed regular gym workouts just to build up enough strength to continue my job', and explained that her large legs (alleged masculine advantage) were a hindrance on the bike circuit. 'It actually made things harder because after the hormone treatment and operation I no longer had the muscle mass to support my bones. This so-called advantage I'm supposed to have doesn't exist' (cited in Goff, 2004: para. 19).

Much like the IOC insistence upon mandatory sex-testing to measure that which does not biologically speaking exist – a categorical and bio-centric gender binary – the IOC, and the sporting community in general, insist upon a transsexual advantage that does not exist. The anxiety about gender, muscles and transsexuality is, thus, suspicious. The anxiety that lies behind the fetishistic engagement with muscularity and the phobic response to genetic female, or transsexual female muscularity (not to mention intersexed competitors), is about a need to ward off a primal fear of annihilation.

Conclusion

Gender has always been subject to question and suspicion but in the 21st century the IOC has embraced a commitment to regulate gender and the processes through which transsexuals cross borders once believed to belong to the 'opposite' sex. Anxiety about gender in Olympic communities intersects with contemporary anxieties about immigration (illegal and otherwise) in a postcolonial context, and officials are increasingly determined to police borders (national, bodily and otherwise) in the name of equity, access and fair competition. Olympic athletes thought to be suspicious (meaning that they are rumored to be gender impersonators, illegal trespassers or otherwise genetically 'anomalous') are vulnerable to sex-testing. In fact, the IOC had a team of medical experts on staff at the Sydney Olympics to test individual athletes subject to gender-based suspicion. It is not known if any athletes, at the Athens 2004 Summer Olympic Games, were subject to testing but a working group on transsexual people's issues believes that the Buccal Smear test was to be used if an individual deemed suspicious was to be investigated (CHANGE et al., 2000).

Ian contends that gender shields the subject from a fear of death and we suggest that the fetishization of muscles is, similarly, based upon a fear of human frailty, injury, sickness, incontinence and decay, the inescapable, yet endlessly disavowed, fate of bodies entered into Olympic competition. In the domain of female bodybuilding, Ian builds upon Zizek to show that death (not binary gender) is the symbolic order (2001: 82). The self-battering training regimes adopted by female bodybuilders is symptomatic of what Zizek refers to as a dialectic of mortification:

> In the case of the bodybuilder, mortification suggests both the paradoxical near death experience to which her interest in 'fitness' has brought her, and the necessary humiliation of appearing nearly naked before the judges and fans: reeling, writhing, uglification, and derision. The bodybuilder alternatively strikes immobile statue-like poses so viewers can examine her body as if it were a flayed, exhibitionistic corpse and resurrects herself into movement. Her performance unites the 'statue's . . . infinite pain' with the magic of resurrection. (Cited in Ian, 2001: 82)

In a similar vein (no pun intended), David Sansone (cited in Sydnor, 2004) defines sport as the ritual sacrifice of human energy. Building on his thesis, Synthia Sydnor claims that there are 'mystic ways that connect the athlete and audience with ineffable meanings of life and universe . . . a desire to engage with a sense of transcendence, sacramentality' (2004: 169) that is intimately tied to the inevitability of death. That the Olympian will, one day, age, become sick, immobile, dependent and infirm is irrationally forgotten (or evaded) by the valorization of muscularity, in this instance seen through the perilous re-incarnation of the

statue-like body. Injury and long-term disability resulting from excessive training regimes are realities for most Olympic athletes but this is hidden from spectator vision. For example, it is a little known fact that Andreas (formerly Heidi) Krieger, East Germany's shot-put champion who was subject to a state-sponsored system of doping, now says he 'experiences such intense discomfort in his hips and thighs, from lifting massive amounts of weight while on performance enhancing drugs, that he can no longer sleep on his side. Only the mildest physical exertion is tolerable' (Marech, 2004b).[15]

The absence of any meaningful reference to human mortality in Olympic coverage of athletic prowess, curiously, mirrors the refusal to engage with the realities of transphobia and bio-centrism in the Olympic community. The disavowal of transphobia keeps at bay the recognition of gender as an achievement and Olympic prowess as an ephemeral, fragile attempt at corporeal mastery (immortality). We conclude that Olympic prowess (and spectator pleasure) is associated with the refusal to accept the passing of life and human frailties. As in the case of female bodybuilding, sex-changes reveal the essential mutability of the body; the social, cultural, medical and legal negotiations at play in the making of gendered bodies. There is in the western, Olympic, imperial white imagination a desire for corporeal homogeneity, bio-centric gender demarcation and stable corporeal body boundaries. Heterosexual orifices and muscular permutations administered by traditional training regimes are not only upset by the presence of trans/intersexed/hyper-musculine women in sport but exposed as a wish for something else. The something else is a desire for immortality and corporeal mastery.

Acknowledgements

We wish to thank R.M. Kennedy and Jean Bobby Noble for reading an earlier draft of this article and offering thoughtful criticism.

Notes

1. Sportswriter Simon Barnes recounted how the original proposal for the 2004 UK government law on the Gender Recognition Bill required legislators to

> . . . forget about hard and fast distinctions between the sexes and accept that there is a border area, and that those who live there are entitled to certain rights in all respects, including sport. But it is clear that sport depends for its very existence on more traditional, reactionary classifications. (Barnes, 2004: para. 20)

The IOC opted for an exclusionary and rigid policy in adopting the Stockholm Consensus (with its narrow definition of gender and refusal to address the nuances and complexities of transgendered and transsexual subjectivities).

2. The International Association of Athletic Federations (IAAF), the international track and field governing body, discontinued mandatory sex-testing of all female athletes through the Barr body test in 1991 but adopted a suspicion-based model in its place. The IAAF developed protocol allowing a medical designate to administer a sex-test at his/her discretion. In 1992 the IOC refused to follow suit and continued to use the PCR test until 2000 (Pilgrim et al., 2002–3: 511), the year in which they abolished mandatory sex-testing of female Olympic athletes. Like the IAAF, the IOC now maintains the right to investigate what they call 'suspicious cases' where athletes are rumored to be 'masquerading' as women.

3. The visual sex-test was also accompanied by a genetic sex-test in Olympic competition and, sometimes, the results were contradictory. For example, Ewa Klobukowska, a Polish sprinter, was the first to fail the genetic sex-test in 1967 during the European Cup in Kiev despite having lived her entire life as a woman (later giving birth to a child). She passed the visual test in 1966 but failed the genetic test in 1967. Klobukowska was said to have chromosomal 'irregularities'. The fact that Klobukowska passed the visual verification test the year before did not mitigate the decision to ban her from competition in 1967 (Pilgrim et al., 2002–3). She was, consequently, stripped of her Olympic medals won in 1964 and banned from international competition entirely (*Toronto Star*, 1989).

4. Maria Jose Martinez Patino was the first Olympic athlete to successfully overturn the results of an IOC genetic sex test. Patino was fully reinstated in 1988, three years after being banned from Olympic competition in 1985. The sex-test revealed that she had XY chromosomes (usually found in genetic men). Because her body could not register testosterone she developed female genitalia and a female anatomical form (no masculine 'advantage'). The runner and hurdler refused to fake a 'career ending injury' (as instructed by her government) and with legal support challenged the IOC ruling. Patino was subject to humiliating press coverage and, as Laura Wackwitz contends, her case 'serves as a reminder of the capriciousness of power, the fragility of the category "woman," and the problems with applying a base 2 system of classification to base 10 reality' (2003: 557).

5. There is evidence to suggest that drug-testing is now being used, also, as a means to sex-test athletes. For example, the IAAF 'endorsed a policy that used the conditions created through drug testing to visually inspect genitals' (Cole, 2000: 332). Effectively this means that sex-testing has been given refuge in the drug testing procedures which enable officials to visually inspect the genitals of athletes during urine collection. The UK Government (2005) guidelines for drug testing transsexuals in sport mandates that a Doping Control Officer (DCO) must 'observe the urine sample leave the athlete's body' although 'when providing a sample, only the athlete and the DCO will be in the toilet, thereby providing the athlete with the optimum amount of privacy' (p. 14). In addition, the guidelines obliquely warn that 'no *written* record disclosing a variance between the athlete's gender and their genitalia will be made' (p. 14, emphasis in original).

Cole argues that because drug testing is less controversial than sex-testing it shores up support for an investigation (and policing) of bodies that would otherwise be seen as intrusive (and discriminatory) in the domain of gender. Because the condemnation of performance enhancing drug use routinely invokes a logic of bodily essence defined, in part, by sex, we might guess that the rhetoric around drugs secures the conditions for less controversial but strikingly similar public debates over gender. Drugs are now seen to create gendered bodies, whereas in the 20th century gender was seen as a biologically determined phenomenon (an essence) above and beyond medical, legal and social construction.

6. Roxanne Atkins Anderson, a 79-year-old who coached Mildred Fizzel (the athlete who finished second to Walsh in the 1934 Los Angeles Olympics), unsuccessfully petitioned the Athletics Congress (TAC), the American governing body for track and field, to take Walsh's title away and give the gold medal to Fizzell, whom she now believed to be entitled to an Olympic win. Speaking of the autopsy performed on Walsh, Anderson said, 'If that coroner was correct, and I have no reason to doubt it, then our history reads that a man won all of these women's championships' (cited in Diadiun, 1991: para. 12). Lynn Cannon, chair of the women's committee affiliated with TAC said that the 'issue of

gender identity is more complex than it might seem and that statements that Stella Walsh masqueraded as a woman or that Walsh was definitely a man are unfair' (Wilson, 1991: para. 3).

7. Cindy Patton situates the fear of masculine women in relation to a postcolonial 'zenophobic discourse about which women [on the international scene] are real' (2001: 131). Questions are regularly asked, in the bodybuilding community, about which women are pumped full of hormones, 'artificially' masculinized through drug injections and, thus, in their minds, un-American.

8. Ken Saltman theorized gender permutations central to bodybuilding but, regrettably, did not conduct his analysis with sensitivity and attention to transgender and transsexual theories of sex embodiment.

9. Soon after publishing *Body Facism: Salvation in the Technology of Physical Fitness*, Brian Pronger experienced a viral brain infection that radically changed his physical and cognitive ways of being in the world. Some of his ideas in the book about confronting and transcending socially abjected states of bodily change, health and death now seem prophetic. At the time of writing we continue to wish him transcendence on his terms, peace, and recovery.

10. For a discussion of transcendence in Olympic sport see Synthia Sydnor (2004).

11. Judith Butler challenges Freud's conflation of the penis with phallic power, and contends that the latter is not a property to be had (or located in a particular organ, like the penis). Rather, phallic power is characterized by 'plasticity, transferability and expropriability' (Butler, 1993: 61).

12. For a discussion of the politics surrounding the medicalization of transsexuality see Pat Califia (1997), Dwight Billings and Thomas Urban (1996), Judith Butler (2004), Dave King (1996) and Viviane Namaste (2000, 2005).

13. A small number of organizations decided that the IOC's suspension of the sex-test meant that there was no mechanism to exclude transsexual women. For instance the world chess organization (FIDE) and the US Chess Federation decided not to contest Angela Alston's right to play in 'women only' chess tournaments to follow the IOC's suspension of sex-testing simply because there was no mechanism in place to test gender/sex.

14. For a discussion of the racialized fetish, see: Bhabha (1994), Eng (2001) and McClintock (1996).

15. Andreas Krieger (along with many other East German athletes in his cohort) now has severe health problems relating to having been given large doses of performance enhancing drugs. The German government had been administering oral turninabol, a powerful steroid that was undetectable by existing tests, to elite athletes, many of whom were minors, since 1974. Karen Knig, a former swimmer for East Germany, recently launched a civil lawsuit against the German Olympic Committee for having administered drugs to athletes without their knowledge or consent. Knig is suing for damages and hundreds of other German athletes similarly affected are expected to follow suit.

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Sheila L. Cavanagh is an assistant professor in Social Sciences at York University, Canada. She does gender and sexuality studies with a focus on feminist, queer, postcolonial and psychoanalytic theories. Dr Cavanagh is coordinating a large-scale research project called 'Public Toilets: Geographies of Gender, Queer Desires'. Her research has been published in *Sexualities: Studies in Culture and Society*; *The International Journal of Cultural Studies*; *Psychoanalysis, Culture and Society*; and *Social Text*. She is completing a book called *Sexing the Teacher: School Sex Scandals and Queer Pedagogies*.

Heather Sykes is an assistant professor at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto. Her research uses queer, poststructural and psychoanalytic theory to examine issues of sexuality, gender and body-based discrimination in sport and physical education. Her work has been published in such journals as *Sport, Education and Society*; *Journal of Curriculum Studies*; *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Issues in Education* and *The Sociology of Sport Journal*. She is currently Co-editor of the journal *Curriculum Inquiry*.