

FROM MONSTERS TO “WOMEN”:
SEX, SCIENCE, SPORT, AND THE STORY OF CASTER SEMENYA

By

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Abstract

My dissertation examines the various rhetorical techniques used to administrate gender and sex in the context of sport. Since the 1960s, the category of female has been treated as a prize to be won, reserved only for those who passed a variety of tests and who, quite literally, carried cards attesting to the authenticity of their sex. Given these restrictions on the category of the “female athlete,” I conclude that women in sport have always been a rhetorical creation. I use the controversy over South African runner Caster Semenya as an entry point to explore these techniques in their various forms from 1966 to the present day. In 2009, Semenya was subjected to a variety of gender tests – from stripping her of her clothes, swabbing her mouth for chromosomal analysis, or extracting blood samples for genetic analysis – each of which had a long history in sport, many of which had been officially banned, but all of which still influenced whether or not she counted as a female. By analyzing the long history of these gender tests and their application to Semenya’s body, my dissertation examines some of the most enduring practices of female naturalization in public memory. Caster Semenya’s story figures as an important reminder of the political and very material grip that past technologies and policies still hold even after their formal abandonment and the role of rhetoric in the creation of gendered and sexed identities.

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From Monsters to “Women”: Science, Sex, Sport and the Story of Caster Semenya

Chapter 1

Introduction

In January 2010, representatives of sport’s most powerful governing organization, the International Olympic Committee (I.O.C.), gathered together at its headquarters in Lausanne, Switzerland. There was just one agenda item. The question on the table was this: exactly what makes a woman a woman? After struggling to legislate this question (with formal policy) for the previous fifty years, the I.O.C. was no closer to a resolution. Yet, with the London summer games on the horizon, the organization felt compelled to once more attempt an answer. As one attendee, Dr. Eric Vilain, a medical geneticist from U.C.L.A., remarked, “You have to draw a line in the sand somewhere.”¹ Even more pertinent to the twenty-four doctors, scientists, and policy-makers in attendance than the upcoming games were the events of the past year surrounding the South African runner Caster Semenya. Indeed, it is not too much to suggest that her body provided them with a reason to convene.

A few months earlier, on August 19, 2009, the then-eighteen-year-old Semenya took the world by storm when she won the 800 meter race at the World Championships in Berlin, Germany. Her record-breaking dash was soon backgrounded when rumors began circulating about her body, one that was noticeably masculine. Rather than praise or accolades for Semenya, in which she “won the eight-hundred-meter title by nearly two and a half seconds,” fellow runners, athletics officials, and spectators around the globe were consumed by the appearance of her body.² Semenya’s story went from curious to salacious when, a few weeks later, medical reports were leaked to the press about so-called “gender tests” conducted on her in Berlin one day before the 800 meter final. It was suggested that, “During those tests . . . her genitals were

photographed and her internal organs examined.”³ Shortly following those tests and Semenya’s win, the International Association of Athletics Federations (I.A.A.F.) banned her from track competition for eleven months, leaving her sex a murky matter and the authenticity of her medal up for grabs.

The story of Caster Semenya “ripped around the world” within days of her controversial win and the reports leaked a few weeks later accelerated the dispute over her body into a “full-blown political scandal.”⁴ The press coverage emphasized not her remarkable athletic prowess, her incredible victory where she “cruised past her competitors like a machine,” or even the fact that her qualifying time for the World Championships “beat the South African record” for the 800 meter race.⁵ The question that consumed the press dealt with Semenya’s body. As *The Times of London* reported, “No sooner had Ms. Semenya won her gold medal at the World Championships in Berlin on August 19, [2009], than questions were being asked about her deep voice and muscular frame.”⁶ *The Observer* chronicled, “Semenya was just another pupil in . . . South Africa until her body propelled her to international glory and very public humiliation.”⁷

These events made the January 2010 meeting of the I.O.C. all but inevitable. As Ellison chronicled, “in the wake of Semenya’s case, and the international scrutiny it prompted, the I.O.C. announced that it would try, once again, to devise a way to decisively determine what makes a woman a woman.”⁸ On June 22, 2010, the I.O.C. published their answer when they opined “that the determining factor making men men and women women – and the source of what was deemed an unfair competitive edge – lies in naturally-occurring levels of testosterone.”⁹ The organization deemed testosterone “the factor most *likely* to confer competitive advantage, due to its typically high distinction between males and females.”¹⁰ With this determination, the I.O.C. specifically focused their attention on women with hyperandrogenism, a condition characterized

by “naturally high testosterone levels.”¹¹ Numerous invested parties challenged the I.O.C.’s findings by claiming that hyperandrogenism’s link to athletic advantage is tenuous at best. Jordan-Young and Karkazis argued, “Testosterone is not the master molecule of athleticism. One glaring clue is that women whose tissues do not respond to testosterone at all are actually overrepresented among elite athletes.”¹² Despite objections – and there were many – their ruling about hyperandrogenism constituted that “line in the sand” demarcating who was a woman and who was not a woman. Given these parameters, the I.O.C. announced that as of June 22, 2010, “any female athlete deemed to have an unfair advantage because of high testosterone levels” could be banned from competition on account of their failure to be a woman by their stipulated grounds.¹³

The I.O.C.’s policy and the discord it created all revert back to that hot August day when Caster Semenya won the 2009 World Championships. In short, her body almost immediately reawakened a deep-seated cultural anxiety about the body, sex, and gender, an anxiety over what makes a woman a woman; an anxiety born of the assumption that there is a singular, discernable, and above all, natural notion of woman; a notion that Semenya somehow failed to embody. Semenya’s outwardly masculine body – with her broad shoulders, sharp jawline, and flat torso – reignited this debate. With simply her appearance/performance in the 800 meter, Semenya gave equal urgency and publicity to a number of questions, questions that have historically circulated in academic circles but have always retained a particularly resonant relationship with athletics as well. With her story, a whole host of questions/concerns were suddenly and once more ingredient: Are gender and sex definitely demonstrable? What happens when one falls short? Can we really determine who counts as a woman and who doesn’t? What is the role of nature in the delimitation of gender? Anxiety about Caster Semenya’s body produced a whole host of

discourses: about what makes a woman a woman, fairness in sport, nationality, gender, sex, science, medicine, and much more. In this project, I explore these questions and ideas by attending to Caster Semenya's case through the events surrounding her participation in the 2009 World Championships. I claim her story proves that the so-called natural woman is a rhetorical product made by various techniques based in science and medicine and historically used by sport's elite organizations. With Semenya, different visions of her body corresponded to not only different corporeal rhetorics, but also different notions of science and nation. As rhetorics about her body shifted, so did articulations about nature, science, and nation. Thus, through historical modes of verifying, policing, and ultimately making women in sport, Caster Semenya's story illustrates that rhetoric, nature, science, and nation were equally in flux.

Caster Semenya always claimed she was a woman. Semenya was quoted as telling the press at the World Championships, "God made me the way I am and I accept myself. I am who I am and I'm proud of myself."¹⁴ Semenya's tongue sharpened when she later commented of the focused attention on her body with the simple retort, "I don't give a damn." Since 2009, Semenya has remained relatively mum on the subject of her body. An exception came in 2011 when she participated in the BBC produced documentary, *Too Fast to be a Woman?* In that film, Semenya told the camera: "Nothing can change it. I've got a deep voice. I know. I might look tough but what are you going to do? Do you think you can change it? No. If someone was born the way she was born, are you going to blame him or are you going to blame God? Whose fault is that? Nobody's." Semenya herself questioned what makes a woman a woman. She was quoted in the South African press problematizing so-called natural signifiers of gender, challenging stereotypical notions about women's bodies, and raising suspicion about the stereotypical gaze

she was subjected to: “What makes you a lady?,” she asked.¹⁵ “Does it mean if you are wearing skirts and dresses you are a lady?”¹⁶

Monsters Not Women

Not surprisingly, many scholars agree that sport is functional because it relies on a gender binary in which distinctly men’s and women’s events make that duality operative.¹⁷ Woodward among others argues that in sport, “there is strong adherence to binary differentiation into categories of women and men.”¹⁸ John Sloop also finds, “As an entire generation of sports sociologists and cultural critics have argued, sports competitions – divided into men’s and women’s events – assume a strict gender binary.”¹⁹ He stresses that, “there are few other arenas in which so much work is put into affirming that each body fits firmly into a male or female category.”²⁰ Caster Semenya’s story is inescapably tied to this contentious relation between gender and sex, sport, and bodily categorization. She was scandalous precisely because her body transgressed sport’s strict gender binary line.

Historically speaking, women have never fit comfortably within sport. In Cole’s words, the “histories of ... the athletic female body ... are embedded in suspicion, bodily/biological examination, and bodily probes and invasions.”²¹ This notion has served as a major point of consensus in rhetorical studies.²² Robinson notes, “For as long as there have been women athletes, there have been debates about whether competition is ‘natural.’”²³ This interplay can be traced all the way back to antiquity in which sex testing occurred much more informally. In ancient times, “sex testing was a simple procedure. Athletes and their coaches walked naked through the gates. No penis. No admittance.”²⁴ As Cameron wrote, “All athletes and their trainers had to appear naked in order to ensure no women were present.”²⁵ In the twentieth century, there was still a perceived problem about female participation in athletics. “In 1936, the

editor of *Sportsman*,” Avery Brundage, “commented of the Olympic Games that he was ‘... fed up to the ears with women as track and field competitors.’ He continued, ‘a woman’s charms shrink to something less than zero,’ and he urged the organizers to ‘keep them where they were competent. As swimmers and divers, girls are as beautiful and adroit as they are ineffective and unpleasing on the track.’”²⁶ Ultimately, at various times and by various people, the message was the same: women who dare participate in sport – especially certain sports – compromise their status as women; sport renders them monsters or freaks of nature.

When women entered the realm of sport, they stopped being women. In Cahn’s words, “In the eyes of her detractors the ‘wholly masculine’ female ... athlete became a freak of nature, an object of horror rather than esteem.”²⁷ As this quotation suggests, females forfeited their claim to womanhood in sport. Instead, they registered as monsters, “freaks of nature,” or, in Bruno Latour’s terms, as “hybrids.” As Latour uses the term, hybrids are creatures in whom nature and culture are inseparably intertwined. That is, they possess distinctly human and non-human characteristics. Not dissimilar from Donna Haraway’s notion of the “cyborg,” hybrids are simultaneously “mixtures of nature and culture” – “two pure forms.”²⁸ On account of the hybrid’s perceived freakishness – by their merger of nature and culture – invested actors seek their purification. In Latour’s words, “Every monster [or hybrid] becomes visible and thinkable and explicitly poses serious problems for the social order.”²⁹ The hybrid problematic lies in their inability to never fully reside with culture or nature, occupying instead a space in both realms. In Caster Semenya’s case, she was widely perceived as a hybrid. Not quite a woman or a man, she was a “confusing entity.” Fouché noted, “The appearance of her body apparently crossed the line from being a svelte and toned biological machine to an overly masculine and questionably freakish alienating device.”³⁰ It was precisely because of her hybridity that Semenya underwent a

slew of tests, all for the purpose of realigning her body with nature. Indeed, for Semenya and for all hybrids, they “present the horror that must be avoided at all costs by a ceaseless, even maniacal purification.”³¹

I suggest this purification in sport boasts a lengthy track record. In a tradition that underscores these “freaks of nature,” female athletes have acquired various identities over the years, making the enfreakment experienced by Caster Semenya provided for by a long historical precedent. For example, in 1933, journalist Paul Gallico wrote in *Vanity Fair* that golfer “Babe” Didrikson Zaharias was a member of what he dubbed the “Third Sex.”³² In 1967, I.A.A.F. authorities referred to Polish sprinter Eva Klobukowska as a “superfemale” for reportedly having “one chromosome too many for her to be declared a woman for the purposes of athletic competition.”³³ In 1988, the I.O.C.’s “Sex Control” office reported that Spanish hurdler Maria Patiño possessed “a rogue Y-chromosome.”³⁴ At the 2006 Asian Games, Indian runner Santhi Soundarajan lost her silver medal after one of her competitors challenged if she was really “all woman.”³⁵

A “third sex,” the “superfemale,” “rogue” bodies, and competitors who fail to embody “all” their sex demonstrate the extent to which the female athlete is a hybrid who must be naturalized in sport. All of these women, including Caster Semenya, defied classification and were then ultimately (re)classified as a woman with the help of rhetoric. This sampling of various labels speaks to the fact that the female athlete is a project for rhetorical intervention. Hybrids are the source of a lot of rhetorical work and so is the move to rid them of their hybridity. Hybrids motivate the purification that enables a move from nature/culture to nature apart from culture, from hybrid to woman. In Latour’s estimation, purification is deeply political

on account of its relationship to rhetoric. “Freedom,” he writes, “is redefined [with respect to hybridity purification] as a capacity to sort the combinations of hybrids.”³⁶

These labels – distinctly material as they are rhetorical – illustrate that the female athlete is a point of arbitration in sport. She is not a “natural” entity, but a deliberately composed or articulated one. For the remainder of my dissertation then I will refer to the “female athlete” and “women.” With the “female athlete” I mean to emphasize first the contradiction that has always been assumed between the two terms (female and athlete) and second the “female athlete” as synonymous with the hybrid concept. By ridding hybrids of qualities perceived as unnatural, undesirable, and even subhuman, particular technologies and policies adopted by the I.O.C. and the I.A.A.F. demarcate “women,” effectively sanctioning who is in and therefore exemplary of femaleness and who is out and therefore forever a freak of nature. Policy makers and institutions have gone to great lengths to naturalize “female athletes” and make the binary – that so oft has served as the subject of inquiry – an operative force in athletics. “Women” did not just arrive in sport and compete. They arrived as “female athletes” and competed only once they were naturalized as “women.” “Women’s” participation was contingent on an endless array of strategies including institutional bans, forced tests, and specific medical/scientific discourses, all used to naturalize an entire portion of athletic participants (“female athletes”).

Sport’s most well-funded and powerful organizations have worked hard to rid sport of freaks in order to preserve sport as an enterprise existing along binary lines, neatly divided into men’s and women’s events. In 1967 Raymond Bunge wrote in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, “In the old days a boy was a boy and a girl a girl, but truth instead of clarifying reality may only muddle it.”³⁷ By 1967, it was evident that those good “old days” were more illusionary than real. Even so, all kinds of work has been put into making “a boy a boy and

a girl a girl.” Sport has always advanced “a particular set of ideas about sex differences around the world, under the guise of the universal, the natural, and the scientific. Some of those ideas are: there are only two sexes; those two sexes are so different as to be almost separate species; and men will always beat women in physical contest, so it would be ‘unsporting’ to have them compete together.”³⁸ Decades of struggle, policy, medicine, science, and cultural remapping(s) of the body have come to define sport and its practices. Reflecting on them, Dworkin and Cooky remarked, “quite an expenditure of cultural time, energy, and resources has to be made to hunt down, find, and reconfigure women’s outstanding athletic performances into new notions of female inferiority and male superiority.”³⁹ In Lenskyj’s words, it was believed that “female” “athletic performances would always be inferior to men’s, and so the gender of female athletes in international competition needed to be confirmed in order to rule out the possibility of male imposters.”⁴⁰

Formally dating back to 1966 – and far, far longer as a cultural anxiety – sport has arbitrated and legislated this question (who counts as a “woman”) through a variety of disciplinary mechanisms. Over the years there have been various instantiations deployed both by the I.A.A.F. and the I.O.C. It is only following these practices that one became a “woman.” By physical exams, chromosomal, and genetic analysis, competitors were fitted from hybrids or “female athletes” into “women,” molded by recourse to a particular technology at a moment in time. From 1966-1968, the I.A.A.F. carried out what became popularly known as “nude parades,” in which “female athletes” were forced to line up naked in front of a panel of doctors in order to verify that they were really “women.” From 1966-1992 for the I.A.A.F. and from 1968-2000 for the I.O.C., a universal mandate required that all competitors undergo an examination. From 1966-1968, the technology was the nude parade, which determined who was

a “woman” by forcing competitors to take off all their clothes and undergo a visual (and if needed an internal) examination by a medical doctor. From 1968-1992, the technology was the buccal smear, which determined who was a “woman” after examining their chromosomal makeup under a microscope. “Women” were asked to be literally card-carrying members of their sex to legally participate in competition. From 1992-2000 it was genetic testing, which determined who was a “woman” after detecting for a particular DNA sequence. Although operative at different times, each of these mechanisms were momentarily invested with the power to determine a natural “female” body, only to be found unreliable, and taken up in another form. Universal testing of “female athletes” under the jurisdiction of the I.A.A.F. and the I.O.C. was formally abandoned by 2000. Robinson remarked, “The Sydney Olympics [in 2000]” marked the first time “since 1966 where women didn’t have to genetically prove they were women before they were allowed to compete. From the 1966 European Athletic Championships to Atlanta in 1996 – and at all world championships and world cups in between – female competitors had been forced to endure testing by medical personnel to ensure they weren’t really tarted-up males.”⁴¹ However, exams – both of the formal and informal variant – are still in practice. In the twenty-first century, a mishmash of policy – most recently represented by the 2010 agreement on testosterone level – is the latest practice that ensures the continual making of “women” in sport.

Whatever the technique at a moment in time, they shared a common agenda in turning perceived hybrids into “women.” All of these practices essentially naturalized monsters, thereby creating the category of the natural “woman.” They all basically did the same thing. That is, “Identifying hyperandrogenism [as was done with Semenya] in female competitors does the same thing as the ‘nude parades’ and gynecological examinations of the 1960s, the Barr body

tests of the 1970s and 1980s, and the SRY gene detection of the 1990s: It identifies (and usually excludes from sport) those women who do not meet the I.A.A.F.'s protean standards for femaleness.”⁴²

These tests performed and continue to perform the work of naturalization, rendering competitors “women” only after examination, never before the fact. This underscores the point that the so-called natural “woman” has always been the end result of arguments, tests, and technologies. The natural “woman” has, in short, been the end result of rhetoric. It is for this very reason that I believe hybrid is a more explanatory, more accurate, and even more empirical term to use for the purposes of my project. “Woman” or “women” implies some kind of stability that simply just wasn’t there. Far from a stable entity, a “woman” in sport was the product of “technologies of normalization” that purified hybrids.⁴³ Thus, because gender and sex are the end product of these techniques (of nude parades, chromosomes, genetics, ETC.), gender specific terms are more preemptive than they are a fair depiction of athletes-before-they-are-tested. In other words, if historically speaking athletes were not officially “women” until after they passed a test, a new name is warranted. I will use hybrid going forward to capture the impossible entity that “female athletes” embodied. The tests in their various forms acted as the rhetorical strategies to explain, naturalize, categorize, and resolutely decide who was a “woman” and who was not a “woman.” In other words, they represented a disciplinary mechanism by which hybrids could be naturalized.

Caster Semenya and the History of Purification

In my dissertation, I argue that at the core of this complex relation between technology, gender and sex, sport, and Caster Semenya resided one dominant agenda: the elusive search for the natural “female” body. This has been and remains with Semenya a distinctly rhetorical

pursuit. Her body was granted political purchase and made recognizable and/or livable (for her but more importantly for other invested parties) by rhetoric. The drive to know Semenya's body – even her natural body – has motivated a variety of rhetorical strategies leveraged by various people for various purposes. Although these strategies differed in as many ways as there were interested parties, they all shared one common goal: to remove her body from the shifting world of rhetoric (or culture) and place it on the firm ground of nature. There was a natural body locatable by Caster Semenya. It was there, they argued, and made clear by recourse to the way in which the boundaries of her corporeality were demarcated. It was believed that the move to make Semenya's body consonant with nature granted it an ontological status that was otherwise impermanent. Shapin and Schaffer underscore the power of such a move when they explain the safety net that nature is perceived to provide. They write, "To identify the role of human agency in the making of an item of knowledge is to identify the possibility of its being otherwise. To shift the agency onto natural reality is to stipulate the grounds for universal and irrevocable assent."⁴⁴ In sum, invested actors in Semenya's story, while reading her body variously, called forth from mythology, pursued vigorously, and advocated passionately for the natural body.

Although the technologies used between 1966-2000 have been institutionally rejected, their memory and their very materiality live on in rhetoric, among other places. They live on and have been carried forward in discourse, in the way Caster Semenya's body was made and remade as a natural "woman" among different politically driven actors. The inescapability of these practices surely indicates that, "The past is not surpassed but revisited, repeated, surrounded, protected, recombined, reinterpreted and reshuffled."⁴⁵ Each one of these techniques registers because of the rhetoric about Semenya that recalls them. Whether in moments of scandal, journalism, or policy deliberation, these elements defined the scene of her story. After Semenya

took gold at the World Championships, her body, perhaps unsurprisingly, was read in divergent ways. Bodies such as hers that “wrongly” depart from cultural expectations of gender, sex, sexuality, etc. quite easily lend themselves to public scrutiny. As John Sloop remarks, “concerns about ‘proper’ gender and sexuality are” indeed “ubiquitous.”⁴⁶ With Caster Semenya, for varied reasons and depending on the agenda of a particular person, her body produced different corporeal rhetoric(s). With her notable musculature, machine-like strides, and baritone voice, Semenya triggered the cultural alarm about binary expectations of sex and gender that are coextensive with sport.

Caster Semenya’s story reintroduces this history and its disciplinary mechanisms. Her very embodiment serves as a reminder of that fear and the practices that were once waged – and to some extent – were more recently leveraged in her case. Thus, when one speaks of or writes about Caster Semenya, they – willingly or not – recall years of disciplinary techniques. One reporter did just that in their story about her, contextualizing it thusly: “In the 1960s, female athletes had to walk nude in front of a panel of experts who assessed their sexual credentials. The so-called ‘naked parades’ were abandoned and gender verification was eventually done using chromosome tests, until the I.O.C. called for their discontinuation in the late ‘90s, saying the tests constituted an invasion of privacy.”⁴⁷ Ellison more succinctly put that same history on Caster: she “sparked the I.A.A.F. and the International Olympic Committee to confront, yet again, an issue they’d repeatedly attempted to wash their hands of.”⁴⁸ With Caster Semenya we have, somehow, found not just one moment resonant but fifty plus years ingredient. In Schultz’s words, “Physically active women, and particularly those who compete in athletics, have always been a source of gendered anxiety. Since the International Olympics [sic] Committee ... first endorsed track and field events for women, critics worried that competitors were too ‘masculine’

... Nearly a century later, the I.A.A.F. regulations echo the same language.”⁴⁹ It is not only that these practices are merely relevant with a contemporary scandal but also that their memory is taken up in new techniques. Nude parades and chromosomal testing, and the logics underlying them don’t die out; they just change shape.

The practices embedded in the history of disciplining “female athletes” were all brought to bear on the body of Caster Semenya, both materially and discursively speaking. She too was forced to take off all her clothes, probed internally and externally, swabbed for saliva, hair, and other bodily fluid samples, banished from sport only to be reintroduced, and simultaneously vilified and supported all along the way. In form and logic, Caster Semenya’s body was introduced to nude parades and scientific/medicinal testing. On their own and together, each of these tests failed to determine what makes a “woman,” what makes Caster Semenya a “woman.” It took the I.A.A.F. almost a year! – eleven months to be exact – to render her body appropriately naturalized and fit for competition after the scandal in Berlin. Even in the contemporary moment – with all these tried practices, with all the advances made in science, medicine, and technology – Caster Semenya’s body reminds us that what makes a “woman” a “woman” remains elusive and so do the practices pursued in the name of that endeavor. What we do know for sure – what I argue we can know – is that her body is the product of rhetoric, one made along politically efficacious, wonderfully transgressive, and terribly regressive lines. In the end, the I.A.A.F. would agree upon just one factor (testosterone level) after much deliberation, with as much brouhaha surrounding this determination as there was around Caster Semenya herself. Sport is no closer to the natural body, and as Semenya’s story evidences, its leading advocates keep at it for fear of gender imposters far more imagined than real, a manufactured notion of fairness, and the social maintenance of the gender binary.

To illustrate this thesis, I focus on the agendas of three key players in the fight over the body of Caster Semenya: Leonard Chuene, Mike Hurst, and Ariel Levy, each invested for different reasons. In every case the terms of Semenya's body's intelligibility is contingent on myriad articulations connected to personal and collective political agendas, including but not limited to gender, sex, race, nation, science, and medicine. With each respective writer of Semenya's body, their rhetoric reflects a battle to propagate or dismantle the natural body through particular strategies. Chuene, Hurst, and Levy argued, and sometimes vociferously so, in favor of or (in the rare case of Levy) against the natural body.

The naturalness that they sought (or sought to fight against) through the body of Caster Semenya was never a contained pursuit. Their rhetorics were equally an articulation point for the recurrent historical topoi in sport about purifying contests of hybrids with nude parades, chromosomal examinations, or genetic testing. In other words, with each of their rhetorics history replayed itself, demonstrating again and again that "woman" remains the product of rhetoric just as she has always been. However, the extent to which the lessons of history are remembered varies on account of who is doing the storytelling. Chuene and Hurst fare far worse than Levy in the way that each of them redeploys the practices of yesteryear as the means to discern Caster Semenya's "natural" body. In this sense, the different visions of Semenya's body amounted to not merely three different personal preoccupations with the natural body but a vigorous engagement with longstanding arguments about making "women." The powerful endurance of these techniques for naturalizing the body lies in their very apparentness across Chuene's, Hurst's, and Levy's rhetorics. Their rhetorics prove the staying power of naturalizing hybrids and ridding sport of monsters despite their recurring inefficacy.

First, Leonard Chuene, president of Athletics South Africa – South Africa’s governing athletics organization – read Caster Semenya’s body visually. For Chuene, Semenya’s body was self-evident; if you wished to know her sex, all you needed to do was to look at her. Chuene’s reading recalled the first institutionalized practice of sex testing known as nude parades. His discourse reinscribed the very logic that made them operative between 1966 and 1968. In essence, he suggested that if one wished to know Semenya’s gender and sex all they had to do was look at her and then they would know. For Chuene, literalness was a technique of naturalizing the body. To him, looking and knowing proved what was natural; it proved Caster Semenya was a “woman.” Chuene utilized his visual notion of the body for hardly altruistic reasons. Behind his advancement of it was a massive cover-up of his own missteps with Caster Semenya. In the months and weeks leading up to the World Championships, Leonard Chuene was advised to have Caster Semenya’s gender tested. Semenya’s rapidly increasing times at previous events coupled with her masculine appearance prompted the intervention of high-level officials, who suggested that testing before such a major event (with a major global audience) would nip anything suspicious – most pointedly her gender and sex – in the bud. With this advice, Chuene went ahead and ordered that Caster Semenya be tested at a clinic at the University of Pretoria, in Pretoria, South Africa. Following the tests, an Athletics South Africa doctor advised that he withdraw the teen runner from the World Championships. Chuene refused and Semenya ran. When the brouhaha over Semenya erupted in Berlin after a second round of tests, Chuene launched his cover-up with the narrative that he knew nothing about them and that testing Caster Semenya would be wrong, unethical, racist, sexist, and simply immoral. This was his political purpose: to cover-up his knowledge of what he knew to be a much more complicated body. Rather than embrace a complex corporeal moment, and therefore give himself up, Leonard

Chuene sought the natural body, to him a prize paved by rhetoric of corporeal literalness. The naturalized body of Caster Semenya was no small thing. It was, in this case, the price of Chuene's innocence by covering up previous knowledge and action about a far more hybridized version of the body.

Second, Mike Hurst, an Australian sports journalist for the popular *Daily Telegraph*, a publication owned by media giant Rupert Murdoch, read Caster Semenya's body as deep or cavernous. For Hurst, only a science that probed beneath the skin and revealed chromosomes that no naked eye could see could speak definitively of the body. Hurst's reading recalled the policy switch from nude parades to chromosomal testing, and more generally, the elevation of science as an impenetrable, objective, and determinative force in sex testing. After the World Championships, Hurst emerged alongside many Semenya chroniclers. But when he leaked the results of the gender tests conducted on Semenya in Berlin by the I.A.A.F., he ascended to an authoritative position among journalists, albeit largely a self-anointed one. In this capacity, Hurst led the charge in determining Semenya's gender and sex with his deep, cavernous body. In his estimation, the deep body was instrumental in understanding Caster Semenya's confusing gender and sex. Hurst premised the deep body on the basis of its inner contents: chromosomal makeup, testosterone level, and sex organs. For him, these elements – the component parts of the deep body – demystified her confusing corporeality. By proclaiming how they figured relative to Semenya's identity and sharing that proclamation with anyone and everyone, Hurst achieved his journalistic imperative and political purpose. Absent these component parts, and most of all, absent the authority of science and medicine, Caster Semenya would remain a mystery. But it was precisely the unraveling of bodily mystery that Hurst sought. Thus, with his journalism about Caster Semenya, Hurst established the deep body by turning his attention to what could be

found inside by peeling back her skin and looking inside. Through his reporting, Hurst conveyed that chromosomal makeup, testosterone level, and organs amounted to what was natural about the body. Or to be more precise, he suggested that a certain chromosomal makeup, a particular testosterone amount, and the presence or absence of certain organs equated a “woman’s” natural body. Biology was indeed destiny, he argued. Hurst needed the body to be naturalized alongside these terms to paint Semenya as a monster, point out yet another incident of unfairness in sport, and keep up a sensational journalistic imperative. He then resolved these things by reminding readers what was pure and natural about the body by way of science and medicine.

Third, Ariel Levy, feminist advocate and writer for the *New Yorker*, read Semenya’s body rhetorically. For Levy, Semenya’s body was the product of various assemblages; it could be known only through its historical contexts in South Africa, only through her biography, only through her past experiences. Levy’s reading recalled a key turn in sex testing in which chromosomes were formally abandoned and the likes of Judith Butler, Anne Fausto-Sterling, and Alice Dreger contributed to a critical discourse that problematized the notion of a stable, simple, clear-cut, binary-abiding body. Among the three actors I analyze, Levy was the only one who respected the rhetorical body. She was the only one who remained perfectly comfortable with the historical fact that “women” in sport have always been populated by a series of tests and arguments. Whereas Leonard Chuene and Mike Hurst argued for visualness or deepness as a way to convey a singular, natural body, Ariel Levy argued against the presumption of “female” naturalness, its relevancy in sport, and the political power it historically possessed. With naturalness ceded to the Chuenes and Hursts of the world, Levy used the rhetorical body to advance a feminist politic in which Caster Semenya’s body was woven together by biographies, histories, and local as well as global politics. She reasoned that despite the insistence of some,

the natural body was forever ineffable and only called into being in order to oppress certain populations to the advantage of other ones. With her story on Caster Semenya, Levy offered a transformative alternative to naturalistic renderings of the body.

The various iterations of Caster Semenya's body and the various iterations of sex testing demonstrate quite clearly that the struggle to discern the natural "woman" is continually under construction, again and again revisited when hybrids make themselves known as Caster Semenya did. If there is such a thing as a natural "female" body, the varied mappings of Semenya's corporeality substantively challenge the power of that argument in our cultural imaginary. Caster Semenya's body figures to the extent that rhetoric demarcates its boundaries. Like "women" before her, she was a product of rhetoric. In sum, in my dissertation I provide a "history of the present," in which it is possible to rethink the relationship of rhetoric, gender, and sex.⁵⁰ A historical perspective reveals that—at least in the case of Caster Semenya—rhetoric also functions as a conduit which can bring forward disciplinary practices which were once located firmly in the past. That is, rhetoric functions not as a cultural reflection or gauge but as "a conduit or a pathway" to "broader configurations of history."⁵¹

Key Terms

My dissertation largely deals with one major conceit: the relationship between nature and rhetoric. In Caster Semenya's case, this plays out as the struggle over the natural body versus the rhetorical body.

Nature and Rhetoric

Put simply, the natural body presumes the body is a static biological fixture that resides apart from extraneous political forces. As such, the natural body is perceived as "undeniably biological, rooted in the natural world and a product of organic processes."⁵² One might say it is

found “in nature,” “a realm that is more fixed” or made up of “determinate processes” rather than “subject to change.”⁵³ The natural body is never the subject of change because its very orientation precludes the possibility of human agency in its making or rendering. In Latour’s words, “It is not men [sic] who make Nature; Nature has always existed and has always already been there; we are only discovering its secrets.”⁵⁴ As a result, “If Nature is not made by or for human beings, then it remains foreign, forever remote and hostile. Nature’s very transcendence overwhelms us, or renders it inaccessible.”⁵⁵ Largely due to the lack of a human hand in making it, nature constitutes a threat to rhetoric and to the possibilities of discursive transformation that rhetoric offers us. Latour underscores this threat when he posits that, “the political freedom of humans has never been defined except in order to constrain it by applying the laws of natural necessity.”⁵⁶

Over the years science has served as a key force in keeping nature at bay and separate from an otherwise rhetorical world. Shilling locates the emergence of the natural body during the eighteenth century in which “science began to flesh out the categories of ‘male’ and ‘female’ and base them upon biological differences.”⁵⁷ Science’s corporeal intervention, he noted, was so impactful that “During the eighteenth century it gradually became taken for granted that the body provided access to uncontested knowledge about both individuals and society.”⁵⁸ It is precisely this taken-for-granted quality of the natural body that has imbued it with such power. It was simply always already there, immune from politics, strictly biological, and distinctly ontological. No rhetoric here. In other words, when we think of the natural body or “naturalized phenomena, then societies, subjects, and all forms of discourse vanish.”⁵⁹ Nature is the anti-rhetoric.

While the natural body has a long-standing cultural preoccupation in general, it retains a particularly resonant one in sport. Magdalinski notes, “sporting bodies are ... assumed to be

‘natural,’ uncontested entities that reflect institutional ‘values’ ... It is ... a potent image within the context of sport, confirmed by a range of textual and discursive devices that present it as inevitable.”⁶⁰ The expectation of the natural body in sport goes a long way in explaining how Caster Semenya’s story was so easily scandalized. There was something about her that was decidedly unnatural and therefore worthy of exploration. It is plain to understand then that the natural body retains a reciprocal relationship with what it is not in the form of a binary in which “the natural/pure/authentic body is confronted directly with its unnatural/impure/inauthentic counterpart.”⁶¹

Despite the fact that “naturalistic views” of the body “have been, and still are, extremely influential in legitimizing social inequalities,” their credibility has consistently been under attack.⁶² Historically speaking, feminist theorists have led this charge under the assumption that “gender fables establish and circulate the misnomer of natural facts.”⁶³ Butler points out that “feminist scholars have argued that the very concept of nature needs to be rethought, for the concept of nature has a history, and the figuring of nature as the blank and lifeless page, as that which is, as it were, always already dead, is decidedly modern, linked perhaps to the emergence of technological means of domination.”⁶⁴ Bordo too explains this important intervention when she writes: “Formerly, the body was dominantly conceptualized as a fixed, unitary, primarily physiological reality. Today, more and more scholars have come to regard the body as a historical, plural, culturally mediated form. To the degree that such a shift has occurred, feminism ... has contributed much to it, to the corollary development of a ‘political’ understanding of the body, and to a new suspicion of the category of ‘nature’ and its accompanying ideologies concerning women’s ‘species role.’”⁶⁵

One way in which I demonstrate the nature/rhetoric conceit in my project is by reference to a rhetoric against rhetoric. I borrow this concept from Bryan Garsten's *Saving Persuasion*.⁶⁶ A rhetoric against rhetoric is a rhetoric that denies its own rhetoricity or viability as a discursive production. Or put another way, a rhetoric against rhetoric is an anti-rhetoric whose users are "rhetoricians in denial."⁶⁷ Using the ancients, Garsten contrasted a rhetoric against rhetoric with rhetoric's "old function" based in deliberation. He wrote, "Rhetoricians taught their students how to argue on any side of any question ... The practice of arguing both sides of a question ... was defended because of the uncertainty inherent in words of moral and political evaluation."⁶⁸ Put simply, "Rhetoric was a manner of engaging in public deliberation, and one only deliberated about what was controversial or uncertain."⁶⁹ A rhetoric against rhetoric is the opposite of these things; it disengages embattled actors, shuts down discourse, and squashes controversy. A rhetoric against rhetoric professes that rhetoric is absentia. It reflects what Hariman has called a "realist style," which "devalues other political actors because they are too discursive, too caught up in their textual designs to engage in rational calculation."⁷⁰ It is perhaps not surprising then that Garsten attached his notion of a rhetoric against rhetoric to Hobbes who put a premium on transparency.

A rhetoric against rhetoric is consonant with the natural body. In terms of my project, a rhetoric against rhetoric was leveraged to support Chuene's and Hurst's notions of a natural "female" body. Through the visual body, Chuene advanced a rhetoric against rhetoric by arguing that there was nothing more to talk about because seeing-and-knowing explained Caster Semenya. He *had* to advance a rhetoric against rhetoric to give his cover-up political traction. Through the deep body, Hurst advanced a rhetoric against rhetoric by arguing that science fully deduced the problem posed by Caster Semenya's body. Like Chuene, his rhetoric against

rhetoric sought to end the deliberation over her identity. Both Chuene and Hurst denied the rhetorical nature of their own rhetorics. To do so would be to lose their grip on nature, their particular agendas, and the historical techniques of naturalization that they each applied to Caster Semenya.

The rhetorical body constitutes the inverse of the natural body. It suggests quite simply that, “rhetoric is articulated through and by bodies.”⁷¹ Whereas the natural body is said to be devoid of rhetoric (a distinctly rhetorical position I will explore in this project), the rhetorical body embraces the body as a discursively viable entity. Examination of the rhetorical body presumes that “material, nonliterate practices and realities – most notably, the body, flesh, blood, and bones, and ... all the material trappings of the physical are fashioned by literate practices,” and therefore, “should come under rhetorical scrutiny.”⁷² A shift from the natural body to the rhetorical body implies a shift from bodily stasis to bodily mobility. The focus of inquiry then considers “what bodies can *do*, what bodies could *become*, what practices enable and coordinate the *doing* of particular kinds of bodies, and what this makes possible in terms of our approach to questions about life, humanness, culture, power, technology and subjectivity.”⁷³

The rhetorical body, I argue, offers a richer, more explanatory, and more precise site of analysis. When I refer to the rhetorical body in this project, I am talking about the body as a distinctly rhetorical enterprise rather than a decidedly natural one. I assume, in Bordo’s words, “that the body, far from being some fundamentally stable, acultural constant to which we must contrast all culturally relative and institutional forms, is constantly ‘in the grip,’ as Foucault puts it, of cultural practices ... Our bodies, no less than anything else that is human, are constituted by culture.”⁷⁴ In my dissertation I wish to show that, at least in the context of sport, the most important actors have always assumed that the natural body could only be created through

rhetorical tests. These productions “create the effect of the natural, the original, and the inevitable” “woman.”⁷⁵ To seek solace in the natural body is to preemptively invite a whole host of limitations on the body, and in particular, on Caster Semenya. Latour underscores what the rhetorical body may offer us. He finds, “There is nothing especially interesting, deep, profound, worthwhile in a subject ‘by itself’... a subject only becomes interesting, deep, profound, worthwhile when it resonates with others, is effected, moved, put into motion by new entities whose differences are registered in new and unexpected ways.”⁷⁶ In this sense, the rhetorical body provides for the possibility that a whole host of forces are (or could be) operative in making the body. Or put another way, “Whil[e] regarding the body as exclusively biological may seem compelling, it nevertheless neglects the ways in which the body is discursively constructed.”⁷⁷ The body of Caster Semenya becomes endlessly more interesting once we too “put it in motion.” When that happens, more contours and dimensions emerge, its relation to other actors, communities, and political practices are apparent, and the voice that it has always had is made to matter. Butler encourages us to “cure ourselves of the illusion of a true body” once and for all.⁷⁸ By doing so, “The culturally constructed body [the rhetorical body] will then be liberated, neither to its ‘natural’ past, nor to its original pleasures, but to an open future of cultural possibilities.”⁷⁹ In this dissertation, I hope to heed that call.

Science

Science is a major key term in my dissertation. Over the course of my chapters, the status of science itself changes. In each one of these instances, the status of the body is not disconnected from the status of science. Instead, they are mutually reinforcing. For Chuene, science occupies two distinct roles. First, science is the enemy of rhetoric and a foe of his visual body in particular. Turning to a “laboratory” as he so often warned would be a mistake because

science cannot reveal what everyday citizens already know about Caster Semenya. His reasoning here underscores a second function of science, in which it gains political purchase and resonance through seeing-and-knowing. This is the only kind of science that Chuene will accept as determinative of Semenya's body. With seeing-and-knowing, Semenya's body was narrowed down to, in Foucault's words, "the plane of visible manifestations."⁸⁰ Chuene's conception of science evidenced a rhetoric against rhetoric by using what could be seen and known as the end product of deliberation. For Hurst, science transformed into what Bruno Latour has called "Science No. 1."⁸¹ Science No. 1 defines science as devoid of rhetoric whose role is to contain controversy and eliminate it all together from the realm of public discourse. In *Pandora's Hope*, Latour explains that Science No. 1 is an anti-rhetoric in that it supports "the ideal of the transportation of information without discussion or deformation," or put another way, acts as a "substitute for public discussion."⁸² Latour contrasts Science No. 1 with Science No. 2 which "deals with nonhumans, which in the beginning are foreign to social life, and which are slowly socialized in our midst through the channels of laboratories, expeditions, institutions, and so on."⁸³ As a largely ideological form of science, Hurst's Science No. 1 serves as an explanatory tool to proclaim what Semenya's confusing body means "once and for all." In this way, his notion of science was also a rhetoric against rhetoric as "The conditions of felicity for the slow creation of a consensus in the harsh conditions of the agora disappeared underground."⁸⁴ All of this is to say with his Science No. 1 deliberation about Caster Semenya goes away. For Levy, science shifts again to a rhetorical science. Instead of preventing or denying its relationship to rhetoric, she understands science as squarely rhetorical. By conceiving of science as a discursive production, the politics ingredient in the techniques of naturalization that were applied to Caster Semenya's body and all "female athletes" historically becomes clairvoyant.

Modernity

Another key term that will constantly underscore the push and pull between the natural body and the rhetorical body is modernity. In Semenya's story, various actors engaged in the processes of purification constantly justified themselves by appealing to modernity. For the purposes of this project, modernity connotes a chronological moment to be sure, but equally important, a form of power that authorizes particular technologies, motivates particular policies, and registers particular identities. I conceive of modernity with recourse to Bruno Latour who suggests that modernity is "marked by" the separation of nature and culture or the separation of the natural body and the rhetorical body, whose division is made through the relentless quest for purification.⁸⁵ Modernity and the existence of hybrids are profoundly at odds with each other. While modernity prefers clear distinctions, hybrids are messy. In Latour's conception, moderns resolve this problematic by purifying hybrids. He explains that with the "modern ... conception," "purification is considered as a useful work requiring instruments, institutions and know-how."⁸⁶ Or put another way, purification entails "a whole set of techniques, a whole corpus of methods and knowledge, descriptions, plans and data."⁸⁷ This is precisely what happened to Caster Semenya. For this reason, modernity is especially relevant to my project because of its relationship to nature and culture and its figuration as a form of power that parses the natural body from the rhetorical body. More than a moment in time, modernity acts as a warrant for purification, turning "female athletes" into "women" through a whole host of practices.

As a result, in this project I will refer to modernity as a "disciplinary" technique. Modernity's disciplinary quality is evident in the way it imposes nature on rhetoric, even as it promises to do nothing of the sort. Latour addresses this entanglement when he writes, "The critical power of the moderns lies in this double language: they can mobilize Nature at the heart

of social relationships, even as they leave Nature infinitely remote from human beings; they are free to make and unmake their society, even as they render its laws ineluctable, necessary and absolute.”⁸⁸ Such an undertaking partitions “Nature and Society,” essentially keeping monsters or hybrids at bay by driving a wedge between their rhetorical bodies and modernity’s preference for the natural body.⁸⁹

With Caster Semenya’s case, modernity was continually leveraged by the different sex tests that were applied to her body. Time and again she found herself on the losing end of modernity by the way in which devices of “progress” were used to purify her and make her into a “woman.” In this way, then, Caster Semenya confirms Latour’s thesis that the relentless work of purification is carried on under the banner of modernity. Yet, there is one key difference at play here. Whereas Latour suggested modernity was defined by purification, I locate that purification specifically at the level of the body.

Disciplinary Technique

Throughout my dissertation I will regularly refer to the rhetorical strategies of Chuene and Hurst and the historical policies of nude parades, chromosomal analysis, and genetic testing as disciplinary techniques or mechanisms of purification. I use disciplinary technique in a Foucauldian sense, in which techniques amount to a form of power specifically waged at the level of the body and specifically attached to identities rather than actions.⁹⁰ Foucault argues that power is applied to the body by “disciplinary methods” whose sole purpose is “to measure, assess, diagnose, cure, [and] transform individuals.”⁹¹ It has a distinctly corporeal function. Through his notion of bio-power he suggests that disciplinary techniques are carried out by “numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations.”⁹² Defined far more by “taking charge of life, more than the threat of death, that

gave power its access even to the body.”⁹³ In addition to making the body its foci, disciplinary techniques are defined by their broad scope, enveloping whole constituencies. Foucault underscores that as a form of power a disciplinary technique can punish entire subsets of people by demarcating particular identities as potentially dangerous (and therefore ripe for punishment), “a milieu of delinquents, loyal to one another ... ready to aid and abet any future criminal act.”⁹⁴ The potential for wrongdoing rather than a specific transgression serves as the warrant then for implementing a disciplinary mechanism.

Historically speaking, hybrids or monsters were treated not so different and thought of on not so different terms. A “model of cure and normalization” was forced on them to make “women” in sport.⁹⁵ All “female athletes” were deemed suspect not for committing a particular wrongdoing but for potentially figuring in sport as gender frauds. Furthermore, the nude parades and medical tests and Chuene and Hurst as extensions of them equally illustrate disciplinary techniques by imposing nature on rhetoric or the natural body on the rhetorical body. I understand these strategies and practices as disciplinary (both discursively and materially) because they forced an entire operation, policy, or vantage point onto Caster Semenya’s body. The tests that Semenya underwent, twice no less, demonstrate the very realness of their attempt to normalize.

Nationalism

Given that Caster Semenya’s case clearly intersects with sport, nationalism figures importantly in my dissertation as well. Even in an increasingly globalized world, questions of nationhood remain front and center, especially in a sporting context where countries are literally pitted against one another on the track, all for the glory of their homelands. Thus, no matter whose rhetorical production, nationalism operated explicitly or implicitly with regard to

Semenya's body. Certainly this observation is not unique, but rather a shared assumption in scholarship on Semenya. Sloop has remarked of its relevance as has Schultz noting that, "In the case of Semenya, issues of race, politics, nationalism, gender, and conceptions of the 'natural' body became especially pronounced."⁹⁶ Nationalism long preceded the particularities of Semenya's story. It has a longstanding relationship with sport, gender, sex, and the naturalization of monsters. But first, generally speaking, sport and nationalism are intimately intertwined. Bairner finds, "Sport is frequently a vehicle for the expression of nationalist sentiment to the extent that politicians are all too willing to harness it for such disparate, even antithetical purposes as nation building, promoting the nation-state, or giving cultural power to separatist movements."⁹⁷ For example, South African's turn toward democracy and away from apartheid emphasizes the pivotal relationship between nationhood and athletics. As Booth notes, "South African history offers a sober reminder that sport is a political project inextricably tied to nationalism."⁹⁸ In 1995 when the nation took the Rugby World Cup, it was "viewed as being symbolic of a new post-apartheid era."⁹⁹

Sport is often taken as a reflection or a gauge of national identity. Competitor's bodies occupy a central position in that expression, and as a result, speak to the nexus between gender, sex, nationalism, and sport. Warrants for sex testing have been historically linked to nationhood. This was never truer than during the Cold War in which the initiation of these practices was premised on the need to ensure that nations fairly competed against other nations, the United States and the Soviet Union being case-in-point. "The fear seemed to be that as women's sports became increasingly important on the international stage, men might infiltrate their competitions."¹⁰⁰ Thus, if one's gendered/sexed embodiment was wrongly performed it was not just a sin unto oneself, but grounds for compromising the reputation of an entire nation. With the

Cold War then, “The suspicion of gender deviance in sport ... [was] used to produce both nationalism and anticommunist sentiment.”¹⁰¹

Nationalism figures importantly in Caster Semenya’s story. Much like science, the status of the body is not disconnected from the status of nationalism. In my dissertation, a particular vision of nation corresponds to a particular vision of the body. For Chuene, he advanced the notion of a state-sanctioned natural body. He argued that his notion of a visual body was not just his, but a national one shared by all South Africans. The naturalism that he suggested was there by recourse to seeing-and-knowing was the product of national consensus. Chuene expressed a particular vision of nation as part of his cover-up. For Hurst, he articulated nation as a colonial body. Given his notion that science was an adjudicator of political controversy, he applied this function in particular to all of “South Africa” as a colonial nation that required Western intervention to save themselves from their own kind, especially from Chuene and Athletics South Africa. Hurst essentially suggested its people were in need of an enlightenment that only his kind of science could provide. South Africa was, in his estimation, part and parcel of a “dark continent” that was ignorant of science’s clarifying properties. For these reasons, they were a colonial nation. For Levy, she conceived of nation as rhetorical. In her work she found that the national response about Caster Semenya’s body was coextensive with rhetoric. A rhetorical nation came in the form of deliberation over how to support Semenya and by way of discourses precisely to the contrary, but all of which had a stake in rhetoric itself. If nationalism was to take root in South Africa following the World Championships, rhetoric, she suggested, would be required. Rather than lending nation to the rhetoric against rhetoric machinery, Levy wrote of a nationalism that embraced rhetoric as the means to talk about Semenya and struggle over her body in private contexts and public forums.

When I refer to nationalism in the context of Caster Semenya, I use the term to explain how national identity was the instigator for, the byproduct of, or a connector to issues of gender, sex, and the natural body. In some moments, Semenya's body functioned to produce nationalist politics, while in other cases her body was used to pin nationalist discourses against one another, and finally, yet during other times, nationalism mattered to the extent that it was a component part of the making or remaking of her body. When it comes to the natural body, nationalism proved pivotal in its construction or deconstruction. Semenya's story is inextricably tied to nationalism.

Fairness

Another key term that will continually appear in my dissertation is fairness. Much like nationalism, fairness is both extremely relevant to sport and especially operative in Caster Semenya's story because of its relationship to gender and sex. When it comes to sport, gender, and sex, fairness has historically served as the arbiter or "moral compass" in athletic competition. Fairness, in the same way sport values a natural body, is foundational to sport functioning across gendered lines. In fact, one major reason why gender tests were initiated in the 1960s was to ensure "fairness," the idea here being that a man infiltrating a female competition would be unfair, or worse, that a "woman" competing against a hybrid who was excessively "mannish" would too be unfair. As Cooky and her colleagues found, "Ostensibly for athletes, spectators, and citizens from the Global North, common sense understandings of gender-verification testing posit testing as an objective, scientific process that ensures a level-playing field and thus, 'fairness' in sport competition."¹⁰² Fairness then is explicitly tied to an agenda in sport – one carried out by the I.A.A.F. and the I.O.C. – to legislate sport by recourse to the natural body. All things being fair, natural bodies would compete against natural bodies. Hybrids were a direct

affront to sport's fairness imperative. Indeed, Caudwell finds that "I.O.C. policy and practice on sex testing/gender verification ... epitomizes this emphatic emphasis on 'fairness' and 'naturalness.'" ¹⁰³ Yet, much like the practices that I argue make "female athletes" "women," fairness is manufactured to the extent that it depends on "the I.O.C.'s narrowly constructed sex and gender rhetorics." ¹⁰⁴

Similar to the I.O.C. meeting in Lausanne, when the I.A.A.F. convened to adjudicate Caster Semenya's case fairness was on the table. The key question was this: did Semenya possess an unfair advantage? When the I.A.A.F. published their findings in May 2011, their answer was couched squarely in the language of fairness and the natural body. They opined that their duty was "first and foremost to guarantee the fairness and integrity of the competitions" and that "reasons of fairness" explained why "competition in athletics is divided into separate men's and women's classifications." ¹⁰⁵ In consensus with the I.O.C., the I.A.A.F. suggested fairness came down to issues of hyperandrogenism. In other words, where hyperandrogenism lurked, so did unfairness. Thus, they ruled, "in order to be able to guarantee the fairness of such competitions for all female competitors, the new Regulations stipulate that no female athlete with HA [hyperandrogenism] shall be eligible to compete in a women's competition if she has functional androgen levels (testosterone) that are in the male range." ¹⁰⁶

For the purposes of my dissertation I use fairness in a couple ways. First, I understand it as a common value or precedent in elite sport. Second, I understand it as a warrant for issues relating to sex and gender and particularly legislation toward that end. Third, I seek to complicate understandings of fairness, and from the onset, approach it not as a neutral value, clear warrant, or otherwise not-to-be-interrogated premise. For different actors and at different times, fairness will mean various things. Each of these functions of fairness can be located in the

rhetorical productions of Chuene, Hurst, and Levy. For Chuene, fairness buttressed his visual body. From his perspective it would be unfair for the I.A.A.F. or anyone else to naturalize Caster Semenya by anything other than seeing-and-knowing. In one way, his perspective on fairness was radical. It said, “judge a transgressive performance by what you see, not what sports says.” On the other hand, he was clearly preoccupied with a far less admirable task. For Hurst, he conceived of fairness as an imperative of sport or an operative benchmark. Fairness meant there was a level playing field under which all “women” competed because their bodies were categorically the same. For Levy, fairness as Chuene and Hurst conceived of it was either too selfish or too myth-based. Thus, she complicated fairness by drawing attention to the precisely unfair nature of sport’s fairness imperative based only on testosterone. Fairness, she argued, depended on much more than that, including the intricacies of the body, class, and race.

Methodology

A great deal of the academic response to Semenya has emphasized how gender played out in her case, with a focus on the disciplinary gender binary.¹⁰⁷ Sloop found that while there were several “logics” about Semenya evident in popular discourse, “the panic that produced them is part of a cultural fabric that, in the main, reproduces a binary understanding of gender.”¹⁰⁸ Winslow also reflected on the relevancy of the gender binary to her case when he claimed that, “By examining Semenya’s position within the gender binary, we can better understand how the terms of gender are instituted, naturalized, and established.”¹⁰⁹ Sloop and others importantly discuss the “problems and possibilities” of gender through her case. As he eloquently remarked, “we must undo gender in order to do gender.”¹¹⁰ Yet, there is more to be gleaned from her story. I would add that we must also be vigilant of the historical practices that compel us to investigate the gender binary and imbue it with the authority it so clearly has.

Doing so gives rhetoric even greater purchase, a reflection of our cultural practices to be sure but also a conduit which connects the gender binary to practices of discipline, and hopefully one day, a more inclusive politic. I believe the richness of Semenya's case is found in the varied accounts of her body and the historical technologies that underscore them.

In order to do just that, I draw upon Bruno Latour's actor-network theory.¹¹¹ The guiding assumption of actor-network theory is to background a particular text, for example, a speech about Caster Semenya, and instead, devote more attention to the circulation of a text, a term, or an idea by invested audiences. This is precisely how I will approach Caster Semenya's body, the various readings of her, and her relation to historically based techniques of naturalization.

With actor-network theory, rhetorical productions are approached suspiciously. It presumes there is not an a priori "list of actors, methods, and domains already taken as members of the social realm."¹¹² Latour argues that if one "takes [it] upon herself to decide in advance and a priori the scale in which all the actors are embedded, then most of the work they have to do to establish connections will simply vanish from view."¹¹³ Thus, in place of "an already existing 'social order,'" he posits that we simply conceive of "assemblages."¹¹⁴ In doing so, rhetoric experiences a flattening out and "It is only by making flatness the default position of the observer that the activity necessary to generate some difference in size can be detected and registered."¹¹⁵

The assumptions of actor-network theory explain how I will conceive of the body and the often taken-for-granted assumption of its naturalness. Rather than concede that the "female" body is already made and therefore natural, I will instead consider how "women" are assembled in sport. Actor-network theory is particularly suited for my project because, in Latour's words, it "feeds off of controversies." Caster Semenya's story is surely a controversy with numerous nodal points worthy of exploration. Latour argues that "controversies are not simply a nuisance to be

kept at bay, but what allows the social to be established.”¹¹⁶ Or put another way, “controversies provide the analyst with an essential resource to render the social connections traceable.”¹¹⁷

This is perhaps the only way forward. After all, as I have already shown, history demonstrates that “women” in sport are not found in “nature” but naturalized by particular techniques. Thus, with Latour in mind, I will examine how Caster Semenya’s body was “assembled and the ways” in which different assemblages “are connected to one another.”¹¹⁸ As Blackman nicely explains, “The body, for Latour, is an assemblage through the way it is connected up to material practices, human and non-human, which articulate its potentiality.”¹¹⁹ When I refer to assemblages, I’m simply trying to underscore the fact that the body is made by different pieces at different times, and includes chromosomes and organs just as much as a speech or an editorial. Assemblages converge across what might be considered natural and what might be considered cultural (or rhetorical). Over the course of my dissertation, some assemblages will be foregrounded or swapped out for another, but the constant remains that assemblages offer a way to explain that the body is always a point of articulation. Actor-network theory can help unpack the various ways in which hybrids were naturalized into “women” and their relation to Caster Semenya’s case. In doing so, I will advance why particular audiences needed particular versions of the body at particular times and the political consequences of those instantiations.

My dissertation uses actor-network theory from a feminist vantage point. Precisely because “actor-network theory affords agency to machines and other entities previously denied such status ... it may be seen as a useful tool for feminism.”¹²⁰ A feminist informed application of actor-network theory enables me to lend a critical voice not just to the gendered and raced politics of Semenya’s case but also the aspects so oft missed, including the body itself and its

relationship to historical technologies. Virginia McCarver's work demonstrates a similarly (feminist) inspired approach to actor-network theory. Of her work on Sarah Palin, McCarver commented, "I am not solely interested in interpreting the text in and of itself but am concerned with exploring the larger cultural practices that engage in and interact with the text and how the text operates as only one component of a larger cultural conversation."¹²¹ I cannot think of a more fitting approach for my project.

Furthermore, gender performativity informs the feminist focus of my dissertation. In my dissertation, I will regularly refer to performativity and the gender binary. They are not opposites *per se*, but they are contrasting ideas about how to conceptualize gender and sex in everyday life. The gender binary suggests that there are two genders (masculine and feminine) and that they correspond to two sexes (male and female). In other words, it presupposes that two kinds of gender reveal two kinds of sex and vice versa, making gender and sex mutually reinforcing.¹²² Moreover, the gender binary relates directly to the natural body. Butler explains how they are consonant when she writes, "Consider that a sedimentation of gender norms produces the peculiar phenomenon of a 'natural sex' or a 'real woman' or any number of prevalent and compelling social fictions, and that this is a sedimentation that over time has produced a set of corporeal styles which, in reified form, appear as the natural configurations of bodies into sexes existing in a binary relation to one another."¹²³ Or put another way, the gender binary bears squarely on nature and rhetoric in that its operative epistemology "create[s] the effect of the natural, the original, and the inevitable" categories of definitively male and female bodies.¹²⁴

It is perhaps unsurprising that in the dominant version of Semenya's story, the press privileged this binary by obsessing over her masculine appearance. She failed to conform to the gender binary and that was problematic. It therefore naturalized the intervention of gender tests

because Semenya so illustrated her own hybridization by her inability to conform. This common story traveled and circulated precisely because it played on the gender binary rather than a performative definition of gender and sex.

I contrast the gender binary with performativity in my dissertation because it deconstructs a dualistic approach to gender and sex. It presumes the rhetoricity of the body and that gender and sex are indeed rhetorical productions. Or put another way, gender performativity forces us “to rethink our implicit commitment to the stability of gender – to the idea that gender is something possessed by rhetors and reflected in rhetorical practice rather than something that is constituted *by* rhetorical practice.”¹²⁵ When the binary is problematized, more than two possibilities for gender, sex, and the body emerge. Butler clarifies that performativity refers not to “free play” or “theatrical self-presentation,” but an iterative, ongoing process of identity negotiation.¹²⁶ In *Bodies that Matter*, she writes, “This iterability implies that ‘performance’ is not a singular ‘act’ or event, but a ritualized production, a ritual reiterated under and through constraint, under and through the force of prohibition and taboo.”¹²⁷ Neither free from constraint nor dictated simply by one’s free will, performativity is at best a struggle against a “disciplinary sense of discourse and materiality” as John Sloop suggests, but nevertheless a pivotal mechanism for potentially transgressive corporeality, of “subversive resignification and proliferation beyond the binary frame.”¹²⁸

Most important for this project, performativity challenges what is supposedly natural about the body. If gender and sex are productions of performance, then nature itself is made; it has a “performative status” as well.¹²⁹ In Butler’s words, performativity “exposes ... the illusion of gender identity as an intractable depth and inner substance” and the “‘the natural’” as equally illusory with its “fundamentally phantasmatic status.”¹³⁰ In other words, since the coherence

of what is natural about gender and sex breaks down with performativity, nature itself is just as fungible. Performativity takes gender binary to task and the techniques of naturalization that have been used throughout history to make “women” in sport.

In the remainder of this introduction, I preview the rhetorical productions of Leonard Chuene, Mike Hurst, and Ariel Levy. I underscore that each of them struggle over the natural body, some making arguments for it and some not, but always demonstrating that “women” are the product of rhetoric.

Leonard Chuene and the Visual Body

In chapter two, I explore Leonard Chuene’s role in the Caster Semenya story and his particular rhetoric that laid claim to the natural body. In this chapter I argue that Chuene advanced a visual body in order to achieve his political purpose. With this particular body rhetoric, Chuene turned to a notion of science that was hostile to the laboratory and instead based on seeing-and-knowing. He also used a notion of nation based on a state-sanctioned natural body. These components repurposed the nude parade portion of making “women” in sport.

When rumors surfaced in Berlin over Caster Semenya’s body, Leonard Chuene, the president of Athletics South Africa, stepped in as her unofficial publicist. In this capacity, he defended Semenya’s right to participate in the 800 meter competition, her gold medal, and most of all, her claim to her gender and sex. In essence, he defended her from the position that she was a monster. In fact, “Chuene claimed to be shocked by the way that the I.A.A.F. had treated Semenya” by testing her.¹³¹ Always a mouthpiece for her, Chuene suggested gender tests overseen by “some stupid university somewhere” were discriminatory, unethical, and simply incomprehensible.¹³² Publicly at least, he was nothing short of Semenya’s most outspoken ally.

Chuene's credibility dissolved just as quickly as he built it when leaked emails revealed that he oversaw tests on Caster Semenya in South Africa before she left for the World Championships, anticipating that her body would prove problematic in Berlin. "In September [2009], the Johannesburg weekly *Mail & Guardian* exposed Chuene's dishonesty about authorizing the tests."¹³³ In the face of overwhelming evidence that Chuene was complicit in the same testing he publicly denounced, an apology from him was hardly forthcoming. Instead, he emphatically told the press, "Tell me someone who has not lied to protect a child."¹³⁴ Thus, while Chuene "portrayed himself as the teenager's great protector," his eventual admission about the tests and the cover-up destroyed his reputation and only brought Caster Semenya's body under even deeper scrutiny.¹³⁵ Calls to punish Chuene were answered in November 2009 when he "was suspended by the country's Olympic body over his handling of the affair."¹³⁶ Chuene's involvement in, and truly his perpetuation of scandal, cost him the presidency of Athletics South Africa and earned him global recognition for what some labeled "among the cruelest acts ever to dominate international attention for the wrong reasons."¹³⁷

The very public dissolution of Leonard Chuene's defense of Caster Semenya clearly demonstrated his blatant dishonesty. He railed loudly against the tests, but in reality, had ensured they took place. Yet, beyond Chuene's stupefying grab for power and the public spotlight was a key point about his seeking the "natural body." For Chuene, the body was neither simple nor visible. That is to say, there was nothing natural about it. If it was those things, one wonders why he would agree to subject Semenya to testing. What is more, he later told Ariel Levy that the "results" of the tests were definitive in making "an informed decision" about Semenya's body.¹³⁸ By his own admission then, Caster Semenya amounted to some kind of hybrid.

Despite Chuene's knowledge about Caster Semenya, for a political purpose he advanced a reading of her body as simple, literal, and something one could look at and easily categorize. In order to advance his cover-up and, from his purview, "protect" Semenya, he suggested the body's extension in space was nothing but a matter of self-evidence. The visualness with which Chuene spoke about the body was his means for naturalizing Semenya and carrying on his cover-up. In other words, with this visual reading, Chuene turned Semenya from the hybrid he privately understood her as into a natural "woman" for his public campaign.

Chuene's formulation of Semenya's body reinscribed the historical practice of nude parades in sport. With Semenya and with his dealings in particular, we are reminded that nude parades are not simply a contained historical phenomenon, but rather a (re)appropriated practice among stakeholders in and beyond sport, reinscribed vis-à-vis her very body. The nexus between his public campaign and the nude parade practice underscores that "women" in sport remain the product of rhetoric, that nude parades continue to have no claim to naturalize the body (try as they might), and that visualness still bears powerfully in the realm of sport as an argument for making hybrids into "women."

Instigators of nude parades and even their methods may have changed since the 1960s, but the underlying standpoint about how to read the body is the same. The operative logic can be summarized thusly: if one wishes to know the body, simply look. A visual inspection conducted by athletic officials, competitors, the press, and most of all, Leonard Chuene best illustrates one key mode through which Semenya's body was popularly understood. Semenya's self-evident body discernable from the nude parade constituted Leonard Chuene's cover-up and her naturalization.

Mike Hurst and the Deep Body

In chapter 3, I analyze Australian journalist Mike Hurst and his particular body rhetoric about Caster Semenya. In this chapter I argue that Hurst advanced a deep body to fulfill his journalistic agenda and enter a larger conversation about fairness in sport. Given this body rhetoric, Hurst's notion of science shifted toward modernity or what I call his turn toward the laboratory. Further, Hurst's vision of nation shifted to a colonial nation, a framing he used for all of South Africa for their supposed ignorance of (his notion of) science. Writing for the *Daily Telegraph*, his journalism abandoned the logic of the nude parade in favor of chromosomal forms of examination, one informed by scientific interventions into corporeality.

Just as nude parades remained legally viable for only a few years, Hurst thought it not enough to read the body from the vantage point of surfaces, using physical extremities as the dominant evidence of identity. Simply put, Hurst believed, or at least implicitly recognized in his reporting, that the body is more complicated than its external markers. At the same time that Hurst recognized that the body is not necessarily reflective of clear-cut categories, he made an explicit effort to place Semenya's body in that set of assumptions by bridging nature with science and medicine. In that endeavor, Hurst used journalism as a platform that acknowledged Semenya's "controversial" bodily performance, but ultimately silenced it by reinscribing the same old categorical imperative of sex as either man or "woman" with the help of the laboratory. In this way, Hurst privileged the naturalization of Semenya's body in order to settle what he called "the biggest crisis facing sport."¹³⁹

For Hurst's purposes, nature and science were mutually reinforcing. Through science, Hurst believed he could naturalize Caster Semenya taking her from hybrid to "woman." First, this enabled him to adjudicate "fairness" in sport. Not unlike the I.O.C. or the I.A.A.F., he sought

to define “women” from a biological vantage point. Second, Hurst’s merger of nature and science supported his personal journalistic agenda to sensationally “figure Semenya out” and report his findings to “the world.” These two purposes speak to the fact that Hurst, like Chuene, did not remember the lessons of history. He did not remember that science has never been able to definitively naturalize the “female athlete” By applying science to nature, Hurst proved once more that the urgent talk of discovering “women” in sport is a rhetorical production.

Hurst’s iteration of Semenya’s body repurposed sport’s transition from nude parades to more scientific, laboratory-based modes of understanding the body. This was sport’s turn toward modernity. The demeaning practice of nude parades led the I.O.C. and the I.A.A.F. to turn from outside markers of the body to its insides and to “medicine and science” in particular “to help verify the legitimacy of athletic bodies.”¹⁴⁰ He relied on the very same evidence that medical doctors did when chromosomal testing was adopted, seeking out the XX/XY chromosomal configuration as the gateway to naturalization. His study of Semenya concluded she was athletically ineligible, and therefore, effectively unnatural in light of her inner contents. Hurst’s conclusion about Semenya’s body was the same rendering of numerous “female athletes” who failed chromosomal testing when it was official policy.

Ariel Levy and the Rhetorical Body

In chapter 4, I analyze *New Yorker* writer and well-known feminist Ariel Levy’s rhetoric about Caster Semenya. In this chapter I argue that Levy provided a positive point of transformation by calling off the search for the natural body. Levy envisioned Semenya’s body as rhetorical, reading it based upon various assemblages. Unlike Chuene and Hurst, Levy did not mask the rhetorical body; she privileged it. Given the rhetorical body, she understood both science and nation as equally discursive. While science mattered in Semenya’s story, Levy

claimed that it was indeed a rhetorical production with no clear answers about the body. With nation, Levy found that Semenya's body was the impetus for public deliberation. Semenya's body was rhetorical and so was the national response to it.

In Levy's iteration, Semenya's body was complex and expansive when understood in its rightful context, a context that encompassed her hometown, family, friends, and coaches, all of which understood her body without recourse to techniques of naturalization. In the words of Butler, hers was a body "bound up with cultural and familial modes of belonging and recognition."¹⁴¹ Levy's rhetoric refused to untether Semenya's body from rich contextualization, and as a result, it refused to reduce her body to one of two options.

Levy's rhetorical body reintroduced the more recent chapters of sex testing in which universal forms of naturalization were abandoned in favor of more specific ones. The I.A.A.F.'s and the I.O.C.'s decisions about hyperandrogenism evidence these more specific forms. Furthermore, Levy's rhetorical body was also underscored by theoretical mediations on the body, which have shown quite powerfully that the body is always contingent and a matter of rhetoric. By literally incorporating Judith Butler, Anne Fausto-Sterling, and Alice Dreger into her story – all of who publicly weighed in on her case – Levy provided no choice but to embrace the lessons of history about naturalizing "female athletes" into "women." Each of these critical voices served as reminders. Fausto-Sterling claimed, "You might think it is simple to tell who is male and who is female. Indeed, sometimes it is simple. But not always."¹⁴² Butler weighed in, "The standards that we use to 'determine' it are clearly shifting and not always consistent with one another (chromosomal, hormonal, anatomical, to name a few)."¹⁴³ Alice Dreger emphasized of her case, "Sex is so messy that in the end, these doctors are not going to be able to run a test that will answer the question. Science can and will inform their decision, but they are going to have to

decide which of the dozens of characteristics of sex matter to them.”¹⁴⁴ In her reading, Levy echoed many of their sentiments and theoretical propositions. This standpoint led her to question popular culture’s obsession with Semenya in particular and asked us to rethink what constitutes a natural body.

Conclusion

Caster Semenya’s lightening fast 800 meter run at the 2009 World Championships unearthed an unending variety of voices, each with something to say about her. In the remainder of my dissertation I unpack at length what Leonard Chuene, Mike Hurst, and Ariel Levy had to say about her body. Chuene, Hurst, and Levy suggested respectively that visualness, scientific evidence, and component parts are the body’s descriptions, knowledge intimately tied to sport’s longstanding preoccupation with naturalizing hybrids and making “women.”

At stake between Chuene’s fiery defense, Hurst’s journalism, and Levy’s compassionate story is the body of Caster Semenya—its extension in space and its political meaning. That is, its very materiality. As these three actors pursue their own distinct goals, the body of Caster Semenya is naturalized into a “woman” reaffirming that longstanding historical precedent or acknowledged as the product of rhetoric. Whether read as scandal, scientific discovery, or a complex entity, their rhetorics reveal the variety of ways in which the body has been articulated and its boundaries demarcated, each with its own political implications, and each with its own relationship to specific historical technologies.

Chapter 2

Nudes Parades, Leonard Chuene, and the Visual Body

When news broke about Caster Semenya undergoing gender tests, it was hardly the first time that suspicions about gender and sex compelled entire organizations to action. The slow and often controversial inclusion of “female athletes” during the early twentieth century illustrates a largely uphill battle to be included at sport’s elite level in all different kinds of events. By 1936, one form of opposition toward their participation emerged in the form of calls for sex testing. Murmurings began circulating that hybrids were increasingly apparent and that they posed a threat. In 1936, *Time* magazine reported that the International Olympic Committee “recommended that all women athletes entered in the Olympics should be subjected to a thorough physical examination to make sure they were really 100% female.”¹⁴⁵ By the early 1930s, and despite their participation in some events, “female athletes” were considered suspicious or on the brink of mannishness simply for enacting their athleticism. Shogan chronicled, “In the early part of the twentieth century in North America, medical doctors and female physical educators advised against vigorous exercise and ‘unhealthy,’ ‘unnatural’ competition that, they cautioned, would tax female bodies to the point of hysteria, damage female reproduction systems and contribute to ‘mannishness.’”¹⁴⁶ Fears like these demonstrate the extent to which athletic bodies were deemed monstrosities at worst and controversial fodder at best when they occupied certain spaces, the track notwithstanding.

Leadership in the I.O.C. and the I.A.A.F. underwrote their fears and suspicions by taking their first steps toward the universal testing of all “female” participants. Thus, “Following the 1936 Games, the United States Olympic Committee sent a letter ... to the I.O.C., requesting that the international federations [the I.A.A.F. included] be alerted to the ‘abnormal woman athletes,’

an early call for sex testing.”¹⁴⁷ Ultimately, that early call would take decades to materialize. In 1966, it came to fruition when the I.A.A.F. adopted the nude parade policy, which transformed the “female athlete” through a particular technique into a “woman.”

Put simply, “[S]ex testing is a procedure whereby a woman’s eligibility for athletic competition is predicated on the results of a physical and/or genetic examination of her biological sex characteristics.”¹⁴⁸ Nude parades earned their name because athletes were forced to parade naked before a panel of doctors for a visual inspection in order to prove that they weren’t monsters. Parades were first practiced “at the 1966 European Track and Field Championships in Budapest, [in which] women were required to undress ... in front of a panel of gynecologists. All 235 competitors were inspected and all of them ... passed.”¹⁴⁹ Since that very first parade, fears of gender imposters were premised on an anxiety far more imagined than real. Nude parades lasted for two years: “From 1966 to 1968, women in international competition ... [were] required to pose nude in front of a panel of judges for visual examination of their genitalia.”¹⁵⁰

In this chapter, I define the nude parade as a visual technology that transformed the “female athlete” into a “woman.” While the nude parade lasted just two years, it solidified the authority of the visual in the discernment of gender and sex. To be more precise, the nude parade made hybrids into “women” by aligning the visual and the natural. It suggested naturalness could be located on the outside of the body, and as a corollary, so could the decidedly unnatural state of hybridity. In short, they “commenced with individuals’ acts of seeing and believing, and w[ere] complemented when all individuals voluntarily agreed with one another about what had been seen and ought to be believed.”¹⁵¹ By siding with nature, the nude parade denied the rhetorical body. It evidenced a rhetoric against rhetoric or a rhetoric that denies its own rhetorical-ness. The

nude parade has always been driven by the dream of a natural body, a body removed from the ambivalences of rhetoric.

The cultural moment of nude parades, their actual practice, and the motivating thought behind them was once more enacted with Caster Semenya. Hardly a relic of the past, nude parades were deployed amidst the Semenya controversy in service of the natural body. In her story, no one evidenced the merger of the nude parade with personal capital more than Leonard Chuene. In this chapter, I argue that focused attention on the rhetoric of Leonard Chuene reveals that he, like many others over time, was in hot pursuit of the natural body. Chuene's particular mission led him to place a premium on what I call the visual body, which for him was contingent on a naturalness that was recoverable only by recourse to the seeing-and-believing-informed nude parade. From Chuene's vantage point, Semenya largely mattered to the extent that he read her body visually. He observed Semenya and took that observation as confirmation of the natural "female" body. This constituted his technique of naturalizing her. In this sense, then, Chuene denied the rhetorical body with respect to Caster Semenya. Instead, he argued, what you have is naturalness acquired by seeing. In his estimation, Caster Semenya was a natural "woman" and this could be proven visually, by looking at her. This approach served as the means of his short-lived defense campaign and his cover-up.

Given Chuene's rhetoric, he demonstrated a distinct definition of science as well as nation. For Chuene, science was the enemy. It led to the "truth" about Semenya's body and therefore his knowledge about the tests. As a result, he reasoned that science was best portrayed as an anti-democratizing force. Relying on the memory of a colonial past – in which "much of the South African medical establishment ... argued that Africans were inherently more prone to contract and spread diseases" – Chuene argued that science was once again imposing its colonial

will in Semenya's case at the hands of the I.A.A.F.¹⁵² In terms of nation, Chuene relied upon a state-sanctioned natural body in order to counteract the dangers of science. In other words, he argued that all of "South Africa" supported his notion of the natural "female" body. His "South Africa" did not need science except by seeing-and-knowing. This nation formulaic was Chuene's attempt at giving his cover-up credibility it otherwise lacked.

In the remainder of this chapter, I first explain his rhetorical production (one he claimed absent of rhetoric). Second, I historicize the nude parade technology and parallel Chuene's relation to it. Finally, I draw attention to the lie of the nude parade and Chuene's insistence on leveraging a practice whose own historicity denied its very viability.

Leonard Chuene, Caster Semenya, and the Nude Parade

As I have suggested, Caster Semenya found herself in a complex political moment, one made so in large part by the technologies that had for years and years prior disciplined the "female athlete" in sport. Just as their bodies were deemed hybrids, so was hers. Just as their body surfaces drove doctors and scientists to use specific practices (mostly of the visual variant), so did hers. Finally, just as they were forced to take off all their clothes for inspection in the nude parade, so was she. These overlaps were not mere coincidences but actually mutually reinforcing ideas about naturalization. For the same reasons they always were conducted, Semenya underwent the same routine, same practice, and same technology. Despite their clear track record of failure, having never found a gender imposter, Chuene nevertheless reutilized the parade, rendering it as ingredient as it was in 1966. This meant that the elusive search for the natural body – as ineffable as it was then and is in the contemporary moment – remained not just viable but sought after by different parties, including him.

Chuene repurposed the nude parade as a response to a recurring situation in Berlin. Over and over again, Semenya's appearance produced accusations of her hybridity. Epstein reported, Semenya's "deep voice, ripped physique and narrow hips had observers openly questioning her womanhood."¹⁵³ Among them was "[a] bitterly disappointed Italian runner, Elisa Cusma, who finished sixth."¹⁵⁴ Cusma "was reported as saying that Caster was really a man."¹⁵⁵ Cusma angrily spouted to the press, "There are people who shouldn't compete with us. She is not a woman, she is a man. We let people win medals, and they don't deserve it."¹⁵⁶ Another competitor, Mariya Savinova, who came in fifth even gave voice to the nude parade's underlying epistemology: "'Just look at her.'"¹⁵⁷ The press piled on as well. Of Semenya, they wondered, "is the new 800-meter women's World Champion a MAN?"¹⁵⁸

Chuene responded in kind to these accusations by naturalizing Semenya's body as visual. Thus, like all "female athletes" of the early twentieth century and into its formal policy era, Semenya was commonly accepted as a monster. Chuene counteracted this by essentially reigning in her rhetorical body through the imposition of nature. He imposed nature by arguing for a visual body. He argued all the brouhaha would stop if people would just look at Caster Semenya. By placing a premium on the visual body, Chuene evoked the nude parade in memory and practice. His rhetoric conveyed that there was a natural body – recoverable by the exterior of Caster Semenya – if one simply opened their eyes and looked at her.

The visual body was Chuene's cover-up. In denying the rhetoricity of Semenya's body, he attempted to stop further investigation into the matter, which would of course reveal his own complicity. The visual body, he hoped, would end the probing and the talking. For four weeks, Chuene kept up appearances by heeding the benefits of the nude parade. From August 19, 2009 when Semenya won the 800 meter to September 19, 2009 when he admitted to lying about his

knowledge of prior tests at a press conference, Chuene protected his private knowledge and misdeeds through a public campaign of defense. The visual body helped to conceal Chuene's own misdeeds because of its simplicity. If all there was to do was to look and then know, then there was nothing more to investigate, and even more importantly, nothing more to say. Wanting no more rhetoric, he took refuge in nature.

In reality, Chuene knew much more than what the nude parade could offer. That is, he knew her body's boundaries far exceeded the demarcations he laid down publicly. Chuene privately believed Semenya was a hybrid (after all, he had her tested) and feared that all "the world" would find out at the World Championships. Faced with this predicament, he used the nude parade to naturalize her into a "woman" and thereby resolve the dissonance he confronted. Despite Chuene's best efforts, he left the determinacy of Semenya's body up for grabs. The naturalness he sought through the visual body never ultimately gained traction. Nude parades rose and fell in just two years. Chuene lasted a mere four weeks.

Leonard Chuene's rhetoric performed the nude parade by way of logic and practice. While there was no poking and prodding by him per se, he underscored a vision of the body as visually derived, easily simple, and just as locatable. Paralleling the parade, he reasoned that the naturalness of the visual body resided in matters of fact established by recourse to surfaces. Looking meant Semenya was a "woman." Looking meant Semenya earned her medal in all fairness. Looking meant spectators should stop asking questions about her hybridity, the intolerable mixture they all perceived of her because of her body.

As doubts over Semenya's body reached a boiling point in Berlin, Chuene initiated his visual corporeal defense campaign. He was clear: "We have not once, as A.S.A., doubted her. It's very simple: She's a girl."¹⁵⁹ Chuene laid out how he knew that in either/or terms: "When

you are born, you can see whether you are a boy or girl.”¹⁶⁰ For Chuene, the process of naturalization equated two categories of sex in man or woman and a corresponding gender identity. After the World Championships when reporters asked Chuene about Semenya, he defended the authenticity of her sex on these grounds. So simple and yet so politically efficacious for him, Chuene argued the visual body constituted a rhetoric against rhetoric as it was fully explanatory in and of itself. He told reporters in Berlin, for example, “you can see whether you are a boy or girl.”¹⁶¹ Always indulging them, Chuene described to the media how visualness mapped on to the natural “woman,” using the issue of doping: “When you go to do dope testing, you go with a woman and she can see you are a woman.”¹⁶² Furthermore, this simple naturalism was universally shared. He claimed, “In [South] Africa, as in any other country, parents look at new babies and can see straight away whether to raise them as a boy or a girl.”¹⁶³ The nude parade of 1966 remained intact: Semenya’s hybridity was naturalized by the naked eye, which determined she was indeed a “woman.”

Chuene insisted on the naturalness of Semenya’s body. In merging nature with her exterior, he purified her hybridity. Chuene insisted, “She has not taken any substance to enhance herself artificially. Her crime is to be born like that. It is a God-given thing.”¹⁶⁴ As a “woman” Semenya was innocent of gender fraudulence. Thus, he absolved her of any potential crimes: “She has not committed a crime whatsoever. Her crime was to be born the way she is.”¹⁶⁵ Rather than reveal his truth, Chuene placed the blame for Semenya’s treatment on the I.A.A.F. whose approach was no better than “[being] dragged in the dirt by an organization which should know better.”¹⁶⁶

Seeing and knowing described the essence of Chuene’s bodily modality. It indicated what could be known about the “female athlete,” how that could be known, and how that made them

“women.” To understand her apart from this formulaic risked entering the territory of hybrids, what Chuene referred to as “a taboo subject” or a “stigma.”¹⁶⁷ With this manufactured reading, Chuene’s campaign demonstrated a rhetoric against rhetoric. His position had so much clarity, it was consonant with the province of nature. One didn’t need rhetoric, he reasoned. All one had to do was look at Semenya and upon visual inspection they would know her sex and her gender. For those who doubted Chuene’s stance, he was prepared to “take on the whole world alone.”¹⁶⁸ His convergence with nature was self-sealing. Nature alone provided an encampment against rhetoric. As Latour writes, “Whoever has Nature in their camp wins, no matter what the odds against them are. Remember Galileo’s sentence, ‘1000 Demosthenes and 1000 Aristotles may be rerouted by any average man who brings Nature in.’”¹⁶⁹ Chuene ironically lamented, “We are now being told that it [Semenya’s body] is not so simple,” but for the purposes of his cover-up, Semenya’s body was just that.¹⁷⁰ It was provided for by nature. The reduction of Semenya’s body to visual markers and bodily extremities undercut the possibility of a more expansive, performative corporeality.

Nationalism

Nationalism appeared again and again in Chuene’s public campaign. It constituted as an extension of the visual body in that it wasn’t just one man’s repurposed technology, but an entire nation’s. His technique of naturalization served as the impetus for a state-sanctioned natural body. One week after the World Championships, Semenya returned to South Africa with Leonard Chuene and the rest of their contingency. Greeted with an outpouring of support, Chuene used the opportunity to once more extend his naturalization of Semenya and stop all the talk about her body. Plainly lying about his authorization of the gender tests before the World Championships, he issued this challenge: “I dare anyone to find the supposed wrong that we did

here. If you say we did not protect her, tell us what it is exactly that we did not do.”¹⁷¹ Chuene’s rhetoric certainly made it difficult to quibble with him. After all, he underscored the point that Semenya was a “woman,” the very thing she asserted all along and the very thing that so many of his compatriots advocated as well. As he told reporters, “She told me, no one ever said I was not a girl, but here (in Berlin) I am not. I am not a boy.”¹⁷²

Chuene sustained his visual body and his cover-up through a nationalism about a state-sanctioned natural body. Toward this end, while his defense of Semenya’s body was born of issues made in Berlin, he tried hard to connect his corporeal rhetoric to South Africa. Through emphasizing a familial connection to the visual body, he suggested it wasn’t just his repurposed technology for political expediency, but rather a shared corporeal vision that boasted a much wider cultural purchase. With the visual body, Chuene regularly told the press that Semenya’s sex was evident by looking at her. With his familial connection though, he strengthened his case that identity was actually never a point of contention since it was always known since birth in his country. He claimed, “In [South] Africa, as in any other country, parents look at new babies and can see straight away whether to raise them as a boy or a girl.”¹⁷³ Thus, when Chuene argued that he knew her sex, it was because it had been known, born of visual markers, years ago. He was merely doubling down on what was already established national knowledge.

In order to leverage this nationalism, Chuene looked to parents as a microcosm of that national knowledge of the visual body. National knowledge precluded and prevented hybrids. In fact, they were deliberately opposed. Parents, he reasoned, were caught in the crossfire and victims of the rhetorical body. “They are doubting the parents of this child,” he exclaimed, “and questioning the way they brought her up.”¹⁷⁴ When doubts registered with the nude parade technology, they equally impelled parental authority. He argued, “There is absolutely no way

you can go and test whether a child is a boy or a girl. If you do that you are saying the parents of that child are lying when they say, ‘unto us has been given a girl.’”¹⁷⁵ Publicly Chuene was defiant on this point: “Show me a scientist who knows her better than her mother who raised her for 18 years.”¹⁷⁶ If one doubted his defense then, it wasn’t merely a personal offense, but an offense against a nation and especially Semenya’s own mother and father who always protected her from hybridity. Chuene merged these pieces together when he told the press, “I am offended. I feel what the parents are feeling. I feel what this child is going through.”¹⁷⁷ If Semenya was their “little girl,” her parents were many, evidenced by the myriad voices that, according to Chuene, supported his visual body. As Leonard Chuene so often remarked, Semenya was one of “our children.”¹⁷⁸

In wedding his reading of the visual body to Semenya’s family – a microcosm of nation – Chuene heeded the practice of the nude parade for his own ends. Through a state-sanctioned natural body, he sought “to leave behind rhetorical controversy.”¹⁷⁹ Using a hypothetical scenario, he reiterated his technique of naturalization that only parents knew best. He found, “This girl has been castigated from day one, based on what? There’s no scientific evidence. You denounce my child as a boy when she’s a girl? If you did that to my child, I’d shoot you.”¹⁸⁰ Despite the fact that Chuene knew there was “scientific evidence,” evidence he was privy to prior to the World Championships, the visual body he articulated made the complex truth conveniently more distant. Her body was simply these descriptions as he relayed, and all the brouhaha, unfounded.

The authority that Chuene gave to the family as a component part of a state-sanctioned natural body was reemphasized when Semenya’s family released her birth certificate to the press. They too appeared to agree with his just look and know position. The birth certificate revelation

was another strike against accusations of her hybridity. This came to fruition when Semenya's mother, "Dorcus, showed the *Guardian* a birth certificate saying she is female."¹⁸¹ The "just look" modality shifted from Chuene to that piece of paper. As Bearak chronicled, "Simply look at the girl's birth certificate, it was suggested. Take her on a supervised trip to the bathroom. Ask her mother. Ask her father."¹⁸² The visual mode of the nude parade thus became shared and enacted by Semenya's family members. Her aunt, Johanna Lamola, for example, was quoted as saying, "I know what Caster has got. I've been her nanny. I've changed her nappies."¹⁸³ The family intervention Chuene himself emphasized was given credibility when it actually materialized. It lent legitimacy to his position, the nude parade technology, and the notion that his vision of the body had national resonance.

Chuene underscored his nationalistic position by drawing upon South Africa's embattled history with racial politics. He argued the nude parade's separatism from rhetoric was a shared public good among all citizens of South Africa. Chuene made the case for South African ownership over corporeal knowledge, not one made through a problematic rhetoric. In an allusion to apartheid, he asserted, "For a long time in this country we let people set the agenda for us. Let us set the agenda for ourselves."¹⁸⁴ The slippage between that national ownership over the body and his visual body remained elusive. Even so, Chuene perceived claims associated with Semenya's hybridity as beyond the scope of the visual body's national boundaries and therefore an enemy of his naturalizing technology. He made clear that, "We are not going to allow Europeans to describe and define our children."¹⁸⁵ In particular, he argued that such rhetoric manifested with the "the international hostile media."¹⁸⁶ A visual body connected to deep political wounds brought a sense of legitimacy to Leonard Chuene's body rhetoric. While

his was lies, the anxiety over bodily autonomy shared by South Africans was anything but fraudulent.

In Chuene's estimation, national deliberation over the body was best served when it was absent of rhetoric and/or the rhetorical body. It is not too much to say that national deliberation over the body is most efficacious when there is no deliberation, only a seeing-and-knowing based in nature. The rationale for this position was found in the deleterious consequences of rhetoric, made plain by the lessons of history. According to Chuene, rhetoric always served the needs of others – past colonial powers and current I.A.A.F. officials. The testing that Semenya endured, he suggested, proved the dangers of rhetoric in which neo-colonial powers reigned, techniques of naturalization endured, and South African citizens lost claim to her identity. On account of these things, Chuene found that nature was a far more secure domain because it lacked “any rhetorical tracks and tools or any laboratory contraptions.”¹⁸⁷ He believed under the protection of a state-sanctioned natural body, “All the flowers of rhetoric, all the clever contraptions set up in the laboratories ... will be dismantled.”¹⁸⁸

Woven throughout Chuene's dishonest defense of Semenya was an honest assessment of the racially charged accusations hurled at her. The accusations questioning Semenya's gender and sex carried with them dimensions of race, class, gender, and most of all, nation. In this way, his rhetoric was tethered to a long, injurious history of struggle among black South Africans that emanated from the categorization of bodies. As the *New York Times* reported, “Chuene and some South African athletes suggested there might be an anti-African bias at work.”¹⁸⁹ Many South Africans, Chuene among them, considered Semenya's international reception “an affront to everyone [in South Africa] ... as if a callous world wants to peek beneath the entire nation's underpants and evaluate what it sees.”¹⁹⁰ Toward this end, Chuene argued that, “Semenya had

been ‘humiliated’ and treated like a ‘leper.’”¹⁹¹ He protested, “It would not be like that if it were some young girl from Europe. If it was a white child, she would be sitting somewhere with a psychologist, but this is an African child.”¹⁹² At another point he asked the press, “Who are white people to question the make-up of an African girl? I say this is racism, pure and simple.”¹⁹³

While Chuene was blind to the hybridity he saw in Semenya for his public campaign, he keenly recognized the hybridity others perceived in her. He used those accusations of monstrosity – of the rhetorical body – as the impetus for a shared national grievance. He claimed that she was treated “like she has a disease that will affect other people.”¹⁹⁴ “I don’t think it is proper,” he urged.¹⁹⁵ Most disturbingly, Semenya’s reception as a “leper” reinvoked the story of Saartjie Baartman, the so-called Hottentot of Venus, the “African woman taken to Europe in the early 19th century and exhibited like a wild beast” where “[s]cientists scrutinized her genitals.”¹⁹⁶ On the basis of such racist origins, Chuene admitted, “It has been deeply disturbing for me to bear witness to the relentless and ongoing controversy surrounding Caster.”¹⁹⁷ Given this powerful and disturbing historical connection, Chuene used racial politics to support his nationalistic vision. He was repeatedly quoted as telling Semenya, “This country loves you.” That love was born out of a history of the South African nation’s struggle with the colonization of bodies, from Baartman to Semenya.

Anti-Science

Given the nude parade’s parameters and his purpose, Chuene argued repeatedly against science. If Chuene was going to carry on a cover-up and attempt to keep his work behind the scenes private, he had no choice but to take this position. If Chuene conceded science’s relation to Caster Semenya, the cracks in his story would start to show and so would the rhetorical body. Since he predicated his defense on a visual body in which anyone could just look and know, the

last thing Chuene needed was the laboratory. He needed sight not science for her naturalization. Scientific mechanisms that probed beneath the skin were irrelevant to Caster Semenya. The only exception for the laboratory's relevance was for doping and he already cleared Semenya of that charge. As Chuene remarked, "You can only test somebody who has taken some kind of substance to enhance his or her performance."¹⁹⁸

Even though Chuene literally initiated the very act, he defiantly proclaimed, "You don't test children in the lab to confirm."¹⁹⁹ He publicly reasoned that since the body was naturalized as a purely physical medium, the intervention of medical doctors or scientists was unnecessary. The limit of the body in this sense stopped at the skin because sight was so clairvoyant. Through this process of naturalization, Chuene helped render "the two-sex system more deeply a part of how we imagine human life ... giving it the appearance of being both inborn and natural."²⁰⁰ Given his formulation, other measures, technologies, and interventions were obsolete.

Chuene passionately challenged the intervention of science in Semenya's case. From his vantage point, science and nature occupied two very different domains. He explicitly viewed the rights of Semenya, in public discourse anyway, as opposed to science. The problem with science, he claimed, was its imposition on nature, and as a corollary, Semenya as a "woman." Science's invasiveness was misguided because it produced all sorts of arguments about corporeality that displaced the authority of the natural body. In short, science was a threat. As a result, Chuene tried hard to wash his hands of science in Semenya's case – despite his own misdeeds – by driving a wedge between his job as A.S.A.'s president and the laboratory. He insisted, "[W]e are not scientists and we are not running any laboratory. Our mandate is to take a child and train that child."²⁰¹ He seemed to suggest that A.S.A. made Semenya, separate of science. Chuene found, "We took her and trained her and she got a gold medal. Where did we go wrong? Our mandate

was achieved excellently.”²⁰² In his view, the sequential even systematic way in which Semenya earned gold at the World Championships existed apart from science’s meddling. The two were hardly coextensive.

Chuene actively contested the authority of science, medicine, and technology at every turn. Despite his compliance with science, he insisted on its irrelevancy in the press. In an effort to cover his own tracks, Chuene condemned the very thing he did. He argued, “You don’t test children in the lab to confirm.”²⁰³ To grant credence to the laboratory was as if to say, “We want to take her to a laboratory because we don’t like her nose, or her figure.”²⁰⁴ Or worse, he suggested it meant a grave moral infraction. Of gender tests, he argued, “There is no way you can humiliate a human being like that. That is wrong.”²⁰⁵ Publicly, then, the boundaries of Semenya’s body were markedly different than Chuene’s private demarcations, in which interiority was far more important. Specifically ruling out instruments, medicine, or an advanced degree, Chuene’s thorough way to Semenya’s body remained one paved in sight, rather than means extraneous to exteriority. He denounced such measures as “outrageous.”²⁰⁶ The visual body needed nothing more than what Chuene already afforded it.

Connections/Conclusions

Chuene’s visual version of the body caused him to break ties with the I.A.A.F, whose board he served on. As one paper reported, Chuene “said he would withdraw from the International Association of Athletics Federations’ board.”²⁰⁷ After resigning, Chuene continued to attack the I.A.A.F. The *Daily Telegraph* reported, “Chuene has consistently denied tests were conducted on Semenya in South Africa and branded the International Association of Athletics Federations as ‘racist’ and ‘sexist’ for questioning Semenya’s gender.”²⁰⁸ With his usual dramatics, he asserted, “People should ask for the minutes of the last meeting where I resigned

and it will speak volumes.”²⁰⁹ Chuene promised to resign “for as long as it takes to fight this dreadful case against our young runner.”²¹⁰ Competing variations of the body surely led to his resignation. In Chuene’s words, “I have withdrawn because there is a clear conflict of interest between myself and the way the case is being handled.”²¹¹ To this point, Chuene was utterly honest. That conflict boiled down to divergent ways of making a “woman” in sport; in this case the literal/simplistic/visual interpretation Chuene preferred to the I.A.A.F.’s deep/clinical corporeality. Or put another way, Chuene’s nude parade preferred to the I.A.A.F.’s chromosomal undertaking.

Despite all of these things – purported defenses, protection clauses, and anger projected at anyone who doubted him – Chuene’s visual body was manufactured to protect him, not Semenya. He only needed her to the extent that he naturalized her body and thus squashed rumors about her hybridity. By this rhetoric against rhetoric, Chuene sought “certainty or consensus” through the visual body, offering up “conclusions” about Semenya “that were, by definition, uncontroversial or incontrovertible.”²¹² To protect himself, he *had* to nip rhetoric in the bud. Risking rhetoric meant revealing his own complicity, acknowledging the rhetorical body, and comprising nature’s sterility. In spite of the clairvoyance that supposedly accompanied the nude parade, Chuene’s campaign demonstrated that it was deeply rhetorical, even as he so professed otherwise. He used the nude parade technology to create an entire public discourse in his favor.

The power of Chuene’s discourse was best exemplified by the national contours he granted to his visual body. He suggested there was a state-sanctioned natural body, legitimated through parents, that opposed a hybrid body at every turn. The real strength of his argument stems from the undeniable reality of a colonial past and apartheid practices in which bodies were

indeed the victims of various rhetorical practices. There was reason to fear rhetoric. By repurposing this national wound for his own ends and embedding Semenya's visual body in its memory, Chuene gave his cover-up credibility it otherwise lacked. The problem though, among others, was that his state-sanctioned natural body smoothed over various accountings of Caster Semenya's body that were indeed rhetorical.

Chuene's defense campaign/cover-up was provided for by a long history of making "women" with the nude parade. At first glance it may seem odd to suggest a relationship between Chuene's contemporary rhetoric and the controversial practice of an old relic. After all, they are years apart and Chuene acted, so he said, in the service of defending Semenya. Yet, I submit it is precisely the practice of the nude parade that Leonard Chuene's discourse reinscribed because both with the parades and in his role each boast the same operative logic and actual practice. They both suggested that in order to purify sport of hybrids, all one had to do was look, visually inspect, and render a conclusive finding. Chuene's bodily modality put the nude parade technology into practice. Even more important though, he put the lie of it into practice – that a visual body equates nature or what is natural about "women." It is precisely the merger between the visual and nature that Chuene took up in his own discourse and actions, and, the rise and fall of it which was all too familiar given the lessons of history. In what follows I explain exactly how Chuene's position was indeed the product of the past.

The Emergence of Nude Parades

In order to make this connection clear, a background of nude parades is required. Sex testing was codified in policy not because of one "gender imposter" or one single authoritative body, but as Cole suggests, because of several "regulatory narratives," narratives that variously emphasize "male imposters, hermaphrodites, transsexuals, female masculinity, muscularity,

nationalism, and doping.”²¹³ Although the first known nude parade wasn’t until 1966, popularly circulated discourses about “women,” sports, and their fitted-ness therein helped to set the stage for what would manifest into a universal mandate in which all competitors paraded before doctors in order to participate. In light of years of accusations beginning in the early twentieth century about sex in sport, hybrids eventually had to submit to examination or not compete at all.

Nude parade advocacy, or at least the notion of testing hybrids, in the elite sports community and the popular imagination more broadly dates back to the 1920s-1930s. At “the 1936 Berlin Olympics, Avery Brundage, the United States Olympic Committee president, lobbied for sex testing.”²¹⁴ At the time, the *Los Angeles Times* reported, “Avery Brundage is not far amiss in his recommendation that women entered in the Olympic competition be subjected to an examination when there is a definite question as to sex.”²¹⁵ Brundage’s cry would not be formally heeded until 1966, but between the 1920s until their adoption in 1966, several forces made nude parades all but inevitable for sport’s most powerful organizations. With their implementation, nude parades harbored the power to naturalize.

The Trouble with the “Female Athlete”

Their realization stems in part from popular early twentieth century rhetoric about gender, sex, and sport. This rhetoric emphasized that the “female athlete” was a non-entity at best, or at worst, some sort of monster. The answer for coping with hybrids would be the nude parade, a visual technology that made “women” in sport a possibility. It resolved the anxiety that one could be female, athletic, and natural.

In the early twentieth century, it was believed that femininity ran contrary to and was compromised by sport. Medical doctors and journalists led the charge in this cultural discussion by suggesting that sport was an unnatural enterprise. Talk was popularly initiated “as early as the

1930s and the 1940s” when “female athletes” “caused suspicion about their ‘real’ sex.”²¹⁶ In this era of suspicion, the medical community and the press acted as, “‘moral entrepreneurs’, speaking in the name of science to stipulate (otherwise prescribe) what ‘real’ women should be, and how they should behave.”²¹⁷ They spoke of and advocated for the natural “woman.”

As early as 1925, concerns about hybrids or monsters infiltrating sport were apparent. A reporter for the *Los Angeles Times*, Philip Lovell, reflected, “Fifteen years ago a woman who was an athlete was generally considered a very masculine, muscular individual.”²¹⁸ That individual, he wrote, “assume[d] very mannish styles when they took up athletic hobbies.”²¹⁹ Physical strength and athletic prowess naturally belonged to men. Lovell argued this much, suggesting the natural corollary to athletics sided with a decidedly (male) sex. “There is no doubt,” he indicated, “that the idea of physical education and gymnasium work could be taken up only by the very strong, as the idea was to see how difficult the work could be made, and how hard the muscles could be developed.”²²⁰ Anxieties over femaleness and athletic participation, like Philip’s, were challenged but by no means uprooted in 1928 when women took part for the first time ever in the Olympics. The *New York Times* chronicled the occasion, reporting, “The 1928 Olympic program will include twenty-two events for men and five events for women. This is the first year that Olympic events for women have been held.”²²¹

Even with Olympic participation – no doubt a breakthrough moment – calls for the natural “woman” continued. Ferez contextualized this moment writing, “In spite of the emergence of a new ideal of feminine beauty linked to ‘sportswomen’ in the work of writers such as Paul Morand or Henry de Montherland in the 1930s, the old norms of setting women’s beauty in the context of modesty and fragility tended to keep them away from sports grounds through much of the twentieth century.”²²² An emphasis on femininity, “modesty” and

“fragility,” was reflected in the press. These qualities were perceived as component parts of the natural “woman.” A 1932 feature article in *Los Angeles Times Magazine* captured this notion pointedly, asking, “Do Athletics Destroy Girlish Beauty?”²²³ In the 1930s the answer to this question was a resounding yes. Wooldridge argued that athletics brought negative repercussions, waged specifically on the body’s surface. Her evidence came from “Max Factor, [a] universally recognized ... make-up authority, who declares that all competitive athletics destroy the delicacy and grace which are femininity’s chief attractions.”²²⁴ According to Factor, outdoor sports “may be indulged in to excess, as in championship competitions, and then their destructive tendencies far outweigh the benefits.”²²⁵ In particular, Factor warned, “the strain of competitive athletics is too concentrated and prolonged for the feminine sex. Outdoor competition in the hot sun and dust of the track, undoubtedly is injurious to the complexion, drying out the pores and the natural oils on the face. By the same token, it also is harmful to the hair and inevitably thins it out.”²²⁶

One of the most prominent propagators of this rhetoric came from journalist Paul Gallico, “a well-known sportswriter” who covered among others “‘Babe’ Didrikson Zaharias ... winner of three Olympic medals,” and,” in his words, “‘an excellent athlete in several other ‘manly sports.’”²²⁷ Gallico filled the pages of *Vanity Fair* and other popular tracts with accusations about Babe’s femininity and sexuality, embedding his commentaries in a broader discussion of gender, sex, and sport. “In *Vanity Fair*, he riddled Didrikson Zaharias with accusations of being neither male nor female,” but a member of what he called a “‘Third Sex.’”²²⁸ Like other writers, Gallico argued that femininity was on the line when it came to sport. In a *Reader’s Digest* piece he proclaimed, “It is a lady’s business to look beautiful, and there are hardly any sports in which she seems able to do it.”²²⁹

Discussions instigated by the likes of Gallico are surely far from Caster Semenya in years and miles. Still, they underscore an ideological critique regarding “feminine” bodies, in which the purported transgression of gender and sex norms registered in the form of journalistic outcry and even calls for verification. For all the criticism about “women” in sport, it can be boiled down to an articulation of nature that they were said to exceed.

Unlike other sports, such as swimming, track and field in particular was considered an especially mannish sport because it was so adverse to a “woman’s” nature. “Hostility toward women track athletes and their feared abnormality permeated all levels,” from individual writers like Gallico to influential policy makers.²³⁰ Gallico, for example, argued that anatomically speaking “they weren’t built for that sort of” thing.²³¹ He claimed if they really were successful on the track it was because they were hybrids, not “women.” Gallico suggested, “The upper part of their legs go in at the wrong places; they carry too much weight from the waist up unless they are built like boys (in which case this doesn’t count, because then they aren’t ladies).”²³² Track, a particularly masculinizing sport, would then comprise what was supposed to be natural about a woman. For reporter William Barry Furlong, the thing compromised by sport was what he called “The Image,” belonging solely to the province of femininity. On the eve of the 1960 Olympics, when the 800 meter race was reintroduced for women after a thirty-year ban, Furlong suggested, “by plunging into certain sports, women tend to destroy The Image – that subtle power by which they exercise the tyranny of the weak over the strong.”²³³ Track athletes precisely lacked “The Image.” Said Furlong, “Today, when we think of women athletes – if we think of them at all – We do not instinctively think of shot-putters and hurdlers, sprinters and discus-throwers. Somehow they do not possess The Image.”²³⁴ Stereotypical notions of Western femininity were preferable in the main and track above most sports made it a virtual impossibility. Thus, Furlong

reported, it was not surprising that, “some girls in some sports, are very much devoted to The Image and – if put to the test – will place it before any number of medals and cups.”²³⁵ His story of “One girl [who] quit the Olympics tryouts in track ... so she could enter a charm school” was case in point.²³⁶ Material ramifications of such discourse clearly reverberated strongly. The anxieties reflected in these kinds of commentaries would all be accounted for with the introduction of nude parades. They would resolve the perceived contradiction between femininity and athleticism.

In addition to concerns about sports masculinizing properties, rumors – some of them substantiated and most of them not – helped along the establishment of sex tests. Rumors carried political efficacy because they popularly circulated who was natural and who was not or was a monster and who was not. Accusations of hybridity or monstrosity were taken seriously enough that they would become legislated with the nude parade. When body surfaces upset the human eye, rumors started. Cayleff suggested that they carried a very real material power, “prompt[ing] the International Amateur Athletic Foundation in 1966 to force women track and field athletes at the championships in Budapest” to undergo visual inspection.²³⁷ Rumors were generally “relayed by journalists,” rather than doctors.²³⁸ In particular though “rumors and speculations about the role of drugs and sex in counterfeit performance” and “rumors of men competing as women” were at the core of the gossip.²³⁹ Just as Caster Semenya’s testing was initiated by rumors so did those tests very implementation.

Talk started early and lasted indefinitely. In 1934, at “the 4th Women’s World Championship in London ... Sdena Koubkova won the 800 meters but the “truth” burst into the media: ‘she could be a man.’”²⁴⁰ Two years later, the Berlin Olympics acted as a particularly rich breeding ground for rumors. At the Berlin Olympics in 1936, “there was widespread speculation

about the chromosomal and gender identity of women track-and-field athletes”²⁴¹ It was rumored that a so-called sex test was initiated after Helen Stephens defeated Stella Walsh in the Olympic 100-meter dash, and Walsh’s Polish coach complained, insinuating that Stephens might be a man.”²⁴² Stephens supposedly had a “male doctor ‘look her over’ to make sure she was female.”²⁴³ It would take thirty more years, but the rumored procedure in Berlin would become a reality with the nude parade technology where looking and knowing was codified in policy. Adding to the controversy in 1936 was Paul Gallico. He wrote of a mystery “female athlete,” “a young lady – a girl of Slavic origin ... [who] was called in before a cold committee of medicos ... to be frisked for sex.”²⁴⁴

What is more, rumors were substantiated in part by known cases of athletes who explicitly changed their identity or actually underwent bodily modification to change their gender and sex. *Life* magazine, for example, told readers about “Lea Caurla ... [who] won medals in women’s events at the 1946 European championships in Oslo. Soon afterward she changed her name to Leon when doctors decided she was really a man,” and “Claire Bressolles ... [who] was also a winner in Oslo but became Pierre after an operation.”²⁴⁵ O’Reilly and Cahn suggest that, “between the late thirties and the mid-sixties ... there were reports that three track and field athletes and one top skier had sex-change operations after winning medals in women’s competitions.”²⁴⁶ There was not evidence that after operations such athletes then infiltrated “female” events, but these cases certainly stoked that fear. Cases of athletes undergoing operations or otherwise modifying their bodies were not simply accepted. Instead, they just reinforced the danger athleticism posed to gender and sex as a masculinizing force. Eventually, this danger would have a countering force in the nude parade.

Gossip surrounding elite international competition proved to be more powerful than actual known cases of “gender imposters.” To date, there are only a handful of cases “for which there is only anecdotal evidence about men masquerading as women.”²⁴⁷ Most famous is Hermaan “Dora” Ratjen, a German track athlete who masqueraded as a man at the 1936 Berlin Olympics only to come in fourth place. In 1955, Ratjen confessed “that he was in fact a man, and been forced by the Hitler Youth Movement to compete as a woman ‘for the honor and glory of Germany.’”²⁴⁸ Ratjen later admitted, “For three years I lived the life of a girl. It was most dull.”²⁴⁹ The second known “imposter” is Sim Kim Dan, a North Korean runner who “set records in the 400- and 800-meter running events.”²⁵⁰ Dan “was apparently revealed to be male when his father identified him as a son that he thought he had lost in” World War Two.²⁵¹

Given that the number of rumors clearly outweighed the number of actual known “imposters,” “imposters” totaling a mere two among male interlopers, gossip proved to be an impactful variable leading to the creation of nude parades. Gossip rearticulated the impossibility of a natural “female athlete” and circulated because of that unresolved notion. As Cole remarked, “it seems that the actual number of men impersonating women was not the issue. Instead, what mattered was the perception, rumors, and possibilities of passing.”²⁵² It is precisely because such rumors destabilized socially advanced (and accepted) ideas regarding a “woman’s” nature that they gained so much traction. It was under that nature that sport could proceed, the binary could thrive, and the hybrid could be prevented. With the “female athlete’s” imposition on nature, something had to be done.

One way in which anxieties over hybrids were bolstered was by their intersection with nationalism. Especially during the Cold War, body surfaces proved effectual in the implementation of nude parades because they suggested that certain nations were entering

hybrids in “women’s” events, which both spoiled sport’s fairness imperative and compromised bodily purity. Thus, talk of the hybridization of the “female athlete” was legitimated materially when it was attached to the bodies of particularly masculine “female athletes” from Communist countries. Carter suggested their “success brought both suspicion and criticism in the West and ultimately ushered in the widespread implementation of sex/gender testing.”²⁵³ For precisely political reasons their masculinity was seen as the enemy: “the bodies of elite Eastern European countries ... did not fit the stereotypical ideas about what a ‘feminine’ body should look like.”²⁵⁴ Hybrids distinctly intersected with nationalism because “female athletes” were perceived as the enemy, which other nations could then naturalize or at least argue in favor of their naturalization. Ridding sport of hybrids became the pride of entire nations.

Spectators, officials, and competitors registered their concerns with “female athletes” by their transgressive body surfaces. In the press “there was a persistent questioning of the femininity of female athletes from Eastern Europe and their record-breaking performances.”²⁵⁵ The *New York Times*, for example, emphasized in their reporting “complaints that some competitors, principally from Communist countries, were of questionable femininity.”²⁵⁶ This sentiment was also shared by influential policy makers in the I.O.C. under the leadership of Avery Brundage. The I.O.C.’s president “suspected that these ‘impossible’ performances and body types meant that these women must be men and were therefore not deserving of the medals they received.”²⁵⁷ Particularly dominant athletes were instrumental in raising these suspicions and introducing the nude parade as a mechanism to keep nature in check at the behest of different countries. Most notable were Tamara and Irina Press from the Soviet Union “who from 1959 to 1965 won five gold medals and set 26 world records between them.”²⁵⁸ Largely “[b]ecause of their strength and masculine appearance, suspicion” heavily centered on them.²⁵⁹

When they did not show up in Budapest in 1966, officials knew they had done the right thing because perceived monsters failed to appear on the track. A staunch enemy to the United States, their absence was nothing short of sport's purification, with medals and national pride on the line.

The suspicions that surrounded Caster Semenya in 2009 illustrated a similar sentiment in which auditors didn't like what they saw, felt threatened, and voiced their opinions accordingly. The "just look at her" disgust that one competitor voiced of Semenya indeed possessed a strong historical precedent. In each instance, whether it was Cold War bodies or Caster Semenya, suspicions, finger pointing, an outright fright emerged on the basis of what could be known by looking. In each instance, the "female athlete" was deviant because of her departure from nature. Nude parades would put her back in line with nature by making her into a "woman."

The Nude Parade Technology

With all the eyebrows that hybrids raised, it was only a matter of time before nude parades would be formalized with policy. *Life* magazine reported in 1966, "Because there had been persistent speculation through the years about women who turn in manly performances – and some notable scandals as well – the International Amateur Athletic Federation had adopted a new rule requiring the medical inspections."²⁶⁰ Nudes parades acted as a response to this crisis over naturalism. Hybrids and monsters were vanquished and put in their place were "women." By naturalizing hybrids, anxieties were resolved. Now "women" in sport were made functional, "classified by [their] belonging to a certain domain of reality."²⁶¹

Starting in 1966, the I.A.A.F. began formally naturalizing all "female athletes" through the nude parade technology, effectively separating the "monsters" from the "women." Under their naturalization technique, "gynecologists look[ed] at the nude women, back and front," a

“visual inspection” of sorts.²⁶² “As *Time* reported [of the first known “nude parade”], ‘The examination was perfunctory. Lined up in single file, the 234 female athletes paraded past three female gynecologists. ‘They let you walk by,’ said one competitor afterward. ‘Then they asked you to turn and face them, and that was it.’”²⁶³ Nude parades put into practice the notion that the natural “female” body was locatable with a doctor’s sharp eye. Visual inspections occurred across the globe between 1966 and 1968, spanning continents, races, and cultures. Caudwell documented, “Women athletes taking part in the 1966 European Track and Field Championships (Budapest, Hungary) and Commonwealth Games (Kingston, Jamaica), and 1967 European Track and Field Championships (Kiev, USSR) and Pan American Games (Winnipeg, Canada) were required to appear naked in front of a panel of officials who visually confirmed and certified their sex and gender.”²⁶⁴

Nude parades were premised on reading the body visually in order seek out hybrids and reconcile the perceived contradiction between nature, sport, gender, and sex. Through nude parades, “Certainty was to be achieved through the common sense of visible difference.”²⁶⁵ Imbued with a presumed certainty, the nude parade examination was largely concerned with the body’s surface. Burton-Nelson detailed, “[W]omen at major competitions were obligated to lift their shirts and pull down their pants in front of a group of gynecologists. They then had to wait while the physicians (male) decided if they were ‘feminine enough.’”²⁶⁶ Suspicious of that certainty, Cole wrote, “It was believed judges could ‘see’ what they were looking for. Perhaps they were looking for familiar and easily recognized bodily differences that mark off female bodies from male bodies. Perhaps they were searching for bodily anomalies – signs that betrayed the female body, erasing basic and fundamental distinctions between the sexes.”²⁶⁷ Prodding was also conducted above the waist. Choi explained, “Although the genitalia were meant to be the

focus of the examination, it is reported that comments about the sportswomen's chests were often made by the examiners, with flat chested athletes being treated with greater insensitivity."²⁶⁸ A flat chest was a sign of hybridity. Flat chests begged such disdain that "at the 1968 Olympics" "[t]he chief sex tester ... told reporters that from his examination of 911 female athletes he concluded that sports made them ugly with unattractive bodies and in some cases, hair on their chests."²⁶⁹ With the premium the nude parade placed on the visual body, it was meant to act as a technology that would purify sport of hybrids and naturalize the merger of femininity and athleticism.

Almost from their beginning nude parades were premised on a mandate that was unachievable. That is, one could not look and simply know. Even as nude parade underwriters championed what could be gleaned from the body's surface, that same surface did not yield the answers its propagators promised it would. The "science" of them was never certain. As Alice Dreger notes of visual markers, "[A] person can have something between a penis and a clitoris, and still legitimately be thought of as a man or a woman."²⁷⁰ Just the second time they were practiced, there was no longer "tolerable proximity."²⁷¹ In their second instantiation at the Commonwealth Games in Kingston, Jamaica, nude parades also relied on poking and prodding in which "judges search[ed] for evidence of no vaginal opening, an enlarged clitoris that could be a protopenis, a penis, or testicles."²⁷² Visual logics of the parade were charged with a task they could never accomplish in naturalizing the body.

Nude parades were considered "invasive and controversial" and quite garish from the start. By forcing "the immediate gaze of physicians" on "female athletes," many saw them as "invasive, degrading, and humiliating."²⁷³ Newspapers reported of "outraged protests from modest maidens, some of whom ... walk[ed] out on meets rather than undress for a medical

probe.”²⁷⁴ Their controversy perhaps can best be summarized by those who experienced the nude parade first hand. For example, “In her autobiography, Mary Peters, pentathlon gold medalist in the Munich Olympics of 1972, describe[d] them frankly as ‘the most crude and degrading experience I have ever known in my life. During the Commonwealth Games, in Kingston, Jamaica, she was ‘ordered to lie on the couch and pull my knees up. The doctors then proceeded to undertake an examination which, in modern parlance, amounted to a grope.’”²⁷⁵ Peters was not the only one. “At least one New Zealand athlete (Valerie Sloper Young) also found it not very pleasant. She explained: ‘All the girls had to do it. It was very embarrassing. Even the women who had children had to go through it. They put you on a chair, took your underwear off and examined you physically to make sure you were a female – quite degrading.’”²⁷⁶

Controversy notwithstanding, nude parades were also practiced with a great deal of compliance and affirmation. This of course started with organizations like the I.A.A.F. and the I.O.C. The I.O.C. did not see sex testing as unfair or degrading. In fact, it was precisely the opposite because they were championing what was good, fair, and most of all, natural. That is, through the nude parade, “women” were assured they were competing against other “women.” Cole wrote, “Mandatory sex testing, according to the I.O.C., was a means of protecting new opportunities that had opened up for women.”²⁷⁷ Surely the “protection” schema underscored the perceived imbroglio of “female athletes” and the need then to naturalize them.

In Budapest, of the 234 athletes initially tested, “most of them thought it was a step in the right direction. As one female put it, ‘I worry when my competitors show 5 o’clock shadows.’”²⁷⁸ The *Los Angeles Times* suggested there was a widely held sentiment of approval among test takers: “Most of the girls here are happy that they look like girls and they’re not mad at the Olympic Committee for perhaps doubting it.”²⁷⁹ “Looking like a girl” was key and not

looking like one tantamount to fraud, as Caster Semenya would find out in 2009. In the main, the practice of nude parades was validating for those who argued for their adoption. When suspected gender imposters, the Press sisters, did not show up for testing in Budapest, “[t]heir absence was construed” as an omission, “as confirmation that they were afraid of failing the sex test.”²⁸⁰ The “true sex” of the Press sisters was considered forever deferred in public memory “since they, along with several other Soviet sportswomen, disappeared from international competition when gender tests were introduced.”²⁸¹ At the time, the *New York Times* called their absence “notable,” along with “Tatyana Scheikanova of the Soviet Union and Iolanda Balas of Rumania.”²⁸² Thus, with absences, “speculation ... about women athletes’ normalcy” only increased and simultaneously justified the use of sex testing.²⁸³ Cole suggested, “numerous journalists and scientific critics asked their readers to think about those who did not compete in the games. Unexpected absences betrayed suspect athletes and suspect bodies. According to these reviewers, absence confirmed guilt.”²⁸⁴

Chuene’s Lie

Nude parades indeed made “women.” As a discursive technology, they illustrated that gender and sex were the product of rhetoric in sport. “Women” did not precede the nude parade; the nude parade preceded “women.” They resolved anxieties about the destruction of nature by hybrids in sport and assured organizations, competitors, and entire nations that bodily purity not monstrosity founded sport and allowed sport to function.

During their time thousands of “female athletes” were exposed to the discerning eye of male doctors who examined them visually and even prodded their genitals. Two years of the practice left a lasting imprint and surely something that could be repurposed. This was evident in Chuene’s rhetorical production of the visual body. Moreover, while their practice was formally

taken over by more scientific methods, their logic endured in Caster Semenya's story and set a precedent for science and technology in sport. The rumors that abounded, the questions about her masculinity that circulated, and the diagnoses that Leonard Chuene, her competitors, and the press placed on her collectively illustrate that the nude parade is anything but history, that we have not necessarily progressed beyond visual practices of naturalization, and that the search for the natural "woman" continues with the help of various technologies.

Leonard Chuene's public downfall conveyed much more than the end of his career. It offered up the lesson that a rhetoric that naturalizes by sight (a rhetoric against rhetoric) may be recurrent by its repurposing of the nude parade technology, but it will never be perpetual. His lies only lasted for so long. For Chuene, the reason that rhetoric won out was because it exposed the cracks in his story. His story could not "eliminate the realm of controversy" or "public deliberation" as he wished it would.²⁸⁵ It could not prove a state-sanctioned natural body he suggested was shared by all citizens. If anything, his technique of naturalization exacerbated the situation. While Chuene thought he made "women" once and for all through the nude parade technology, the conversation kept going, his work behind the scenes became public knowledge, and Semenya's hybridity was once again on the table for discussion. The lie of the nude parade was proven again. The lie that is visual inspection in naturalizing "women" was brought to bear through his cover-up.

The particular technology Chuene used with the nude parade forced him into the lie. That is, if Chuene argued parallel to the nude parade that the body could be known by looking then lying was his only option. He had to lie about knowing something that transcended exteriority. In earnest he knew that Semenya's sex figured in a far more complex way, but to tell the truth would be to reveal his prior involvement, his endorsement of science, and the safety he found in

nature. Moreover, it would wrong the beliefs of an entire nation he said were there all along in support of Semenya. By relying on such a visually based, myopically deduced, overly simplistic technique of naturalization, all other options were off the table if Chuene wanted to continue to peddle his story.

Chuene's involvement in Caster Semenya's story rearticulates the nude parade to present day. His fashioning of the rhetorical practice relied on a simple, visual logic in order to read her body and discipline it so as to make her fit his story. This was the same logic that its practitioners used during the 1960s. Although Chuene's nude parade served a much more self-serving purpose, they are mutually reinforcing to the extent that both shared an investment in producing "women" for public consumption. Like the nude parade itself, Chuene's defense of Semenya was brief, lasting just weeks before more complicated technologies of the body gained traction. Even as Chuene vowed to protect her, the limits he imposed on Semenya via the visual body limited how much good he really could do. After all, he made rhetoric his enemy. The artificiality of the body's so-called natural boundaries that Chuene stressed perhaps made the unraveling of his story and the nude parade all but inevitable, ceding space for technologies beyond visualness. The artificiality was equally as evident in the varied readings of Caster Semenya's body within South Africa. There was no state-sanctioned natural body as he suggested. At the same time, his literal, simple, visually derived body resonated in part among some South Africans (at least for the period of his cover-up), by activating wounds still raw over issues of nation, race, sport, and apartheid.

Chuene's nude parade technology squashed Semenya's performativity as an alternative mode of being in a binary world. Even though he was firm in his defense her, arguing that Caster Semenya was indeed a "woman," a point of contention among other parties invested in the

scandal, Chuene still disciplined Semenya's body by his naturalization of her, reminding everyone that despite this transgressive performance you see by her, the body is ultimately defined by its surface and its parts. Given these aspects to his reading, Semenya's body was deliberately and forcefully contracted. Chuene denied a space discursive or otherwise for Caster Semenya in our discourse and the athletics arena, even as he kept her in the game. His visual technology naturalized Semenya and propagated the lie of the nude parade.

Chapter 3

Chromosomes, Mike Hurst, and The Deep Body

The body controversy that Caster Semenya's win ignited began – quite literally – on the very same ground as track's “original” body scandal of 1936. It was in that same stadium at the “Hitler Olympics” that German track athlete Hermann “Dora” Ratjen masqueraded as a “woman” in the high jump, only to come in fourth place much to the chagrin of an entire nation. Having *not* been caught, Ratjen's masquerade forever changed the cultural landscape of sport by helping to render the successive performances of “female athletes” suspicious and designate them as possible sites of gender fraud. If Ratjen got away with it, perhaps any competitor could. Seventy-three years later, charges of gender fraudulence would be brought to bear in that stadium once more; this time with focused attention on Caster Semenya's body. For some, those charges were ultimately authenticated because of the journalistic work of one man, Australian sportswriter Mike Hurst.

For his part in the Semenya story, Mike Hurst was preoccupied with the role that science and medicine played in the scandal and the lengths that others – especially Leonard Chuene – went to undercut it. He reflected almost two years after the World Championships, “The *Daily Telegraph* exposed the Semenya fraud and also drew attention to Chuene's lies in a series of award-winning reports in September 2009.”²⁸⁶ These reports were at their most inflammatory on September 11, 2009, when Hurst suggested that Caster Semenya had no womb or ovaries and undescended testicles based upon the results of the I.A.A.F.'s testing that he claimed were exclusively leaked by the *Daily Telegraph*. Such results were never subsequently published by the organization. Upon Hurst's retirement from journalism in July 2012, he considered his work on her case among his “best scoops.”²⁸⁷

Hurst's journalism is noteworthy for many reasons. It is sensational, dramatic, and gossip-worthy, probably better suited for a tawdry tabloid and not a popularly circulated, prominent newspaper. On its surface, Hurst's writing almost reads like a sensationalist Victorian novel, with its emphasis on "duplicity, deception, disguise, the persecution and/or seduction of a young woman, intrigue, jealousy and adultery."²⁸⁸

Yet, beyond these markers of style and juicy content, lurks a key rhetoric that spells out an important mode through which Semenya's body was read and once more naturalized. I argue that through his reporting, Hurst advanced an account of Semenya's body as deep; hers was a cavity of secrets that warranted discovery, examination, and explanation. To Hurst, it was what lay beneath Semenya's skin that unlocked the mystery of her body's surface. Crucially for him, this body rhetoric was politically expedient in several ways. First, it resolved the scandal surrounding her identity. By this point it is quite clear that when Caster Semenya ran in Berlin, her body was the impetus for starring, accusations, and suspicions. Khoabane editorialized, "From being called a gender bender, gender fraud and even a gady (guy + lady), the teenager had all forms of insults hurled at her."²⁸⁹ Hurst's deep body resolved the anxiety rooted in many of these observations by providing officials and concerned citizens alike with an answer based in science and medicine. Literally and figuratively speaking, there was more distance with his corporeal rhetoric. Second, the approach adopted by the Australian journalist also reasserted the authority of nature in sport, which Caster Semenya's participation in the 800 meter threatened to dissolve, thereby not only correcting her confusing body but also resolutely ending the issue in sport "writ large." The stabilization the natural "woman" suffered under her performance and equally under responses to her performance. With Hurst's intervention, however, nature's authority was reestablished in the way that he first illustrated Semenya's distance from it and

then closed that gap. In Hurst's words, the "line between male and female must be defended."²⁹⁰ Finally, the pains to which Hurst went to tell his "true story" and make sport consonant with the gender binary benefited him personally. Hurst became a journalistic hero. One admirer wrote, "Sometimes, it takes someone from outside to point out the obvious."²⁹¹

With Hurst's rhetoric, few ingredients, namely chromosomes, testosterone, and organs – all of particular types, levels, and functions – mattered with regard to how Caster Semenya's body registered in public imaginary. In shifting his attention to these particularities, Hurst advanced a specific mode of the body as I suggest, but also a specific definition of science, one with political traction, explanatory power, and resistance to others actors in her story, Semenya included. His definition of science was consonant with nature, in Latour's words, "conceived as a type of demonstration with no other goal than to bring in the 'impersonal laws' to stop controversies from boiling over."²⁹² The science Hurst couched his journalism in illustrated "a nonhistorical nature" and "a sustained mode of existence for facts."²⁹³ In short, he conceived of science as an anti-rhetoric. Similar to Chuene, this formulation of science evidenced a rhetoric against rhetoric, serving as a stopgap measure against Semenya's "excessive" body and her defenders, including the embattled Athletics South Africa leader. With Hurst's advocacy of a deep body premised on this specific science formulaic, he believed he did the "world" a favor in the form of an education about Caster Semenya's gender and sex.

The journalism that Hurst created to cover Semenya's story remained largely inseparable from South Africa's injurious colonial past. As a result, Hurst conveyed a particular notion of nation as well. While his science was supposedly an anti-rhetoric, it was anything but. It reflected a notion of science best described by Latour as Science No. 1. Latour suggests that, "It has only one use: 'Keep your mouth shut!'"²⁹⁴ Hurst used Science No. 1 as a tool to tell others –

namely all of “South Africa” – that he knew the “truth” about Semenya’s body. “Science No. 1 is taken, by its friends *as well* as by its foes, as all there is to say about science.”²⁹⁵ Hurst’s notion of science, far from a rhetoric against rhetoric, revealed itself as fraught with racial politics. Hurst’s emphasis on the deep body contingent on a particular (and peculiar) science compelled him to criticize South Africans for supporting her. Given this, with his journalism nation switched from a state-sanctioned natural body under Chuene to a colonial nation, whose citizens were apparently unenlightened about Science No. 1’s truth claims. Not only would this generalize support (or lack thereof) that was far more complex than Hurst portrayed, it would reassert his journalism in the contemporary moment as a neo-colonial power of the twenty-first century, in which deeds done in words reintroduced practices of oppression. The “scientific racism and pathologization of black bodies integral to apartheid,” therefore found a political foothold with Hurst’s writings on Caster Semenya.²⁹⁶ Using her body as an entry point into that past, Hurst attempted to discipline an entire nation for their political dealings and their ignorance of science as he saw it. The state-sanctioned natural body that Chuene peddled shifted with Hurst to a colonial body. Chuene spoke of a state-sanctioned natural body to support his cover-up while Hurst wrote of a colonial body to advance his notion of science as it pertained to the deep body.

The so-called revelations about Caster Semenya that Hurst was obsessively committed to publishing lends itself of course to his rhetoric and his political motivations, but much like Chuene, to a broader cultural history in which nude parades were replaced by chromosomal testing. This was his turn toward modernity, or what I call the laboratory turn. That history replayed itself with her story, largely because of Mike Hurst’s rhetoric in which he forced a shift

from the visual body to the deep body. The deep body was ushered in because of the science Hurst preferred and the historical technologies that underwrote it.

The science that Hurst relied on in his reporting mirrored the I.A.A.F.'s and I.O.C.'s turn toward science for sex testing in 1968. The turn toward the laboratory was years in the making, and when introduced, hailed as a far more efficient method for testing the "female athlete." Not only was the science more advanced than nude parades, the science of the actual practice was too. Shani and Barilan explain, "The discovery in the late 1950s of the human chromosomal makeup and the development of cheap, simple, and reliable methods of karyotyping [a test to examine chromosomes] enabled scientists, clinicians, and laboratory technicians to mass screen for karyotype profiles."²⁹⁷ With the implementation of chromosomal testing, I.A.A.F. and I.O.C. officials argued their practices were more evolved than the nude parade, more easily carried out, and more reliable. The nature of "woman" officials believed they once located with the nude parade was now doubly as good. The definitive answers that underwriters believed this technique facilitated carried an equal level of certainty with Hurst's deep body. Thus, through techniques that began with chromosomal analysis dating back to 1968, Hurst forwarded a logic and practice with the same vested interest in science focused on Caster Semenya. Although it would be easy to dismiss Hurst as one man obsessed with a particular moment in time for his personal reasons, his journalism carried social capital. For example, for his series of reports, Hurst won a high-profile prize from the Australian Sports Commission, which "rewards excellence in sports journalism and is Australia's only dedicated sports media award."²⁹⁸ It is certainly worth considering how the revelations of one writer produced such multifarious outcomes.

Hurst's journalism demonstrated once more that "women" are made in sport. By "exposing" Semenya through his writings, "he hoped to disempower, to use observation to bring

these unknown elements [of her body] under scientific control.”²⁹⁹ With the implementation of chromosomal testing and Hurst’s repurposing of this modern turn, “woman” in sport figured not as an ontological right but as a prize to be won by passing a certain test. Thus, far from an assumption, “women” in sport remained, under the guise of science and medicine, a distinctly rhetorical pursuit. Paralleling the nude parade, chromosomes would also rise and fall, proving to be a fallible arbiter of sex and eventually abandoned by the I.A.A.F. and the I.O.C. As one doctor observed in the pages of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, “the difficulty of infallible sex differentiation has produced a serious dilemma in international sport.”³⁰⁰ Hurst’s work underscores the paucity of science’s ability to prove nature. Instead, what it really demonstrates is rhetoric’s integral role in the production of “women.”

In what follows, I first explain sport’s switch to modernity in which chromosomal testing replaced nude parades in naturalizing hybrids into “women.” I then illustrate how Hurst repurposed this historical practice of sport in his journalism about Caster Semenya. As part of this refashioning, I explain that his particular notion of science and nation were integral to his turn toward the laboratory.

The Reign of Chromosomes

While it was believed that nude parades verified the thing the I.O.C. and the I.A.A.F. were after, they failed to have long-term traction. This was certainly due in large part to the way they were carried out. At the same time, the brouhaha over gender fraud left a forever imprint, and in its wake, a lasting suspicious eye aimed at the most elite, “female athletes.” The *Washington Post* chronicled, “in deciding to test for sex at the Olympics the [I.O.C.’s medical] commission considered the controversy at the European track and field championships in Budapest” in which certain feared imposters failed to show.³⁰¹ That decision would result in the

implementation of chromosomal testing or what was often called a buccal smear or Barr body test.

Chromosomes were perceived as a decidedly modern turn and ultimately a more evolved way of examining the bodies of those who hoped to qualify as “women.” They were nothing short “of a new power to judge.”³⁰² As Boylan wrote, “The test, which began as a crude physical inspection, has become more sophisticated over the years.”³⁰³ Cole too emphasized this narrative, writing that, “Between 1966 and 1992 gender verification took the form, first, of visual inspection, then, a more probing gynecological exam, and increasingly high-tech chromosomal analyses.”³⁰⁴ Robinson also explained that chromosomes truly ushered in a sense of modernity among athletes, administrators, and countries: “How wonderful it seemed for women when, in 1968, the International Olympic Committee (I.O.C.) introduced the buccal smear test ... at the Olympics in Grenoble and Mexico. Now all they had to do was supply a sample of tissue scraped from the cheek to receive their ‘femininity card,’ a piece of identification bearing their photo, height, weight, and accreditation number.”³⁰⁵ The card itself was completely the product of modernity. It marked the “membership of a homogenous social body” and “play[ed] a part in [the] classification” of “women.”³⁰⁶

When chromosomal testing was rolled out, it was celebrated as a major, full-proof advancement. This form of testing was thought to represent a “more scientific method of assessing sex.”³⁰⁷ The editor of the *I.O.C. magazine*, Monique Berlioux, editorialized, “This will be the first time that such a control will be carried out, thanks to the experts named by the I.O.C. and approved by the International Sports Medicine Federation.”³⁰⁸ According to Berlioux, “The chromosome formula indicates quite definitively the sex of a person and, some years ago, it was

discovered that a simple saliva test will reveal its composition.”³⁰⁹ That saliva sample, she promised, “will be taken and analyzed in laboratories.”³¹⁰

For administrators in sport, it wasn’t just a change in the name of progress but efficiency that was needed as well. With nude parades, it was difficult to test all competitors. Each potential “woman” had to line up, strip down, and be evaluated, an arduous practice indeed. But by 1968, the I.A.A.F. and now the I.O.C. were firm: “all women athletes would be subjected to a test to prove their femininity.”³¹¹ Officials lauded the efficiency of chromosomal testing. They were much more expedient and yielded a definitive outcome to boot. The head of the I.O.C.’s medical commission noted, “There is a very simple test to determine if the athlete is right or wrong.”³¹² Doctors touted the advance as “a simple aid to the determination of the truer sex of an individual.”³¹³ It is perhaps unsurprising then that 1968 was dubbed the inauguration of “the modern era of gender testing.”³¹⁴

Medical knowledge of the body was part of the progress narrative that chromosomes were attached to in the late 1960s. Early coverage of the chromosomal sex test would explain, for example, “There are 16 chromosomes in the human body, which are referred to medically as XX’s for women and XY’s for men.”³¹⁵ Again and again the logic of the XX/XY chromosomal configuration was circulated. The *Washington Post* wrote, “The chromosomes in the human body are referred to medically as XX’s for women and XY’s for men. If a test shows an imbalance of these chromosomes, a woman athlete can be declared ineligible.”³¹⁶ The *Chicago Tribune* reported, “Men and women have 22 identical chromosomes, but men have one chromosome more. Under Olympic rules, any athlete entered as a woman who has the extra chromosome is disqualified.”³¹⁷ The *Los Angeles Times* detailed more of the same: “Men and women have 22 identical chromosomes but men have one chromosome more. Under I.O.C.

rules, any athlete entered as a woman who has the extra chromosome is disqualified.”³¹⁸ Into the 1970s, the same discourse continued, almost unmodified. Shirley wrote, for example, “Each human cell contains 23 pairs of chromosomes, which carry genes and determine genetic makeup. The genetic female is determined by the presence of two sex chromosomes (X) and the genetic male by one X and smaller chromosome (Y).”³¹⁹

Implicitly all this talk of chromosomes indicated that the body was more complicated than originally thought, and thus, should be subjected to more than what nude parades could capture. That is, a surface-level knowledge. Chromosomes revealed the body had more dimensions and contours to sex. Still, even with the complexity that chromosomes conceded, they were equally believed to provide more clarity than nude parades, and thus, serve as an arbiter of fairness in sport. With chromosomal revelations of “abnormality,” officials learned whether or not “female athletes” were actually monsters in earnest, and thus in possession of an “unfair advantage.” A former member of the I.O.C.’s medical commission explained what this monster might look like: “If this person were to compete as a female, an unfair advantage over the female competitors might be gained because of the effect of the male hormone in producing greater strength and muscle mass.”³²⁰

The perceived clarity of chromosomes coincided with anti-doping measures in sport, which were equally reliant on the laboratory. To be precise, chromosomal testing emerged in concert with anti-doping measures. Perhaps not surprisingly, doping concerns like gender and sex concerns were driven by anxieties over bodily purity in sport. Thus, just as sex testing in the laboratory was introduced to athletes and the world, so were measures against doping. The *Washington Post* reported, “Starting with the 1968 Olympic Games, athletes will have to sign entry application oaths that they have not and will not use ‘pep pills,’ narcotics, drugs which

enlarge blood vessels, alcohol or anabolic steroids – male sex hormones which build up muscles.”³²¹ Along with chromosomal testing, anti-steroid measures tried to establish pure as well as definitively sexed bodies. With the advancement they procured, chromosomal testing was welcomed as a major equalizer on the playing field. The head of the I.O.C.’s medical commission, Prince Alexandre de Merode, argued comprehensive sex tests were a key mechanism for keeping out frauds, whether of sex and gender or steroids. “We are trying to help the world,” he claimed. “We think that under our present regulations it is difficult if not impossible for cheating – on the feminine side or doping – to succeed.”³²² All of these measures underscore the great effort officials undertook to secure what they perceived as a natural body, and natural “women” especially.

Chromosomal testing was premised on specific mechanisms in which “women” were made with “techniques possessing their own specificity.”³²³ Known as the Barr body test (or buccal smear), the exam swabbed “the athlete’s mouth” to look for “Barr bodies during microscopic examination.”³²⁴ In 1967, the *New York Times* spelled out the technique’s specifics: “During the examination ... a skin scraping from each contestant is studied under a microscope to determine the number and type of chromosomes in her cells. If the number does not meet the prescribed standard, the contestant is declared ineligible.”³²⁵ Under chromosomal analysis competitors were often “weighed and measured” and “then one of four pathologists” would take “a small plastic scalpel and scrape the inside of the athlete’s mouth.”³²⁶ That scrape sample would be examined under a microscope in which “The pathologist takes the smear and makes a stain ... A tiny spot in the nucleus of a corpuscle indicates a female; a blank nucleus indicates a male.”³²⁷ The whole process took “about five minutes.”³²⁸ The results too came with a specific directive: “When a woman athlete is tested and shows an abnormal result, she must either

withdraw from competition or undergo a battery of gynecological and physical exams to decide if she is ‘female enough’ to compete.”³²⁹ When competitions fell under the jurisdiction of the Barr Body, “women” were required to be “card-carrying” members of their sex and failure to produce their femininity card required them to retake the test.³³⁰

The shift to chromosomes was perceived as a fairer treatment of athletes and a more definitive explanation of their bodies. Fairer it might have been, but a truer arbiter of sex it was not. The idea that chromosomes definitively reveal a body’s sex is not a straightforward matter. Simply put, “[T]he aim to verify women’s sex premised on the presence of an XX chromosome pattern has been shown to be flawed.”³³¹ Testing like the Barr Body, “does not necessarily map on to physiological or phenotypic sex, which are the only kinds of sexual identity that confer a sporting advantage (and there are many confounding conditions, as people can be born with just one or three or more sex chromosomes, so that combinations like XXY or XO are quite possible.”³³² Alice Dreger clarifies, “[T]he biology of sex is a lot more complicated than the average fan believes. Many think you can simply look at a person’s ‘sex chromosomes.’ If the person has XY chromosomes you declare him a man. If XX, she’s a woman. Right? Wrong.”³³³ Chromosomes are not always authoritative and can sometimes complicate rather than illuminate one’s “true” sex.

The Chromosomal Era

Chromosomal tests were supposed to be carried out “without any fanfare,” unlike the nude parade.³³⁴ It was suggested that, “If an athlete fails, the information will be passed to the team doctor by the head of the medical commission.”³³⁵ Upon successfully completing chromosomal testing competitors were issued femininity cards. Femininity cards were, in de Merode’s words, “applicable to any future world competitions.”³³⁶ The “female athlete” was

subjected to severe gender administration. With this turn toward modernity, bureaucracy took the place of sensationalism in sex testing.

After the first official go-around with chromosomal testing, de Merode told the press, “It was a great relief. We were all very satisfied with how smoothly everything went.”³³⁷ Their machinery was efficient as it was successful. The first use of chromosomal testing, just like nude parades, found no monsters among the ranks. “According to de Merode, no extra chromosomes were found.”³³⁸ The *Los Angeles Times* suggested that first chromosomal test could be remembered thusly: “One girl blushed and almost balked. Another wasn’t asked but pleaded until she got it. All passed with flying colors. That, in a nutshell, is what happened during the first sex tests for female athletes in Olympic history, according to Prince Alexandre de Merode.”³³⁹ Despite de Merode’s picture perfect story, chromosomal testing did not occur that first time without accusations of mannishness. Overseeing their implementation, “the chief tester told reporters that the women he tested showed various signs of masculinization because of sports, and that sports had generally made them ugly.”³⁴⁰

When they were first practiced, doctors and athletics officials raised some issues with chromosomal procedures. Their necessity seemed impractical. Couldn’t one look and fully know? Dr. Clayton Thomas, a former member of the U.S. Olympic Medical Committee told *Women-Sports* magazine, “A lady can not be a lady and not know it.”³⁴¹ Others quibbled over procedure. When word got out in Grenoble, France that only every fifth “female athlete” underwent inspection, tempers flared over the possibility of misfits going unchecked. The *Washington Post* reported, “Officials who refused to be named said the system of random selection did nothing to solve the problem since it still left too many of the girls unchecked.”³⁴² An anonymous official explained that this was an all or nothing procedure, and testing cannot

proceed under the notion of “Go down the list and pick them out of the blue.”³⁴³ Gender was to be administratively managed, they argued. The unnamed official lamented, “This makes a mockery of what these tests are supposed to accomplish. It is ludicrous.”³⁴⁴ It turned out that the one-in-five rule was followed for practical rather than ethical concerns, an administrative error of sorts. In fact, “Official sources said one reason only 20 per cent were being tested had to do with the cost of tests and the facilities they require.”³⁴⁵ This procedural defect was corrected at the summer Olympic games following Grenoble. On February 25, 1968, the I.A.A.F. declared, “All female competitors at the Mexico City Olympics will have to undergo a sex test.”³⁴⁶ The Marquess of Exeter, the British president of the I.A.A.F., told the press, “It’s the only solution and the only way to remove all doubts and suspicions.”³⁴⁷

The second time they were used at the 1968 games in Mexico City, compliance was once again almost universal. All sports but swimming yielded to their authority. In Mexico City, de Merode “told newsmen: ‘There are 962 women involved in these Olympics. Every federation, except the one involving swimming, has agreed to voluntary tests.’”³⁴⁸ Swimming’s international federation protested their usage, citing the visibility of the external body as its evidence for why swimmers need not comply. The *New York Times* reported of a “dispute between the medical commission of the International Olympic Committee and the International Swimming Federation over sex tests.”³⁴⁹ De Merode eventually got his way though reassuring the press that, “The last of the girl swimmers took the test.”³⁵⁰

Like nude parades, the conspicuous absence of certain athletes once again lent positive affirmation to chromosomally based sex testing. Supposedly, fears of the tests kept mannish “female athletes” at bay. At Grenoble, “There [were] rumors around the press center for days that at least one Russian woman who came to Grenoble failed the sex test. The rumors gathered

strength when the Russian did not show up for the event she'd entered."³⁵¹ Notable absences included Soviet Union champion Claudia Boyarskikh, Bulgarian champion Krastana Stoewa, and Austrian champion Erika Schinegger. Each one of their absences from the Grenoble games were supposedly linked to "uncertainty about being able to pass a sex test."³⁵² These conspicuous absences coupled with an unrelenting rumor mill about Soviet athletes only increased chromosomal testing's authority and their general acceptance. "[I]t was believed that Communist countries in Eastern Europe were using male athletes in women's competitions."³⁵³ Boylan suggested that such rumors could be substantiated, at least to a degree: "The truth was that some of the Eastern European athletes had been on a regimen of testosterone and steroids."³⁵⁴

Chromosomal testing, like nude parades, was met with mixed emotions, both of affirmation and downright anger. One reporter noted, "In some corners, the International Olympic Committee's sex test is considered controversial and degrading, but" others perceived "chromosome analysis as a welcome annoyance."³⁵⁵ Many welcomed modernity with open arms. Whereas nude parades were dubbed "humiliating for athletes," with chromosomal analysis "athletes don't seem to mind."³⁵⁶ On the eve of their official implementation in Grenoble, France, British skier Bunny Fields told the press, "I think it's a ball, really. Personally, I can't wait to take the test."³⁵⁷ The captain of the British Alpine team voiced their shared sentiment: "We find it all terribly amusing. We aren't worried."³⁵⁸ Enduring fears about Communist hybrids infiltrating events informed compliance. For example, American slalom skier, Wendy Allen, explained while at first "We never thought about it [sex testing] in our sport," when she "read about some husky Russian woman beating our women in some track and field event," the tests seemed warrantable.³⁵⁹

The press helped to extend the argument that compliance with sex testing was particularly resonant among the most “feminine” athletes, such as “women skiers, among the most beautiful and feminine.”³⁶⁰ Apparently notably feminine skiers were “amused and chagrined by directives that they must be subjected to tests to determine if they are really women.”³⁶¹ According to the *Los Angeles Times*, this standpoint was shared by competitors like slalom skier Karen Budge, “a willowy blonde, 5-foot-8, with the figure of a Las Vegas showgirl.”³⁶² Even as the tests were affirmed, the legacy of reading the body visually prompted the press and participants to wonder if they were really necessary. In this sense, the sophisticated measure of chromosomes could not be severed from the visual body. “Carolyn Finneran, assistant manager of the U.S. men’s and women’s swimming teams, put it this way: ‘They think it’s quite funny. We [swimmers] can’t hide too much.’”³⁶³

While sex testing became almost routine – like “brushing your teeth” as one competitor found – over the years some athletes found them unsettling. Competitors who underwent chromosomal analysis, like javelin thrower Kate Schmidt, suggested, “It doesn’t hurt.”³⁶⁴ “But,” she interjected, “it’s so stupid to have some old, weird man telling you you’re a lady. It’s really bizarre.”³⁶⁵ Jane Frederick, a “U.S. pentathlon star,” said of the tests, “The official explanation is that this test protects us from imposters and from women who are really men, whatever that means. No, I don’t believe it. I think they’re really saying, ‘You’re so good, we just can’t believe you’re a woman. So prove it.’”³⁶⁶

Proponents of chromosomes were vindicated when its first victim fell from grace. Polish runner Eva Klobukowska was the first woman to officially fail chromosomal testing, underscoring the notion that sex was indeed a prize to be won. Her story constituted “the first known case of a woman athlete being ruled out on these grounds.”³⁶⁷ When Klobukowska failed

the exam, examiners famously declared that she “had one chromosome too many for her to be declared a woman for the purposes of athletic competition.”³⁶⁸ Klobukowska’s one chromosome too many also led authorities to categorize her as a “superfemale,” what was then dubbed a “common name for a birth defect characterized by the presence of three female sex chromosomes instead of two.”³⁶⁹ According to the *Los Angeles Times*, superfemales “have the appearance of any normal female. However, a normal female has two X chromosomes. A normal male has one X and one Y chromosome. A superfemale has three X chromosomes.”³⁷⁰ Eva’s “superfemale-ness” – her hybridity – ultimately disqualified her. Due to Klobukowska’s “failure,” “the I.A.A.F. decided ... to withdraw ratification of all victories, medals, and records by Eva,” including “the two medals she won in the 1964 Olympics.”³⁷¹ Disgraced, the Polish runner declared, “It’s a dirty and stupid thing to do to me. I know what I am and how I feel. I’ve been very aware of all the unhealthy sensationalism in the press but I wasn’t expecting anything like this.”³⁷² Klobukowska even refused “to be interviewed by the Western press, blaming journalists for having created a ‘sex test scandal’ about her.”³⁷³ The claim to identity and the claim of invasive journalism would sound all too familiar with Caster Semenya. Klobukowska was later purified of her hybridity in part by that same press when the *New York Times* followed up on her, reporting that she “is still single and lives alone in a large apartment in downtown Warsaw ... [S]he dates men, and the possibility of marriage remains.”³⁷⁴ They added, “Though a little plumper than she was in 1967, Miss Klobukowska still runs and swims.”³⁷⁵

Just as soon as Klobukowska was publicly shamed and stripped of her titles, criticism of the I.A.A.F. ensued. Maher lampooned their handling of Klobukowska’s case: “The feeling here is that the amateur federation should be commended for handling this case about as tastefully as it might have been handled by a panel of apes.”³⁷⁶ He argued, “[T]he most disturbing thing about

the case is the manner in which it was publicized by the amateur federation. Surely one of the most humiliating things that can happen to a girl is to have someone declare publicly that she is not really a girl but some kind of freak. Worse yet, the federation announced that it was punishing Eva by rescinding her records, thereby leaving the impression she had committed a crime by carrying one too many chromosomes.”³⁷⁷ Outraged, the Polish government voiced condemnation as well, granting her “a special scholarship to the Warsaw Higher School of Statistics and Economic Planning and other assistance” for her ordeal.³⁷⁸ Klobukowska would become a touchstone for sex test “failure.” Shirley wrote, the “Polish sprinter was the first, and some say the only, athlete to publicly flunk the femininity test.”³⁷⁹

Klobukowska’s story helped ignite murmurings over the fallibility of chromosomal testing. Murmurings transformed into a discourse in earnest in the 1970s. During that time, it was suggested that chromosomal testing did not yield the certainty its implementers claimed it did. Boylan noted that, “dozens of female athletes tested in this [chromosomal] manner have tested ‘positively’ for maleness.”³⁸⁰ Yet, they were still “women.” He explained why: “these tests don’t measure ‘maleness’ or ‘femaleness.’ They measure – and not always reliably – the presence of a Y chromosome, or Y chromosomal material, which no small number of females have.”³⁸¹ This sentiment would be echoed again and again and what exactly makes a “woman” would only become more contested. Joyce Luiken and David Popiel wrote in to the *New York Times*, “The chromosomal sex test is too narrow in focus. The determinants of one’s sex seem to include such things as genital structure, hormonal balance, psychological orientation and secondary sex characteristics. A true sex test should encompass all of them. One danger of the single-criterion test is that the single criterion chosen may depend on the people who do the choosing and the result that they desire.”³⁸²

Arguments against chromosomal testing intensified throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Some in the medical community led this charge arguing that there were numerous variations in chromosomal makeup, not all of which or any of which actually conferred an advantage. For example, British medical professional Liz Ferris argued, “All sex testing does is single out women with chromosome abnormalities but who have no physical advantages in any way over the model female.”³⁸³ Contrarians of chromosomal sex testing argued that determining sex required far more than could fit in a petri dish under a microscope. In Ferris’s words, “The sexual difference between people with different chromosomes is not a simple thing and several women have had to withdraw from international sport because of it.”³⁸⁴ These arguments however would always be in competition with claims for chromosomal sex testing. Track athlete Lorraine Moller, for example, recalled that even in the 1970’s, “there were still plenty of stories being bandied about that were hard to ignore about how excessive exercise would turn girls into men.”³⁸⁵ In other words, the rationale to continue chromosomes was not dead just yet. Fears were always lurking that more hybrids could surface at any point.

Objections to chromosomes were brought to bear again in 1985 with the story of Spanish hurdler María José Martínez Patiño. Patiño, like Klobukowska, became a touchstone story about failing chromosomal testing and chromosomal testing’s failures. Anderson chronicled, “One day before the 1985 World University Games in Kobe, Japan, Spanish hurdler Maria Patiño spat in a cup and ruined her career.”³⁸⁶ When Patiño was chromosomally tested and her “test came back abnormal,” she was instantly declared a hybrid.³⁸⁷ After the test, Patiño “faked an injury and flew home in disgrace. She was banned from international competition, her scholarship was revoked, and she was expelled from her athletic housing. Her boyfriend stopped calling, and her wins were removed from many record books.”³⁸⁸ This was years apart from Klobukowska and yet

Klobukowska all over again. Not dissimilar from her, Patiño argued she knew who and what she was, telling the press, “It was obviously devastating to me. I had devoted my life to sport. But it was never a question for me of my femininity. In the eyes of God and medicine I am a woman.”³⁸⁹

Unlike Klobukowska, however, she fought back. Patiño “was convinced that science could show how ludicrous gender testing was, and that people could be convinced that her genetic disposition did not give her an advantage.”³⁹⁰ After years of arguing and money poured into challenging the tests, Patiño learned she was born with a genetic defect, androgen insensitivity. This meant “she was born with X and Y chromosomes; but she nevertheless developed as a female, except for the absence of ovaries and a uterus.”³⁹¹ Patiño’s condition made “her body unable to respond to testosterone, the hormone that triggers the development of male genitalia and typically male secondary sexual characteristics such as body hair.”³⁹² This also meant, contrary to popular wisdom, that she held “no athletic benefit from the condition.”³⁹³ Androgen insensitivity among other conditions exposed major flaws in chromosomal testing. Patiño was eventually reintroduced into elite competition. In 1988 her “case was argued successfully, and her ‘womanhood’ was reinstated. She was allowed to compete again.”³⁹⁴ Her case proved pivotal in jumpstarting “the I.A.A.F. into convening another work group ... to devise recommendations for a better system.”³⁹⁵

Still, even with objections to chromosomes, and stories like Patiño’s, they continued to rule in the 1980s and 1990s. In 1984, the *Los Angeles Times* reported, “Every woman competing in the Olympic Games must undergo a sex test.”³⁹⁶ That test was still chromosomally sanctioned. In 1985, Anderson wrote, “For the past 20 years, sports doctors have tested a female athlete’s gender by looking under a microscope for the telltale second X in the 23rd pair of

chromosomes.”³⁹⁷ One key difference by this time was that there was even less fanfare. There was a strong emphasis on conducting chromosomal testing under complete secrecy. Still heading up the I.O.C.’s medical commission, de Merode, “told a news conference [in July 1984] that the I.O.C. has taken elaborate precautions to ensure that any female athlete who fails the chromosome test will ‘quietly disappear’ from the Games without publicity.”³⁹⁸ There was far more of a concerted effort than before to shroud the sex testing in secrecy because of the implications quite obviously associated with identity revelations and the measures used to ascertain them. De Merode promised, “The whole procedure is being conducted in absolute secret. We must avoid pointing a finger at someone who has a problem of this nature, because it would create a lot of unfavorable publicity, the effects of which could destroy her personality.”³⁹⁹ He continued, “The shock of discovering a sexual abnormality (through the tests) would be serious enough for the individual concerned. It would be scandalous if we added to the human suffering of such an event by publicizing it.”⁴⁰⁰ With efforts to confound the publicness of identity with the so-called insular and private nature of sex testing, chromosomes remained in use and in demand.

Along with calls for increased secrecy, the transparency of chromosomes was conceded in part by the addition of more tests. De Merode told the press, “If the first test indicates an abnormal chromosome count, further tests are conducted, and finally, there is a clinical examination.”⁴⁰¹ Still, “[A]fter dozens of misdiagnoses such as Patiño’s, opposition to the technique” was “impossible to ignore.”⁴⁰² As a result, in 1992, the I.O.C. implemented a new technique for naturalizing the “female athlete,” thought to be even more modern than the last one. The new test, known as polymerase chain reaction (PCR) “uses DNA ‘primers’ – fragments

of genetic materials that correspond to parts of the Y chromosome – to search for the presence of male genes.”⁴⁰³

Like chromosomal testing, PCR was perceived controversially and drew “the opposition of several prominent scientists.”⁴⁰⁴ Some researchers suggested “like its predecessor, [it] misses the point: Two X chromosomes are not the only hallmark of a woman ... and prohibiting women with other genetic configurations is discriminatory.”⁴⁰⁵ At the 1992 Barcelona summer games, a Spanish geneticist refused to perform the test. “PRC, they argue[d], is vulnerable to contamination; it amplifies and identifies whatever genetic material it finds – even that of the person conducting the test.”⁴⁰⁶ Likewise, Ferguson-Smith argued, “the chromosomes are really irrelevant. PCR is just really a more sophisticated way of looking at the same wrong thing.”⁴⁰⁷ At the 1992 winter games, more medical detractors came forward. In Albertville, France “The French medical association said ... that new sex tests being carried out [the PRC] on women athletes arriving in Albertville for the Winter Olympics were incomplete and could in effect disqualify women who could indeed bear children.”⁴⁰⁸ The association also argued while “the test ... revealed much more on a patient than the previous tests that sought to insure that women carried the ‘double-X’ female chromosome ... its reliability was still in dispute.”⁴⁰⁹ Even under a new technique, the reliability of the chromosome remained elusive. Despite the fact that officials looked to science and medicine to give them clear-cut answers for administering gender and sex, it only gave them options, not certainty. Like the buccal smear, the PCR failed to demarcate the natural “female” body. Newspapers indeed reported, “Research has shown that there are several ways in which women can have an unusual genetic makeup ... and still be what society considers female.”⁴¹⁰

Despite the emphasis on secrecy, the struggle over making “women” became increasingly visible in public discourse. Scientists were increasingly “divided on just where one should draw the line” since “a growing body of disquieting evidence” revealed “that none of the conventional tests used in sporting events are conclusive.”⁴¹¹ The most prominent voice opposing sex testing emerged as Albert de la Chapelle, a geneticist from the University of Helsinki. Since the early 1970s, he “spearheaded a movement to get the I.O.C. to reconsider its sex test policy. He reason[ed] that if its intent is to exclude men and women whose body structure or muscle strength confer an ‘unfair male-like advantage, then the buccal smear is the wrong test. It catches women with genetic abnormalities bearing no relation to physical advantages.”⁴¹² While officials feared certain chromosomal makeups confounded nature, de la Chapelle routinely voiced criticism in the press and medical journals, arguing, for example, “There are a lot of women out there with a Y chromosome and there are a lot of men without a Y.”⁴¹³ He concluded, “What these tests do is leave behind tragedies.”⁴¹⁴

De la Chapelle’s posturing drew the attention of the I.A.A.F. and the organization’s admission that perhaps other measures were needed, or even more controversially, no measures at all. “In November 1990, de la Chapelle and other prominent experts were invited to Monte Carlo ... to recommend a new method of confirming sex.”⁴¹⁵ De la Chapelle and his colleagues “concluded that the only reliable and dignified solution was a full medical exam of both male and female athletes that would include – along with other tests – a visual inspection of the genitals.”⁴¹⁶ As a result of the Monte Carlo meeting, “In January 1991, the I.A.A.F. decided to abandon the chromosome tests” all together.⁴¹⁷ This marked the end of their universal testing era. The I.O.C. took a different path, arguing their right to universally test all “female athletes” with

the PCR method that the organization believed was more reliable, definitive, and efficient than the Barr body.

Chromosomal Journalism and Caster Semenya

The conceit between the natural body and the rhetorical body that the I.O.C. and the I.A.A.F. struggled over was brought to bear with Mike Hurst's journalism. On the one hand, Hurst's reading of Semenya demonstrated an evolution in the instantiations of Semenya's body. At the very least, he acknowledged Semenya's hybridity, something Chuene never did. This point was evidence in Hurst's descriptions of Semenya as a "gender misfit," "sexually ambiguous," an "intersexual superstar," and simply "controversial."⁴¹⁸ In other words, where Chuene took the surface as determinative, Hurst saw the surface as the misleading locus of difference. Hurst knew that if he was going to naturalize Caster Semenya, something more would be required.

Echoing the laboratory turn of 1968, Hurst took up that something more in his work. His journalism effectively turned toward modernity in its approach to Semenya's body and the definition of science that supported it. This particular move got Hurst back to nature and to the nature of what makes a "woman" a "woman." Equally as important, Hurst's notion of nation shifted as well. Whereas Chuene propagated a state-sanctioned natural body, Hurst utilized a colonial body, positioning South Africa as part and parcel of a "dark continent" ignorant of science and its clarifying properties. To Hurst, Caster Semenya was "the world's most controversial athlete" because of her body.⁴¹⁹ He took it then as his job to get to the bottom of that controversy by naturalizing Semenya from hybrid to "woman." In doing this, he believed he would resolve a moment of gender ambiguity, a major crisis for sport in dealing with a deviant body, and boost his own journalistic credentials. The crisis resided in the unnaturalness of

Semenya's body and the inability of any person, policy, institution, or nation to quickly resolve it. In sum, Hurst argued Semenya's body could be naturalized by peeling back her skin and looking inside for particular contents. The end result was that Semenya had no claim – and certainly not a natural one – to a femininity card.

The rise and fall of chromosomes was equally evident in Hurst's journalism. Although Hurst utilized the laboratory turn as a mechanism of naturalization, it was not without struggle. Struggle came in the form of competing arguments levied against him, and even his own knowledge, all of which made it impossible for the rhetoric not to shine through in his reporting. It was difficult to ignore, in other words, that Hurst's notion of science was equally a rhetoric in the service of a particular agenda. As Crincoli detailed, "The days of the strict chromosomal approach are behind us, as the I.A.A.F. and the I.O.C. have struggled to protect competition in sports that is based on binary categories of male or female at a time when there is increasing medical knowledge that people are not always so easily categorized."⁴²⁰ Yet, despite its datedness, simplification of the body, and inaccuracy, this is exactly the kind of political machinery Hurst emphasized in his work. It enabled him to advance a particular notion of science and nation with Semenya's case as the focal point.

A Deep Body for Fairness

Hurst evoked his deep body on September 11, 2009, when he reported, "The *Daily Telegraph* can reveal that gender verification tests by the sport's governing body have revealed evidence that Semenya has no womb or ovaries and has both male and female sexual organs."⁴²¹ Like those who came before her – Klobukowska and Patiño among others – Hurst used the so-called results of Semenya's gender verification tests to disqualify her from competition by the unnaturalness found inside her body. Thus, after reporting the results he detailed that the I.A.A.F.

was poised “to disqualify Semenya from future events and advise her to have immediate surgery because her condition carries grave health risks.”⁴²²

With his journalism, Hurst conveyed that Caster Semenya could be known through medicine, science, and most of all, her body’s inner contents. He indicated this much with one of his headlines, “Semenya’s Gender Stripped Bare after Tests.”⁴²³ Hurst consistently tied bodily knowledge and Semenya’s identity to these contents. He reported, “A source close to an investigation being conducted by the International Association of Athletics Federations, the sport’s governing body, said the 18-year-old returned three times the amount of testosterone.”⁴²⁴ Days later and weeks later, his commitment to this reading only intensified. “Three times the amount of testosterone” eventually transformed into a “crisis over the gender of Caster Semenya.”⁴²⁵

If Semenya’s body at first garnered suspicion, Hurst rather quickly turned her into a hybrid using her body’s component parts. Like 1968, he turned toward science and medicine for answers, and in particular, toward the microscope for the presence of certain hormones. Hurst’s reliance on hormones, and not chromosomes explicitly, nevertheless intimated chromosomal knowledge. More specifically, he seemed to suggest that Semenya had an XY chromosomal makeup and that her body responded to the testosterone that such a makeup conferred. Thus, the biological formula that Hurst used was largely premised on presence or absence as well as coding hormonal and organ visibility or invisibility as the measure of physical advantage, a gauge of fairness, and a detection device for unnatural hybrids in the ranks among “women.”

Not dissimilar from the connection administrators made between chromosomal makeup and advantage, Hurst foregrounded his certainty of Semenya’s unfair advantage on the basis of hormones. Arguing that Semenya was indeed in possession of testosterone excess, Hurst levied

charges of gender fraud. Connecting attributes of hybridity to Semenya, he explained, “Testosterone is a male hormone with a primary task of building muscle bulk. It also produces body hair and a deep voice.”⁴²⁶ Semenya had a deep voice. Semenya’s deep body then (at least partially) confirmed the transgressive characteristics that its surface bore. Furthermore, also not dissimilar from the connection administrators made between organs and advantage, Hurst argued was yet another telltale sign of hybridity. He again produced his evidence: “[T]ests revealed the South African world champion has no womb or ovaries.”⁴²⁷ The merger of hormones and organs was conclusive in proving Semenya’s fraud. With that, Hurst made clear, “I.A.A.F. testing, which included various scans, has revealed she has internal testes – the male sexual organs which produce testosterone.”⁴²⁸

Given these component parts of the body and the fraud ingredient in their presence or absence, Hurst believed he got to the bottom of the Semenya problem. With a scientifically based technique of naturalization, her sex could finally be known, a matter of fact and a body made by the tests but never before them. Hurst concluded, “She is a hermaphrodite, someone with both male and female sexual characteristics.”⁴²⁹ By explaining Semenya’s body vis-à-vis these particularities, the confusion was resultantly resolved. Using the deep body, Hurst freely and without restraint identified Caster Semenya as a “hermaphrodite,” an identity she consistently rejected.⁴³⁰

Hurst reasoned that his focus on Semenya was for her own protection, protection from unfairness in sport and protection from the burdens of her own body. Fairness for him was clearly on the table. Hurst reported, “[T]hey have not ruled out stripping Semenya of her 800m world championships gold medal.”⁴³¹ While his journalism was not the final adjudicator of fairness, his work still sought a similar verdict. Hurst claimed Semenya was a danger to herself.

He reported, “the I.A.A.F. requested A.S.A. withdraw Semenya after the [preliminary] heats of the 800m [in Berlin], suggesting she fake an injury, for fear that when inevitably she won the world title she would be exposed to potentially humiliating international scrutiny.”⁴³² She was equally a danger to all competitors. Based on Semenya’s body’s component parts, Hurst was sure Semenya would “jeopardize the career of anyone she runs against.”⁴³³ Not only was she a danger unto herself and therefore in need of protection, all potential “women” required protection from a hybrid invasion. That protection was paternalistically extended to Athletics South Africa as well. Hurst vowed the organization “believes it now knows a lot more about who Semenya is and has a duty of care to the South African as well as every other female competitor.”⁴³⁴

Making the Science Connection

In his work, Hurst made an explicit effort to transfer the authority of Caster Semenya’s body from Semenya to scientists. By the transfer of authority, the chromosomal era of sport was again foregrounded in which a turn toward science and medicine sidelined the personal writing of one’s corporeality in favor of organizationally administering gender and sex. It was ultimately the I.A.A.F.’s “extensive knowledge of the tests” that mattered, not a personal accounting of one’s body.⁴³⁵ The group’s “medical commission” was “crucial to resolving the biggest crisis facing the sport” and nothing but “obliged to initiate their own gender verification tests.”⁴³⁶

Hurst’s vantage point proved once again that “women” in sport are the product of rhetoric. In his words, the I.A.A.F.’s “extensive knowledge” from the tests “set down in black and white a working definition of what constitutes a woman, for the purposes of competition.”⁴³⁷ In that capacity, they would determine if she was “more biologically male than female.”⁴³⁸ They would “rule on Semenya’s case based on whether her ‘conditions ... accord no advantage over

other females' after consulting a gynecologist, an endocrinologist, a psychologist, an internal medicine specialist and a gender expert."⁴³⁹ The outcome of these results, he explained, would then be "given ... to an independent panel of experts, promising to provide a verdict."⁴⁴⁰ A whole host of actors helped in making "women," none of who were Caster Semenya. When Semenya objected to this plan, Hurst condemned her for her failure to "cooperate with the International Association of Athletics Federations."⁴⁴¹ It wasn't just that Caster Semenya would not "cooperate" but that she specifically would not defer to "the medical test results" or "submit to further gender examination."⁴⁴²

At stake here is not whether or not experts can produce knowledge about gender and sex. As I have demonstrated, historically doctors and scientists have done just that in sport and beyond. The key point is what and who is at stake as a result of these productions. Conveyed through Hurst's rhetoric is the notion that these scientists were somehow different. Separate, isolated, privileged, he suggested they were arbiters of nature much to the demise of Caster Semenya. The ahistorical quality he granted to scientists meant they could have been lifted from 1968 or 2009. It wouldn't have made a difference because expert knowledge still figured by the same practices, same logic, and same outcomes.

Hurst redoubled his efforts to connect Semenya to hybridity by using the issue of doping. In both cases, he reasoned that the possibility of a deviant, unnatural Semenya warranted science's intervention. He premised this connection on Athletics South Africa doctor, Dr. Ekkart Arbeit. He alleged that, "A.S.A. has employed Dr. Arbeit, the former East German head coach and Stasi spy" who "has raised suspicions as to whether doping may be involved."⁴⁴³ Arbeit, he claimed, "was indeed fully in control of Semenya's training preparation."⁴⁴⁴ According to Hurst, a source told him "Caster trained with Ekkart while she was at the training camp in Germany [for

the 2009 World Championships].”⁴⁴⁵ It was Athletics South Africa’s ignorance of science (and yet their duplicitous relationship with it through Arbeit) and Arbeit’s doping past that illustrated the unnaturalness ingredient in Semenya’s win. Hurst explained, “Leonard Chuene and his equally ruthless retinue had devised a plan with their coaching consultant Ekkart Arbeit ... that their intersex superstar would win a gold medal in Berlin and the burden of proof ... would be on the International Association of Athletics Federations.”⁴⁴⁶ With the doping accusation, albeit an unfounded one, Hurst deepened Semenya’s connection to a “female athlete” in need of naturalization.

Just as athletes were stripped of their medals and disqualified from competition – often permanently – Hurst’s scientific preoccupation led him to suggest Semenya faced a similar fate. He warned that she “could be stripped of the gold medal she won in Berlin.”⁴⁴⁷ When he was not suggesting what could be, his own journalism performed similar work, disqualifying Semenya on the same grounds that he hoped or feared the I.A.A.F. would use by recourse to science and medicine. Klobukowska had “one chromosome too many.” Patiño did as well. With Semenya, allegations of excessive testosterone, the absence of ovaries, and the presence of undescended testicles, once more marked a hybrid body fit for punishment. It mattered very little that Hurst lacked the material power to actually disqualify Semenya because with his deep body in which science acted as the container of controversy, he did so anyway. He sought her out, turned toward the laboratory, and used those results for gender and sex administration. The thing that changed since 1968 was then not an advance in techniques of naturalization, but instead the matter of who could take them up. Their uptake was evident in the ease with which Hurst made declarations of I.A.A.F. procedure and results.

The legacy of challenges to chromosomal and genetic testing endured in Caster Semenya's case with Hurst's writings. He conceded, at times, that biology did not map seamlessly or easily onto sex. For example, when he claimed that Semenya had "three times the amount of testosterone," his comparison was based on a "normal" "woman."⁴⁴⁸ Hurst perhaps knew or feared that the natural "woman" he compared Semenya to was on some level constructed and only made so by parameters agreed to in a time and a place. Worse, he knew or feared that his notion of science was not so easily administered. In another report, Hurst suggested, "determining exactly what makes a woman" is something "no man achieved in history."⁴⁴⁹ His own sources also supported his suspicions/fears that the neatness of science's relationship to nature was a façade. Along with his own intimations, sources which told Hurst things like, "It's complicated" or "It's not quite so simple" challenged the authority he granted to testosterone levels and organs.⁴⁵⁰ Yet, even as Hurst himself and the sources he used for his journalism conceded that science and medicine could not so easily administrate sex, he ultimately clung on to the notion the I.A.A.F. put in place long ago by giving the laboratory turn credibility and efficacy in proving the existence of hybrids and naturalizing them into "women."

Hurst's Peculiar Science

Hurst's laboratory turn advanced his political agenda but also a particular definition of science and scientific epistemology. He defined science as sterile, separate, transparent, and authoritative. In Latour's words, he mistook "science for realist painting, imaging that it made an exact copy of the world."⁴⁵¹ Its exactness was key for Hurst. It was as if he said, if we can just go to the laboratory, then we can finally figure this whole Caster Semenya thing out. For him, "The scientists" – not anyone else, not even Caster Semenya – "makes the fact" about "women."⁴⁵² Hurst put a premium on what he dubbed the "facts, law and science in this [Semenya's] case."⁴⁵³

The realism that Hurst ascribed to science and its practitioners helped him lead a charge that to others – a global audience, feminists, South Africans especially – was unethical, morally reprehensible, and devoid of consequence.

These aspects so clearly and intimately tied to Hurst's reading failed to register with him because of his particular recourse to science – because of the precisely separate modality he understood science as, and as a corollary, Semenya's body. It was that science that aided "The *Telegraph's* expose."⁴⁵⁴ His scientific modality is why he believed Leonard "Chuene could have saved Semenya from public scrutiny" or what he called the "media glare."⁴⁵⁵ "Sack Caster's Lying Boss Now," Hurst exclaimed.⁴⁵⁶ He found, "The continued humiliation of Semenya, who appears guiltless, is all very cruel."⁴⁵⁷ It was a humiliation "not of the I.A.A.F.'s making," but because of "Chuene's decision to ignore medical advice not to permit Semenya to run."⁴⁵⁸ In other words, if Chuene had just known his visual body would prove ineffectual, and had retreated into science, into the deep body as Hurst had, then Semenya's fate would have been different. Hurst's own "media glare" mattered not at all, not to him at least. The Hurst-Chuene dividing line was drawn unequivocally by their differential conceptions of Semenya's body and their corresponding attitudes toward science. While Chuene's province was the visual body, Hurst's province was the deep body and it was this very preoccupation (premised on science, chromosomes, etc.) that forced him to go after the Athletics South Africa president. It was Chuene's "fraud," a virtual crime of how he read Semenya's body that so troubled Hurst.⁴⁵⁹ Even though they both sought a natural body, they each developed distinctly different rhetorical productions regarding the same conceit.

Hurst argued it wasn't just Chuene but his entire organization that was guilty. He suggested this much in one of his tracts, writing, "A young person's life is in disarray at best,

danger at worst because the adults – most of them self-appointed – who presumed to guide her thought more of the glory which would be reflected on them than they did of the giant burden Semenya would be left to carry.”⁴⁶⁰ Hurst even utilized “History’s greatest athlete Carl Lewis” to support his side and his vision of corporeality. Lewis, he said, “condemned Athletics South Africa for exposing its controversial intersex runner Caster Semenya to psychological damage on the world stage.”⁴⁶¹ They hadn’t protected her, like Hurst thought he did. The former track great “was scathing in his assessment of ASA president Leonard Chuene and various members of the country’s ANC Government.”⁴⁶² Lewis told Hurst, “To put it out in front of the world like that, I am very disappointed. Now, for the rest of her life, she’ll be marked as ‘the one.’”⁴⁶³ The contradictions abound largely because of their competing mediations on the body and their competing agendas. An ahistorical, controversy-squashing science by Hurst was in no way a stoker of the flames in which Semenya was embroiled.

The Australian journalist’s own rhetoric performed the same political work – exposing Semenya “on the world stage” – and still this remained out of his purview because he made science “cold, asocial, and distant from political reasons.”⁴⁶⁴ Hurst’s separatism was perhaps best conveyed when he wrote of Semenya, “Despite displaying all these symptoms, it is understood Semenya is completely unaware that tests identify her as a hermaphrodite.”⁴⁶⁵ Just as Hurst thought Chuene insensitive and Semenya unaware, so was he. Hurst argued science was separatist in the sense that its “scientific content” was “surrounded” but not in conversation with “a social, political, and cultural ‘environment.’”⁴⁶⁶ As Latour explains, in the laboratory of science, “you see no public relations, no politics, no ethical problems, no class struggle, no lawyers; you see science isolated from society.”⁴⁶⁷ Where the “social, political, and cultural” aspects of her story flourished, Hurst retreated toward nature in which “the orderly pattern of”

“scientific method and rationality” ruled.⁴⁶⁸ Although a journalist by trade, the qualities Hurst granted to science made him not just a reporter on the beat, but also a “spokesman ... the mouthpiece of what is inscribed on the window of the instrument.”⁴⁶⁹ In that capacity, he would write declarations that read, “The tests, not yet publicly released, show the 18-year-old-old has no womb or ovaries.”⁴⁷⁰

Despite what Hurst viewed as separate from the rest of us, and from the politics of Caster Semenya’s story, his science was utterly political, and even dangerous, because the definitive quality he gave to it shut down discourse. Or put another way, science did the talking so rhetoric was not needed. This is where he also converged with Chuene, forwarding a rhetoric against rhetoric to stamp out disbelievers. His was “Science with a capital S ... an ideology that ... offer[ed] a substitute for public discussion.”⁴⁷¹ Latour argues that this kind of science, what he calls “Science No. 1,” reveals itself only as “a political weapon to do away with the constraints of politics.”⁴⁷² Where Hurst saw controversy brewing and politics ablaze with Semenya, he intervened with Science No. 1 and explicitly deployed it as a stopgap measure, “to stop controversies from boiling over.”⁴⁷³ In this way, he seemed to suggest, “Facts are facts. Full stop. There is nothing to add and nothing to subtract.”⁴⁷⁴ In short, for Hurst, “For the world to become knowable” – for Caster Semenya’s body to become knowable – it had to “become a laboratory.”⁴⁷⁵ Hurst argued we could all go to the laboratory “to settle our doubts.”⁴⁷⁶ The naturalization of Caster Semenya depended on it.

In the history of chromosomes that Hurst’s reports reintroduced with Semenya, rhetoric mattered to the extent that it was an administrator. In words and in deeds, rhetoric administrated gender and sex by defining who was in and who was out, by carrying out the practices that indicated inclusion or fraudulence, and by recourse to a science that promised to separate the

monsters from the “women.” Rhetoric was administrative and powerfully so beginning in 1968 because of its turn toward the laboratory. While the science of chromosomes in buccal smear and PCR forms was certainly ambiguous at best – never definitive in nature despite heralding to that effect – chromosomal properties were taken as certain for the purposes of awarding sex to some but not all competitors. No one could be declared ineligible, denied a femininity card, or stricken from the record books otherwise. For examining bodies, documenting them, verifying or disqualifying them, rhetoric mattered in all these ways. In other words, it achieved these ends with the discourses and the mechanisms of “female” naturalization. The insular quality that officials hoped and believed science and medicine had in 1968 worked only partially. As with the nude parade, there was discord over its legitimacy and its techniques. Parades would rise and fall and so would chromosomes.

With Hurst, rhetoric had an all too familiar function, hiding its own rhetoricalness behind a façade of nature. He too acted as an administrator of sex by legislating the controversy about Caster Semenya and its implications for track. He categorized Semenya as a hermaphrodite, relied on a presumed clarity found in testosterone and organs, and disqualified her by the very shroud of suspicion, doubt, and blame he placed in and around her. At the same time, his laboratory turn retained discord as well, just with more specificity paid to Caster Semenya. Along these lines, particular constituencies and communities took issue with how he used science and medicine in making declarations about Semenya’s identity, the publicness with which he did so, and the relatively desensitized way in which he published his reports. There was a presumed certainty of science then as there was in Hurst’s moment. But in both cases, the certainty was fallible, which was evident in cultural disagreement over scientific practices, actual changes or abandonment of practices for the I.O.C. and the I.A.A.F., and with Hurst’s own

acknowledgment of the tenuous grounds of his claims about the “normal” or natural “woman.” With Chuene and now Hurst the lesson was clear. There was no such thing as a rhetoric against rhetoric. The rhetoric always shined through and so did each of their respective agendas. A rhetoric against rhetoric didn’t squash deliberation. It only spurred more rhetoric.

Hurst, Nationalism, and a Colonial Body

What one might say was markedly different with Hurst’s rhetoric was its broad scope. With his deep body rhetoric Hurst waged a racial war with Semenya but more broadly with South Africans. He criticized South Africans for supporting Semenya and her continued participation in track by conceiving of the country as a colonial body. Excising South Africans with nothing short of a racist, colonial logic, Hurst argued their support was entirely mismatched with science’s findings and nature’s binary heuristic. He believed an entire “people [were] in denial.”⁴⁷⁷ They were in “denial over their controversial 800m runner.”⁴⁷⁸ Hurst found that South Africans were ignorant of or hostile to science. Hurst wrote, “The fact that gender verification tests indicate Semenya has certain male qualities – including internal testes – that helped her emerge from obscurity to win the women’s 800m world championship in Berlin simply has not sunk in at A.S.A.”⁴⁷⁹ In other words, he was sure she possessed an “unfair advantage” and also sure that South Africans were either too dumb or too pernicious to acknowledge it. If the facts would just sink in, as they did for Hurst, things would be different, he reasoned.

Furthermore, Hurst suggested South Africans were politically motivated, a trend with a historical precedent. First they denied AIDS, he argued, and again with Semenya, they turned a blind eye to science once more. Hurst suggested the pattern when he wrote, “the same South African politicians who denied AIDS was a problem in their country are standing behind their queen of athletics.”⁴⁸⁰ The medal count trumped science. One of Hurst’s sources told him, “They

did not know [about Semenya's body] because they did not want to know. They had a gold medal winner."⁴⁸¹ They simply "did not want to know the gender test results."⁴⁸² Much to his frustration, this colonial body ran counter to (his) science. South Africans were "blinded by the glitter of gold at the world titles," and their defense was more about rankings, than it was an honest defense of Caster.⁴⁸³ The notion that South Africans stood behind her as some sort of statement about performativity lacked true authenticity. In his words, "to dismiss the whole issue as meaningless and to say that she should run as a girl because she has been accredited that way ... is so disingenuous, it beggars belief."⁴⁸⁴ The South African support was all that stood between science prevailing and rhetoric disappearing or Semenya's false masquerade winning out. Only one of two options could ultimately stand firm. Hurst remarked of this purported colonial body, "Only the certainty of a savage backlash from South Africa has so far prevented the I.A.A.F. from banning Semenya and revoking her gold medal."⁴⁸⁵ The South African defense, in lieu of the revelations Hurst published, represented nothing more than "a sorry but fascinating study of a people in denial, even in the face of facts which emerged from their own sex tests conducted before she left for Berlin to win the world title."⁴⁸⁶

When Leonard Chuene's cover-up was revealed publicly on September 19, 2009, Hurst used these revelations to strengthen his argument for his scientific reading, to chastise the Athletics South Africa leader, and to punish the entire colonial body. He declared, "Chuene's bluff had been ... called."⁴⁸⁷ But, it wasn't just an indictment of Chuene, but of all South Africans. Hurst made this transition seamlessly. As one headline read, "South Africa Knew Semenya's Secret."⁴⁸⁸ Chuene and his colleagues at Athletics South African became a metonym for the whole of "South Africa." Hurst detailed, "Chuene was aware intersexual athlete Semenya underwent gender verification tests before ... [the] world championships in Berlin."⁴⁸⁹ At a press

conference, “Chuene admitted ... he had lied when he denied sex tests had been conducted on Semenya.”⁴⁹⁰ Following Chuene’s confession, Hurst claimed, “Athletics South Africa bosses are now squirming.”⁴⁹¹ They were squirming over the death of their visual body, a mere convenience whose time had run out. Hurst claimed it was those officials – Chuene and others – not his scientific body which “cruelly exposed their gender misfit Caster Semenya.”⁴⁹²

Much like Chuene decried science just as he secretly used it, Hurst decried publicity just as it was his operative mode in earnest. With the resignation of Wilfred Daniels, Athletics South Africa’s head coach, Hurst’s rhetorical ammunition only increased. “A few honest men,” Daniels among them, “found the courage and further evidence to accuse the A.S.A. chief of lying.”⁴⁹³ The colonial body had a few defectors in its ranks. According to Hurst, Daniels argued that comments like Chuene’s “were symptomatic of ‘a win-at-all-costs mentality that has destroyed a young woman’s life.’”⁴⁹⁴ Daniels, he published in his reporting, had said “All Athletics South Africa cared about was getting medals ... they never thought about what they were doing to Caster.”⁴⁹⁵ In Hurst’s purview, Daniels knew, or least endorsed, his scientific body over Chuene’s visual body. Daniels told Hurst, “For all intents and purposes ... I don’t believe she can step on the track again as a woman.”⁴⁹⁶ Hurst’s position just intensified when others followed suit. He was quick to report on South Africans, like the country’s Minister of Sport, who “called on Athletics South Africa to ‘fire’ its pugnacious president Leonard Chuene for lying about gender verification tests on Caster Semenya.”⁴⁹⁷ With every detractor that surfaced after Chuene’s cover-up became public knowledge, Hurst’s reading, in his eyes, was strengthened – its rhetorical potency amped up, its material ramifications even truer, and his science all the more relevant in resolving controversy.

The deep body Hurst used in Semenya's case ran counter to the body that South Africans rallied around after the scandal broke in Berlin. With his reporting, Hurst conveyed that South Africans citizens supported Semenya, took ownership of her gender and sex, and criticized the I.A.A.F. for their handling of her case. They embraced an undoubtedly rhetorical not natural body. This position so frustrated him. It was precisely for these reasons that Hurst understood their national rally for Semenya as a colonial body. It was colonial because South Africans were, from his vantage point, unenlightened, impervious to science's findings, and ignorant of facts he believed were plain as day.

Hurst framed his deep body as deliberately counter to South African discourse. If Hurst turned toward modernity, he claimed South Africans were distinctly anti-modern and in the dark. He traced their differences in his reporting. Hurst took note of the staunch nationalism that enveloped Semenya after the World Championships and the colonial body that took hold in public discourse and actions: "South Africa embraced Semenya after the storm of controversy from Berlin, declaring her 'our girl' and various factions within South African society and politics have attacked the I.A.A.F."⁴⁹⁸ One source reportedly told him that the "I.A.A.F. now have the whole ANC [African National Congress] and the whole of South Africa on their backs."⁴⁹⁹ While Hurst preferred science and its naturalizing properties, South Africans preferred their own biographical and geographical knowledge separate from mechanisms of naturalization. As result, he found that organizations like Athletics South Africa "erected a fortress around their golden girl, thwarting even – or perhaps especially – the I.A.A.F. from contacting the impoverished 18-year-old."⁵⁰⁰ Whereas Hurst perceived a natural corollary between the science of reading the body from the inside and then mapping those results onto Semenya, he found that Athletics South Africa and an entire colonial body were hostile toward his science. The stark

contrast between Hurst and the colonial body was evident in remarks he tracked, such as Phiwe Tsholetsane's, ASA's manager of events, marketing and communications who told the press, "If there are others Casters out there, we will also let them run."⁵⁰¹

Hurst widened the distance between his deep body and the colonial body with each constituency he reported on over the course of the controversy. Everywhere Hurst looked, he found support for Semenya, from anonymous bloggers, to feminist groups, and even among the highest offices in the South African government. It appeared that this national colonial body trumped Hurst's application of science, and more broadly, the turn toward the laboratory under the I.O.C. and the I.A.A.F. South Africa's ruling party, the African National Congress, he observed, "lodged a complaint with the UN High Commission on Human Rights, accusing the I.A.A.F. of racism and sexism."⁵⁰² Hurst wrote that, "The Monte Carlo-based I.A.A.F. has been pilloried by A.S.A. officials and members of the African National Conference ruling party in South Africa."⁵⁰³ The group, said Hurst, "demand[ed] the International Association of Athletics Federations 'nullify and void' results of sex tests" after "their own 'investigation' into the furor."⁵⁰⁴ An "investigation" absent of naturalizing mechanisms was of course a nonstarter for Hurst. Jackson Mthembu, an ANC spokesperson, whom he included in his reports, explained their position thusly: "We [have] decided to request a meeting with the I.A.A.F. in which we plan to advise them to declare the tests null and void."⁵⁰⁵ Despite these interventions into the case, Hurst continued to insist that he possessed the "face of the facts," while leadership in the African National Congress knew only rhetoric based on their mere "'investigation."⁵⁰⁶ Test results – the prize some "women" won in their favor through chromosomal examination – had a far greater point of purchase for the Australian reporter.

Furthermore, Hurst recounted more nationalistic accountings of Semenya's body through other key political players, including Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, Nelson Mandela's ex-wife. She was poised to speak for a nation when Semenya returned from Berlin to Pretoria. Upon her arrival, Hurst reported, Madikizela-Mandela declared, "We are here to tell the whole world how proud we are of our little girl. People can say and write what they like – we are proud of her."⁵⁰⁷ Of Madikizela-Mandela's intervention, Hurst argued it was part of parcel of the "ANC's lack of impartiality," an impartiality to the test results he so revered.⁵⁰⁸ Perhaps the ultimate example of the colonial body that Hurst took note of came from Jacob Zuma, South Africa's controversial president, who also voiced a national defense of Caster Semenya. Once again he found this colonial body in direct opposition to his practices of naturalization. It was for this reason that he they ought to be colonized, set straight, and enlightened by science. At a reception in Pretoria, Hurst chronicled that Zuma implored the Minister of Sport to write the I.A.A.F. expressing "our disappointment at the manner in which the body dealt with the matter."⁵⁰⁹ Unlike Hurst, Zuma dethroned science of its separatist, adjudicative, and apolitical properties. It was not cold, objective, and determinative, but instead, the means "to publicly humiliate an honest, professional and competent athlete."⁵¹⁰ By Zuma's account, Semenya was a "woman." Hurst's agenda was then not only nationally alarming but also cause for rally, legislation, and a different making of gender and sex apart from sport's mechanistic history.

The Caster Semenya that various citizens rallied around had a staying power far beyond chromosomal testing. There was no rise and fall like there was with nude parades and chromosomal testing. Much to Hurst's disappointment, months after the initial scandal broke in Berlin, Semenya continued to be celebrated and publicly recognized. He noted, for example, that in South Africa's "Gauteng North Province [citizens] named the world title winner their athlete

of the year.”⁵¹¹ Not surprisingly, he viewed recognition like this as contrarian to the “fact that she is currently suspended from competition by the International Association of Athletics Federations [and] subject to the completion and interpretation of sex tests.”⁵¹² Similar to the fate of Chuene, the rhetoric that Hurst tried hard to contain showed through vis-à-vis the very support of Semenya he chronicled. With his journalistic agenda and his historical imperative, Hurst would remain forever contrarian to rhetoric and always preferential toward a science that could separate the hybrids from the “women.”

Hurst denied a connection between his writings and the public damage suffered by Semenya. He argued, “This story was in no way meant to be an attack on Semenya.”⁵¹³ He unabashedly criticized athletics officials for their handling of the affair telling readers, “A young person’s life is in disarray at best, danger at worst because the adults ... thought more of the glory which would be reflected on them than they did of the giant burden Semenya would be left to carry.”⁵¹⁴ The colonial body required an intervention only he could provide through a deep body and a science that probed beneath the skin. In the meantime, Semenya and an entire nation, Hurst argued, suffered at the expense of their own thoughtlessness and ignorance.

Conclusion

Mike Hurst deployed a specific reading of Caster Semenya’s body for a specific reason. He wanted to make plain, or as he stated, “black and white” categories of sex in sport. Semenya’s gender and sex, no doubt a slippery subject for such an endeavor given her androgynous appearance and simultaneous insistence that she was “a lady,” was for a moment in time administrated by his recourse to science. Through reading her body as scientific, deep, and clinically derived, Hurst fashioned himself a spokesperson of facts and an arbiter of bodily ambiguity in sport. The limits of the body for Hurst truly boiled down to its depth or what the

body harbored beneath the skin. In his instantiation, that meant the stuff of chromosomes, hormones, and organs.

It was precisely because of these markers (scientific, deep, etc.) of his rhetoric and his corresponding vision of nationalism that Hurst fell so very short of discerning what was at stake in publishing his reports. With his rhetoric against rhetoric, Hurst stopped seeing Semenya or the implications of his agenda. In short, his chromosomal preoccupations blinded him from the consequences of his own quest. This enabled him to make expressions of fact about Semenya's body and her identity as well as an entire nation absentia rhetoric. Thus, Hurst claimed Semenya was definitively a "hermaphrodite" based on what he believed researchers found in the laboratory. Using this label, albeit a crude one, Hurst used his Science No. 1 to ensure fairness in sport on account of naturalizing Semenya's hybridity. To him, this chromosomal journalism was devoid of a political agenda and merely suited to solve one. His rhetoric against rhetoric took refuge in science's ability to align itself with nature and prove the existence of monsters. To the contrary, Hurst's journalism was deeply rhetorical and heavily embroiled in the politics of body making, nationalism, and naturalism. All of this was for the purpose of keeping hybrids separate from "women."

Hurst's reporting retold a key chapter in the history of sex testing bodies in sport. His iteration of Semenya's body enacted that cultural moment of the turn toward modernity in sport when chromosomes were introduced and then used for twenty-three years by the I.A.A.F. and thirty-two years by the I.O.C. In the modern moment, competitors were tested and classified, some becoming "women" and some remaining monsters. In other words, some bodies were made to matter and some were not. While their reign would eventually wane, only to be replaced by other measures, Hurst argued their relevancy and their political efficacy was alive and well

through Caster Semenya's participation in the 800 meter, the ensuing conflict, his resolution, and the colonial body he thought was operative during the scandal. Amidst the stuff of sensationalism and its highly public nature was his particular bodily modality, and with it, the chromosomal chapter of sport's past.

Although they pursued different mechanisms, Chuene and Hurst were equally invested in the natural body. Hurst's journalism conveyed that in order to understand Semenya's body one had to look not on the outside like Chuene said, but on the inside. His instantiation of Semenya's body was scientific and deep, discoverable with instruments and not merely the naked eye. Their shared investment in the natural body was also equally disciplinary. Whether aided by sight or microscope, Semenya was silenced or constrained. With Chuene, she was naturalized into a "woman" and with Hurst she remained a monster. As a result, disciplinary forces in pursuit of an authentic, natural "female" body and their corresponding histories prevailed across both nude parades and scientific productions of Chuene and Hurst.

Chapter 4

Ariel Levy, Feminism, and a Critical Turn

With all the attention Leonard Chuene and Mike Hurst devoted to Caster Semenya, her perspective was conspicuously missing from their rhetorics. Given their preoccupation with the natural body, Semenya appeared to matter very little at all. Chuene was far more interested in the media circus, the temporary spotlight he created for himself therein, and the protection of his organization. He was hardly a defender of Caster Semenya. Hurst was far more interested in getting to the bottom of a body problem, punishing Athletics South Africa – even an entire nation – for supporting Semenya’s participation, and getting that lead story about the runner. With him as well, an honest accounting of Semenya was lacking. Given their respective agendas, perhaps it was only “natural” that Caster Semenya would remain obscure and backgrounded, even as each man spoke and wrote about her. This would change with Ariel Levy.

On November 30, 2009, the *New Yorker* published Levy’s “Either/Or: Sports, Sex, and the Case of Caster Semenya.” Levy’s story proved effectual in forcing yet another iteration of Caster Semenya’s body into the public imaginary. Unlike Chuene and Hurst who believed they could establish a natural body (through sight, science, medicine, ETC.) for personal gain and journalistic glory, Levy remembered the lessons of history, which again and again proved that there was no such thing as a natural “female” body. She knew, in other words, that nude parades and chromosomes had their respective rise and fall. Since August 19, 2009, she had witnessed the damage done by techniques of naturalization. Levy saw equally the implementation, maintenance, and dissolution of Leonard Chuene’s cover-up. Indeed, she noted, “Chuene has, since the revelation of his deceit, become almost as controversial a figure in South Africa as Caster Semenya.”⁵¹⁵ Levy also observed the public microscope that was forced on Semenya with

Mike Hurst's journalism. "The report," she explained cautiously, revealed "a *potential* advantage over competitors."⁵¹⁶ Chuene's remarkably selfish behavior and Hurst's tawdry journalism were each deeply invested in the natural body, and resultantly, part and parcel of the international brouhaha following the World Championships.

With her own vested interest in the story, Ariel Levy attempted to sever herself from the spectacle, and instead, remember the lessons of history by writing Caster Semenya's rhetorical body. As opposed to the rhetoric against rhetoric that permeated Chuene's agenda and Hurst's project, Levy suggested rhetoric was in plain sight. In that endeavor, Semenya figured significantly but not by recourse to a "female" body naturalized by the end of Levy's report. In not granting the natural "female" body political purchase, Levy was free to thrive in the comfort of no resolvable end to the so-called saga and no one person's agenda winning out as a matter of resolution. By embracing the rhetorical body, she thrust a complex political moment upon auditors rather than contain the controversy as others tried so arduously to do. Thus, rather than strip things away so as to focus solely on a visual body or a deep body, Levy blasted things wide open asking auditors to confront not one variable that could explain Caster Semenya's body but rather a whole host of components, some mattering more than others, but never one without the other. The component parts to Caster Semenya's body that Levy foregrounded helped her matter in a transformative way.

With Ariel Levy's report, Caster Semenya's body was once again remade from visual, deep, to now rhetorical, not so much because she was androgynous but because of the various component parts that made her body. Biography, science, and nation all combined together to constitute its very rhetoricalness. With Levy, the rhetorical body *was rhetorical* precisely because it was made or put together by what Latour calls "assemblages."⁵¹⁷ Assemblages

constitute, in his words, “heterogeneous associations that includes human and nonhuman elements.”⁵¹⁸ They are “ad hoc groupings of diverse elements, of vibrant materials of all sorts.”⁵¹⁹ Thus, Semenya’s body was once more reconstituted on different grounds, sutured together via these different components of biography, science, and nation. Levy brought several conversations to bear on the body of Caster Semenya. These were the component parts of the rhetorical body. Semenya’s body, in this sense, was not visual or deep but “an interface that becomes more and more describable as it learns to be affected by more and more elements.”⁵²⁰ It was as if Levy said, “the more rhetoric, the better!” Levy underscored that deliberations over her body (for which there was no resolution) centered on the push and pull of various politics – of systematic efforts to contain gender excess, international advocacy for transgressive performances, painful memories of gendered and racialized colonial practices, and a feminist groundswell to disavow disciplinary mechanisms in sport.

With Levy’s rhetoric, she forced us to confront “gender as a historic category” and the particular rhetorical practices embedded in techniques of naturalization.⁵²¹ She forced us to see the lie that nude parades and chromosomes were premised on for all those years. Their lie was founded on a rhetoric against rhetoric. For Levy, this required that we “accept that gender, understood as one way of culturally configuring a body, is open to a continual remaking and that ‘anatomy’ and ‘sex’ are not without cultural framing.”⁵²² Whereas Chuene and Hurst placed a premium on nature and a rhetoric against rhetoric, Levy did the opposite. Instead of questioning Semenya’s identity as the others had done (either privately or quite publicly) by recourse to various naturalizing technologies in sport, Levy preserved what was always already there throughout the entirety of the case and well before it got started. She embraced and preserved the very fact that the body has always been the product of rhetoric. From there, there was no impetus

as there was for Chuene to cover-up deeds done to determine sex or no temptation as there was for Hurst to proclaim truths about the body. For Levy such actions were fruitless pursuits because they ignored the rhetorical production at stake with Caster Semenya and with the body more broadly.

Given her focus, her notion of science and nationalism also shifted. Science shifted from seeing-and-knowing, to a controversy stopgap measure, to a political component of the rhetorical body. By no means did Levy decry science or its import in Semenya's case. While she perceived it as less adjudicative and neutral, she still argued it mattered to Semenya and her body. She reasoned science was only as strong its relationships to other component parts of the body. She reinforced these connections by drawing upon feminist theorists Anne Fausto-Sterling, Alice Dreger, and Judith Butler, three historically important voices on science's relationship to the body, gender, sex, and culture. Nationalism changed as well with the rhetorical body that Levy traced in her story. Nationalism shifted from a state-sanctioned natural body, to a colonial body, to a rhetorical vision of nation. The nationalism that was intertwined with Semenya was less about which category her body belonged to and more about a national pride in athletics that her body enacted. National pride in athletics – indeed athletics as a democratizing force – was a point that long preceded her participation in track, but, it was nonetheless important once more with Levy's story. South Africa became a rhetorical nation because they used deliberation and advocacy as an answer to Semenya's case.

Like Leonard Chuene and Mike Hurst, the rich story that Levy's rhetoric emphasized about Semenya reintroduced another chapter in the history of testing bodies in sport. In particular, it evoked its most contemporary moment, in which the I.O.C. and the I.A.A.F. abandoned universal examinations, in 1992 and 2000 respectively. While their organizational

efforts to administrate sex ceased to exist as a universal mandate, other policies were put in place to continue to surveil the “female athlete.” Thus, preoccupation with the natural body died a hard death, only to be reincarnated in other forms, forms that still circulate present day. As Lenskyj remarked, “After more than a century of preoccupation with sex binaries and discomfort with sexual and gender ambiguity, the I.O.C. and the I.A.A.F. continue their rigorous policing of sex and gender, purportedly in the interests of fairness in competition.”⁵²³ The retirement of certain practices indicated that perhaps – just perhaps – the natural “female” body was a cultural enigma after all. Even so, such a possible concession would never be made whole because the binary in sport still rules and so do measures to keep it that way. Levy’s rhetoric replayed this tension in which certain forms of regulation were sidelined while the tendency to deploy particular technologies of naturalization never fully disappeared from public purview or sport’s practices. Thus, it is important to historicize the tension that Levy picked up on in her story about Caster Semenya. As opposed to Chuene and Hurst whose rhetorical productions were mirror images of the past, the policy component to Levy’s rhetoric mattered and she indeed wrote about it, but it did not define the extension of Caster Semenya’s body in space.

In what follows, I first explain how and when the universal examination of “female athletes” ended. Second, I turn to Levy’s story about Semenya that reflects both the intrusion of policy in making “women” and the rhetorical possibilities that emerge outside of that task. I illustrate those possibilities through her body’s assemblages of biography, science, and nation. I underscore the positive point of transformation provided by the rhetorical body through Levy and South African activism, in which the lessons of history (the lie of the nude parade and the lie of chromosomes) were finally remembered. Third, through a discussion of fairness in Semenya’s case, I demonstrate the endurance of techniques of naturalization sought to keep rhetoric at bay.

The End of a Universal Mandate

The reign of chromosomes – that would be repurposed with Caster Semenya – formally ended in the 1990s. Amidst continued efforts to police “female” bodily excess, the waning power of chromosomes marked an important rhetorical and material shift in sex testing. Under the pressure of advocacy and even the sheer cost of testing, the I.A.A.F. formally stopped using chromosomal testing (and issuing femininity cards) in 1990. Cole documents that that year, the organization “revoked its sex-testing requirement, claiming that the test was invasive, humiliating, potentially psychologically damaging, and even resulted in the disqualifications of females who had no physical advantage.”⁵²⁴ This was quite a change. When the I.A.A.F. discontinued its chromosomal preoccupation, it was viewed as a major victory against the notion “that a person’s genes determine their sex.”⁵²⁵

The I.O.C., on the other hand, dug its heels in, refusing to abandon universal testing. Instead of using the buccal smear, they relied on a different method of “female” naturalization in the form of the PCR exam. With the PCR test, doctors testing competitors looked for “the presence of the SRY gene – the gene leading to testis development.”⁵²⁶ The logic of the PCR test went something like this: The presence of that gene signaled the presence of a hybrid. Like the nude parade and the buccal smear, the test came with its own set of problems. Genetic testing, it turned out, can be unfairly sweeping and not universally correct. While it was implemented with the “reasoning that this (the SRY gene) was the source of male athletic advantage,” “there was little evidence that this test was useful for sex determination, or any evidence that this gene was linked to athletic advantage.”⁵²⁷ The shortcomings of the exam manifested publicly, and notably so, at the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games. There, “eight female athletes ... tested positively” for the SRY gene.⁵²⁸ Doctors determined that, “Seven of these

women were found to have some degree of androgen insensitivity, and one an enzyme defect.”⁵²⁹ Still, and much to the detriment of the PCR’s presumed authority, “All were subsequently allowed to return to competition.”⁵³⁰ Largely due to the fact that the PCR test wrongly accused “women” of being hybrids, Atlanta proved pivotal in forcing the hand of the I.O.C. to retire universal sex testing.

Problems in Atlanta were magnified by a growing chorus of detractors, arguing against the PCR test and universal testing of any kind. Flaws in testing were emphasized by a more cohesive and consistent group of advocates than in years past. Feminist bent groups composed of “women’s sports advocates, such as the Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women in Sport (CAAWS) and the Women’s Sports Foundation (WSF), ... paid careful attention to sex verification in sport and drafted detailed position papers in response to injustices directed toward women athletes.”⁵³¹ In particular, voices from academia around the globe figured quite prominently in the debate about sex testing. Robinson wrote of, Drs. Berit Skirstad, “an associate professor at the Norwegian University of Sport and Physical Education, Dr. Sandi Kirby, a former Olympic rower and the chair of the sociology department at the University of Winnipeg, and several other sport activists [who] have lobbied for years to have the tests banned because of their intrusive nature and the high number of false results, as well as the stigma they attach to being a female athlete.”⁵³² Skirstad, among others, argued that the tests do not actually yield the results they promised to. Again and again detractors found that an efficient test was no match for a complex body. Complexity in effect became their rallying cry. A mere swab of the cheek or quick check under the microscope failed to capture sex in earnest.

It took the I.O.C. almost ten more years, but they followed suit in 1999 when they too abandoned systematic testing of “female athletes.” Robinson chronicled, “[I]t wasn’t until June

1999 ... that the I.O.C. finally decided it would cease administering tests to women to qualify them for their ‘female carding.’”⁵³³ Still, the I.O.C. maintained “their right to subject ‘suspect’ female athletes to further examination” if deemed necessary.⁵³⁴ The 2000 Sydney Olympic Games marked the first time “since 1966 where women didn’t have to genetically prove they were women before they were allowed to compete.”⁵³⁵

As I suggested earlier, the nude parade and chromosomal forms of testing were reintroduced by way of Caster Semenya’s story. With Leonard Chuene’s and Mike Hurst’s rhetorics, the nude parade and chromosomal forms of examination were reintroduced. With Levy, however, a particular technique of naturalization was replaced by a debate over how to handle the “female athlete.” Or put another way, with Levy there was no singular form of power that was repurposed but instead a complex moment in which certain measures were tried in place of universally examining all “female athletes.” Thus, with the historical moment Levy foregrounded in her story, it wasn’t just one technique of naturalization that was reapplied, but a complex web of particularities. Those particularities emanated from the decisions the I.O.C. and the I.A.A.F. made following each of their respective turns away from the universal examination of “female athletes.”

While universal testing was formally abandoned by both major organizations, their memory continued to haunt athletics. The suspicions did not die nor did the lingering stereotypes wane. That is, “the underlying question remained: If a woman is an active, strong, physically skilled athlete, then just what kind of a *woman* is she?”⁵³⁶ For the I.A.A.F. and the I.O.C., fears about hybrids were assuaged in part with doping examinations. Although universal testing was no more by 2000, testing for doping continued. Unlike gender testing, doping had an actual material precedent that warranted their continued use. For authorities invested in concerns over

“female athletes” infiltrating sport, doping tests were simultaneously a sex test every time a competitor peed into a cup in front of an official. Cole argued, the I.A.A.F. “transformed drug testing – a space where genitals are seen because urination must be done under observation – into the official unofficial site for sex testing.”⁵³⁷ Using external genitalia, much like in a nude parade, the I.A.A.F. essentially redoubled their efforts, this time without formal policy on gender and sex, by granting “gender verification refuge in drug testing.”⁵³⁸

Moreover, despite the abandonment of formal measures, the emergence of more touchstone stories (e.g. Klobukowska, Patiño) warranted the continual policing of “female athletes” for sport’s governing organizations. A notable moment came in 2006 with Indian runner Santhi Soundarajan. She “was stripped of her silver medal in the 800 meters at the Asian Games for ‘failing’ a sex test. An Indian athletics official told The Associated Press that Soundarajan had ‘abnormal chromosomes.’ She was ridiculed in the press, and her career was destroyed. In the wake of her global humiliation, she attempted suicide.”⁵³⁹ After she was stripped of her medal, rumors suggested that, Soundarajan – who identified her whole life as a “woman” and lived her whole life as a “woman” – “likely ... [had] androgen insensitivity syndrome, where a person has the physical characteristics of a woman but the genetic make-up which includes a male chromosome.”⁵⁴⁰ The Soundarajan episode like the others was a warning to officials to continue their vigilance and stay on high alert for the possibility of gender fraud. Thus, even in the wake of policy abandonment, officials still found methods to discipline hybrids and backing in doing so when cases of perceived hybridity surfaced.

Caster Semenya Prompts Policy

The informal ways in which the I.A.A.F. and the I.O.C. adapted to the end of universal testing was coupled with formal policy changes as well. A key moment in formal policy occurred

largely as a result of Caster Semenya's imprint on elite sport and sex and gender. During Semenya's eleven-month suspension from competition under the I.A.A.F., officials convened to determine what to do with her body/eligibility and to once again create policy for handling hybrids. Findlay chronicled that, "Semenya ... forced an entire bureaucracy on the issue."⁵⁴¹ This of course followed a long trend in elite athletics.

Details remained scant when the organization lifted their ban on Semenya's eligibility. The process involved "months of negotiation with the I.A.A.F. involving legal representatives and a high-profile mediator known for his work on international disputes."⁵⁴² In November 2010, they ruled, "that Semenya had been found innocent of any wrong-doing and would be allowed to keep her medals, and that the results of the tests would be kept private."⁵⁴³ The innocence the I.A.A.F. declared seemed too little too late granted the charges of gender fraud that so many – Hurst among them – hurled at Semenya. Still, in some regards, the I.A.A.F.'s response marked a change from organizationally sanctioned public proclamations of "one chromosome too many" to relative muteness. There was certainly publicity, but the form of it suggested at least a little more nuance than in years past. At the same time, international media, especially Mike Hurst, reified practices of yesteryear by going to great lengths to leak the results of Semenya's tests.

In light of their deliberations over Semenya's body, the I.A.A.F. laid down new rules, publishing the "I.A.A.F. Regulations Governing Eligibility of Females with Hyperandrogenism to Compete in Women's Competition" in April 2011. On May 1, 2011 the policy officially went into effect. The guidelines specifically legislated female hyperandrogenism, "a condition in which females produce androgens in excess of the range typical for females."⁵⁴⁴ Give the focus of their new guidelines, the I.A.A.F. intimated that potential hybridity rested on the "assumption that androgenic hormones (such as testosterone and dihydrotestosterone) are the primary

components of biological athletic advantage.”⁵⁴⁵ Furthermore, the I.A.A.F. also intimated that hyperandrogenism was *the thing* that plagued Semenya and warranted her suspension. Under the new rules, “for a woman to compete, her testosterone must not exceed the male threshold.”⁵⁴⁶ That male threshold “defines the ‘normal male range’ of total testosterone in serum as ≥ 10 nmol/L.”⁵⁴⁷ The 10nmol/L measures “the concentration of Total Testosterone in serum.”⁵⁴⁸ If a female competitor exceeds this benchmark, “she must have surgery or receive hormone therapy prescribed by an expert I.A.A.F. medical panel and submit to regular monitoring.”⁵⁴⁹ Once again, the I.A.A.F. was in the business of making “women.”

Since universal examination was no longer an assumption, a competitor might fall under the I.A.A.F.’s jurisdiction for one of two reasons: “First, if a woman has been diagnosed with hyperandrogenism (or is in the process of being diagnosed), she is required to notify the I.A.A.F. and undergo evaluation.”⁵⁵⁰ Alternatively, and more controversially, an “I.A.A.F. Medical Manager may initiate a confidential investigation of any female athlete if he [sic] has reasonable grounds for believing that a case of hyperandrogenism may exist.”⁵⁵¹ Once a competitor has been flagged, there are three possible courses of action. A “(1) clinical exam; (2) endocrine exam (testing urine and blood for hormone levels); and/or (3) full exam (which may include genetic testing, imaging, and psychological evaluation). Following evaluation, a female athlete can only compete if she meets the criteria ... specifically, a testosterone level below 10 nmol/L for I.A.A.F. competitions.”⁵⁵²

It is hard to ignore the visual modality of reading the “female athlete” that has persisted across iterations of testing. Visualization and the witnessing of repeatable experiments are after all at the heart of the scientific method. With this latest policy, the I.A.A.F. was once again grafted to it. Some in the organization hailed the policy as a reflection of their progressive take

on sex, gender, and identity. For example, Kristen Worley, a member of the I.A.A.F. “expert panel” told a reporter, “What we’re trying to do, instead of having sport based on sex, we’re basing it on ability. We’re moving away from the idea of sex-based sport.”⁵⁵³ Even so, there was nothing about the policy that displaced the authority of the gender binary or that suggested hybrids were not submitted to a technique of naturalization.

Similar to testing iterations of the past, the “I.A.A.F. Regulations Governing Eligibility of Females with Hyperandrogenism to Compete in Women’s Competition” was met with a barrage of criticisms.⁵⁵⁴ The criticisms underscore many of the anxieties that Caster Semenya herself experienced. Findlay wrote of, “Top-ranking Canadian sport officials ... speaking out about their opposition to what they fear is another chapter in the checkered history of Olympic gender policing.”⁵⁵⁵ Paul Melia, President of the Canadian Center for Ethics in Sport, argued that the cost of testing far outweighed any possible benefit. He found, “At some point we’re faced with the intrusiveness and degradation of privacy – a public outing of someone at a high-profile athletic event – and that doesn’t seem right.”⁵⁵⁶

Beyond a privacy invasion, some asserted that the policy was just about as sexist as the nude parade by endorsing a similar 1966-style logic. It implicitly suggested that there are limits on how fast a “woman” can run; that “women” who run too fast may be men; and that there is above all a natural kind of “woman.” Caster Semenya was clearly caught in the crosshairs of such an ideology. Bruce Kidd, “a prominent Canadian sport policy adviser” suggested the I.A.A.F.’s policy is the equivalent of “policing femininity.”⁵⁵⁷ Critics advanced the position that the I.A.A.F. is still driven, after all these years, to privilege a particular (and narrow) notion of “woman.” As Shani and Barilan put it, “There are good reasons to suspect that the ongoing attempts to regulate the gender division in sport are related less to fairness and the spirit of sport

and more to a strong drive to ‘normalize’ gender identities.”⁵⁵⁸ Kidd too noted that 1966 clearly registered in the contemporary moment: “It’s still the old patriarchal fear, or doubt, that women can do outstanding athletic performances. If they do, they can’t be real women. It’s that clear, it’s that prejudicial.”⁵⁵⁹ Ellison agreed, citing that “the policy – and the testing, treatment, and humiliation that can come with it – only applies to female athletes,” whereas with men “there is no upper – or lower, for that matter, limit to the amount of testosterone their bodies naturally produce.”⁵⁶⁰ Schultz also found sexism at the heart of the I.A.A.F.’s policy: “In fact, an overabundance of naturally produced testosterone in a male competitor would be considered a genetic gift – an athletic endowment to celebrate – while the same condition in a female would derail her career.”⁵⁶¹

Given the sexism of the policy, critics argued the I.A.A.F. was merely manufacturing an equal playing field, essentially remaking – quite literally – some women’s bodies in order to keep up the gender binary and so-called natural categorization. In other words, what was truly a naturally occurring fact with some bodies, of “their genetic, biological, or social constitutions,” was precisely and deliberately de-naturalized under the I.A.A.F.’s dictates in the name of the natural.⁵⁶² Anne Fausto-Sterling weighed in on this idea, suggesting, “The question is, do you let a woman who by all other measures is a woman but who has testosterone compete and say, ‘Well, this is a variation of womanhood that has made her a champion in a certain field and has given her a world record,’ or are you going to say, ‘This is outside true ‘Woman’?’”⁵⁶³ The only conclusion worth reaching for Fausto-Sterling and others was, in her words, “there is no right.”⁵⁶⁴ While Fausto-Sterling and others preferred variations of “women,” the I.A.A.F. in its policy advocated for a singular one.

The policies spelled out by the I.A.A.F. and the I.O.C. were also notably lambasted for their scientific merit and for what some perceived as the unnecessary intrusion of science. Rebecca Jordan-Young, a socio-medical scientist, found, “These policies are based more on folklore than precise science.”⁵⁶⁵ A major argument levied against the guidelines was that testosterone did not actually produce the advantage that officials said it did. Karkazis and her colleagues suggested this much when they wrote, “It may seem logical to infer ... that a person with more testosterone will have greater athletic advantage than one with less testosterone, but this is not necessarily so. Individuals have dramatically different responses to the same amounts of testosterone, and testosterone is just one element in a complex neuroendocrine feedback system, which is just as likely to be affected by as to affect athletic performance.”⁵⁶⁶ The science of a proven advantage yielded by one’s hormone level was perceived as suspicious at best among skeptics. “Having abnormally high levels of natural testosterone, critics say, is more akin to having an oversized heart, like Lance Armstrong, or double-jointed ankles, like Michael Phelps. It’s genetic, biological, and it may or may not confer an advantage.”⁵⁶⁷ Schultz argued that the I.A.A.F.’s focus on androgen levels specifically ignored a whole host of other bodily variables that might procure an advantage in sport. She noted, “there are at least 200 autosomal performance-enhancing polymorphisms (PEPs), or variations in one’s DNA sequence that can enhance athletic abilities.”⁵⁶⁸ So did Shani and Barilan citing that “more than 200 biological conditions associated with specific advantages in competitive sports have been identified.”⁵⁶⁹ Despite all of these criticisms, the I.A.A.F. did not bend, administering sex (and thus fairness) by recourse to one variable.

While the I.A.A.F. and the I.O.C. no longer have a universal mandate, policies from each organization make clear that testing and its memory are alive and well. Rumors about the un-

official continuance of such practices have surfaced over the years. For example, it was suggested that in 2008 “the organizers of the Beijing Olympics announced that they had set up a ‘gender determination lab’ to test female athletes suspected of being male. ‘Experts’ at the lab [were said to] evaluate athletes based on their physical appearance and take blood samples to test hormones, genes and chromosomes.”⁵⁷⁰ Caster Semenya is deeply imbricated in this complex moment of policy disbandment, rule change, and cultural expectations about gender and sex in sport. The different mechanisms of naturalization were displaced with Ariel Levy’s story on Caster Semenya. Her contribution was an important one for the way it rejected the laboratory turn and demonstrated the possibilities found with the rhetorical body.

Caster Semenya’s Rhetorical Body

Various mechanisms were applied to Caster Semenya’s body all in the name of “female” naturalization in sport. With Chuene, a visual body kept his cover-up afloat and also functioned as the means for suturing the deep wounds of apartheid, scientific categorization, and racially sanctioned oppression. With Mike Hurst, a deep body acted as the political means for his sensational journalism and declaration of just “what” Semenya really was. Both iterations, for different reasons, were ultimately disciplinary, and thus, whether their intention was to help or hurt Semenya, the outcome of reading her body visually or cavernously put her back in line with what it meant to be a natural “woman.” There is more to this story, however.

Ariel Levy’s *New Yorker* story about Caster Semenya evidenced (like Chuene and Hurst) a distinct reading of Semenya’s body. With this reading and her intervention into the global scandal, Caster Semenya’s body was again remade, this time molded by a feminist politics that did not narrow her corporeality by visual (Chuene) or deepness (Hurst), but instead, privileged Semenya’s proclamation that she was a “lady.” Levy’s reading advanced a rhetorical body. In

this instantiation, Levy did not try to naturalize Semenya with the visualness of sight or the instruments of scientists and doctors. With her approach to the body, Levy emphasized the point that, “The only dependable test for gender is the truth of a person’s life, the lives we live each day ... not a degrading, questionable examination.”⁵⁷¹ Using in particular Semenya’s biography, a rhetorical science, and a rhetorical nationalism as her organizing foci, Levy argued the body was the product of rhetoric. It was the product of its assemblages. With Caster Semenya she stressed that her particular rhetorical production was contingent on a performative notion of gender and sex, one that she located firmly in South Africa and its historical memory of colonial practices as well as the politics of biomedicine that figured deeply in attempts to undo Semenya’s performance. With this rhetorical body, Levy suggested that Semenya was “the poster child for triumphant transgression.”⁵⁷² In this story, we see science and nationalism shift again. This time, science and nationalism figure as equally rhetorical as the body itself. This shift demonstrates the constraints Chuene and Hurst placed on both science and nationalism in their own rhetorics.

Biography

Instead of simply foregrounding techniques of naturalization as the singular explanation of Caster Semenya, Levy turned to those who knew her well to explain the story of her body. She sought to extend not just her personal adjudication of Semenya’s body, but what discourses emanating from family and friends suggested natural meant. For this rhetoric, she interviewed various coaches, teachers, family members, and activists. From the dirt Semenya used to run on to the mentors she worked with, these parts helped to make her body’s assemblages.

Unlike other iterations of Semenya’s body, Levy placed a premium on place, using South Africa to frame her story and reframe her body. Levy wrote about her background in South

Africa's northernmost province, Limpopo, using biography and South Africa in tandem. Merging her personal history with her locale, Levy wrote, "She was born in Ga-Masehlong, a village about fifteen miles from the track."⁵⁷³ Ga-Masehlong "is a small village dotted with jacaranda trees; goats graze on the garbage and the grass on the roadsides. The houses have tin roofs, and people put rocks on top of them to keep them from blowing away. There are satellite dishes in several yards, but most people have dug their own wells and collect firewood from the bush for cooking."⁵⁷⁴ With biography Levy complicated the I.A.A.F.'s presumption of fairness based on testosterone by emphasizing the very raced and classed nature of what exactly could make a "woman" in sport. Levy did the math, "The average monthly income for black Africans in Limpopo – is less than a thousand rand per month, roughly a hundred and thirty-five dollars. (For white residents, who make up two percent of the population, it is more than four times that amount)."⁵⁷⁵ Fairness adjudicated by genetics was then taken to task. Levy reminded readers of the economic distance Semenya travelled to prepare for the World Championships: "She went from training on the dirt roads of Limpopo to a world-class facility."⁵⁷⁶ The economics of (un)fairness was reiterated when Levy spoke with Semenya's former coach. Phineas Sako told her, "I used to tell Caster that she must try her level best. By performing the best, maybe good guys with big stomachs full of money will see her and then help her with schooling and the likes. That is the motivation. And she *always* tried her level best."⁵⁷⁷

Levy was not prepared to adopt Hurst's position that Semenya automatically possessed "an athletic advantage" in need of tempering.⁵⁷⁸ Using the testimony of Semenya's parents, Levy emphasized the precise unnaturalness of mechanisms tailored to make the natural "woman." The unnaturalness of the tests, she found, was conveyed by Semenya's parents. Her father expressed their sentiment thusly, "I don't even know how they do this gender testing. I don't know what a

chromosome is. This is all very painful for us – we live by simple rules.”⁵⁷⁹ The “simple rules” he told Levy about ought not to be confused with a watering down or ignorance of the body. They are, instead, part of a much more radical perspective that took Semenya’s performance as an important component part of her story and the rhetorical body itself. That perspective went a long way in explaining their outrage over mechanisms of naturalization, which was clearly captured by Semenya’s mother: “They did not even consult us as parents. They acted like thieves. They did whatever they wanted to do with our child without informing us.”⁵⁸⁰ The thievery of the I.A.A.F. and equally the actions of Athletics South Africa were exemplary of the Hurst-like agenda Levy took issue with in her work.

The sentiments of Semenya’s family substantiated Levy’s reading. Her aunt stated, “I know what Caster has got. I’ve changed her nappies.”⁵⁸¹ Not to be conflated with Chuene’s look-and-know rhetoric, Levy’s point was more nuanced than that. Knowing “what Caster has got” did not shut discourse down, like it did for Chuene. It was not a rhetoric against rhetoric. It was rather the beginning of a much more complex story. Thus, for family members, looking and knowing was not an end in and of itself as it was for Chuene. Elsewhere, Semenya’s mother stated, “I am not even worried about that (claims she is a male) because I know who and what my child is ... Caster is a girl and no one can change that.”⁵⁸² Semenya’s grandmother was also defiant of any technique of naturalization. She knew Semenya was a “girl” not because of what they saw (Chuene) but because of a life lived. Maphuthi Sekgala answered accusations about her granddaughter by saying, “I know she’s a woman. I raised her myself.”⁵⁸³

Furthermore, Semenya’s track coaches implicitly recognized Semenya’s performance as out of the ordinary but not punishable. They helped to problematize natural performance in sport but making Semenya an exemplar of one rather than an aberration. Phineas Sako told Levy that

she was “a natural” at running. “Caster will remain Caster,” he asserted.⁵⁸⁴ Caster Semenya the “natural” was the kind of athlete who excelled at their sport, a title commonly thrust upon any truly excellent competitor. Thus, while others took her Berlin win as the meddling of a hybrid in sport, Semenya’s performance registered as utterly natural – even commonplace – among her mentors. Her Pretoria-based coach emphasized the same, telling the press, “I have been working with Caster since January [2009] and I can tell you now I have been training a girl, not a boy.”⁵⁸⁵ Levy herself thought so too, recounting her 2009 World Championships victory at length: “After the first lap of the race, she cruised past her competitors like a machine. She has a powerful stride and remarkable efficiency of movement: in footage of the World Championships, you can see the other runners thrashing behind her, but her trunk stays still, even as she is pumping her muscle-bound arms up and down. Her win looks effortless, inevitable.”⁵⁸⁶ Instead of looking for an explanation for Semenya’s win with recourse to a particular technology of naturalization, Levy argued Semenya was no gender fraud. Simply put, “She did not cheat. She has not been evasive.”⁵⁸⁷

Semenya’s rhetorical body was even conveyed in the linguistic slippage of her storytellers. Levy noted that when she spoke with Phineas Sako, “he frequently referred to Semenya as ‘he.’”⁵⁸⁸ Sako, for example, told her “Caster was very free when he is in the male company.”⁵⁸⁹ Sako remembered a particular day when he asked Semenya, “‘Why are you always in the company of men?’ He said, ‘No, man I don’t have something to say to girls, they talks nonsense. They are always out of order.’”⁵⁹⁰ Sako’s linguistic slippage perfectly matched Semenya’s multipart embodiment. What was natural, then, was what Semenya looked like, acted like, dressed like, ran like, and lived like. It was Semenya’s performance, and Levy – with the help of those she met – retelling that to us. The best way forward, Levy suggested, was found in

the advice of an activist she met in South Africa, Funeka Soldaat. Soldaat reasoned that Semenya embraced her body and her body in running, so why shouldn't we? "Caster has to continue running with other girls in South Africa," she stressed, "Because, really, that's what she wants, that's what she is, that's what keeps her alive: that's running."⁵⁹¹

Science and Medicine

In addition to the biographical component of the rhetorical body, Levy also underscored the role that science and medicine played in Semenya's case. Levy advanced a rhetorical science. Unlike Chuene and Hurst, she found that science and medicine were deeply political, belonging not to the province of nature but to the whims of whoever was invested in it at a particular moment in time. In Levy's words, science was a "slippery" entity.⁵⁹² With this description, Levy stressed that science was rhetorical, illustrating a shift from the anti-rhetorical properties that both Chuene and Hurst granted it as part of a rhetoric against rhetoric. As part of Semenya's rhetorical body, science helped to make her, but not at the expense of stopping deliberation or minimizing other assemblages found in biography and nation.

For Levy, the contingency, instability, and tenuous nature of practices embedded in science and medicine – most notably sex testing – were brought to bear with Semenya's body. That is to say, science proved itself as rhetorical because of Semenya's story. Whereas seeing-and-knowing and the laboratory supposedly naturalized Semenya, Levy illustrated that these same mechanisms amounted to rhetorical productions, not reflections of a singular "nature." They were part of "our growing capacities to control, manage, engineer, reshape, and modulate the very vital capacities of human beings as living creatures," and it was precisely this kind of political machinery that Levy sought to expose as rhetorical.⁵⁹³ Toward this end, she used key critical voices on the intersection of science and sex and gender in the form of Alice Dreger,

Anne Fausto-Sterling, and Judith Butler to support this position and this particular portion of the rhetorical body.

Dreger was equally suspicious of visual and/or deep advancements of the body. Regarding visualness, Dreger suggested the “pull down the jeans!” method was flawed, and yet still in use. She noted, “The I.A.A.F. asks drug testers to do this.”⁵⁹⁴ She warned though, “because male and female genitals start from the same stuff, a person can have something between a penis and a clitoris, and still legitimately be thought of as a man or a woman.”⁵⁹⁵ Moreover, she claimed that external visualness was also suspect because it did not so easily map onto or match a body’s inner contents. That is, “a person can look male-typical on the outside but be female-typical on the inside.”⁵⁹⁶ Chromosomal forms of testing fared no better for purifying sport of hybrids. Dreger argued that the seeing-and-knowing of microscopic observation was also not scientifically sound. She wrote, “Many think you can simply look at a person’s ‘sex chromosomes.’ If the person has XY chromosomes, you declare him a man. If XX, she’s a woman. Right? Wrong.”⁵⁹⁷

The complexities surrounding chromosomes that Dreger has made central to her larger project were equally picked up on by Levy.⁵⁹⁸ Using Dreger as a point of illumination, Levy wrote, “All sorts of things can happen, and do. An embryo that is chromosomally male but suffers from an enzyme deficiency that partially prevents it from ‘reading’ testosterone can develop into a baby who appears female.”⁵⁹⁹ Levy continued, “Then, at puberty, the person’s testes will produce a rush of hormones and this time the body won’t need the enzyme ... to successfully read the testosterone. The little girl will start to become hairier and more muscular.”⁶⁰⁰ Dreger’s point and Levy’s as well collectively relate back to the problems with various techniques of naturalization that historically were used in sport and contemporarily

applied to Semenya. Dreger and Levy emphasized their limitations and their rhetorical rather than indisputable properties. As Levy remarked of the tests, “these assessments proved problematic.”⁶⁰¹

Given the problematic nude parade and chromosomal examination, Dreger, Fausto-Sterling, Butler, and Levy stressed that there is no singular mechanism based in science that can truly define a “woman.” Indeed, Butler reminded readers, “It is important to remember why in 1999 sex testing was ruled out for world sports competitions. I gather it kept making ‘errors’ and that there was no agreement on results.”⁶⁰² The I.O.C. and the I.A.A.F. had such a hard time legislating the “female athlete” because of the variance of sex. Butler emphasized that “sex can be ambiguous (and is for at least 10 percent of the population), and much more if you take ‘psychological factors’ into account.”⁶⁰³

Elsewhere Butler has exemplified this position in stronger terms. In *Gender Trouble* she conveyed that to miss science and technology’s rhetorical properties is not without consequence. She wrote that, “technology is a site of power in which the human is produced and reproduced.”⁶⁰⁴ It is for this reason that she urged readers to consider the “uses and abuses of technology” so as to avoid “the human ... becom[ing] nothing other than a technological effect.”⁶⁰⁵ At the same time that she remained concerned over the power implicit in scientific practices (especially those of naturalization), she argued that their absence is just as alarming. Butler noted, “we would be foolish to think that life is fully possible without a dependence on technology, which suggests that the human, in its animality, is dependent on technology, to live.”⁶⁰⁶ Perhaps the best way forward, Butler suggested, is “to craft wide-ranging frameworks within which to broach these urgent and complex issues.”⁶⁰⁷ To be a “woman” for Butler and

Levy alike was contingent on “woman’s” interface with science, but not at the expense of rhetoric.

In her larger work as well Fausto-Sterling has argued that science has never been able to adjudicate “women” in general and especially in sport. Like Butler, she claimed that while science makes categories less assured in sport, we still need it. In her well-known treatise, *Sexing the Body*, she observed that the tests the I.O.C. and the I.A.A.F. have historically used “cannot do the work” they “want it to do.”⁶⁰⁸ The reason, she explained, is because “A body’s sex is simply too complex. There is no either/or. Rather, there are shades of differences.”⁶⁰⁹ Notably, Levy titled her essay on Semenya “Either/Or,” which itself reflected the merger between public advocacy and the resources of critical feminism. By turning to science to understand bodies, Fausto-Sterling stressed that we have to resign ourselves to its indeterminate properties or what she called its “artificial” ones. In Fausto-Sterling’s words, “competitive athletics leads both athletes and a larger public who emulate them, to reshape bodies through a process that is at once natural and artificial.”⁶¹⁰ The artificial part of this equation stemmed from the “cultural practices [that] help us decide what look to aim for and how best to achieve it.”⁶¹¹

The challenges posed by science in determining “women” led Levy to advocate for the rhetorical body. It was her only viable option given Chuene’s and Hurst’s misguided rhetoric against rhetoric. She resigned herself to the rhetorical body, finding that, “Unfortunately for I.A.A.F. officials, they are faced with a question that no one has ever been able to answer: what is the ultimate difference between a man and a woman?”⁶¹² Again drawing upon her theoretical counterparts, Levy was resolute in the position that there is no science that answers this question. Dreger told Levy, “This is not a solvable problem. People always press me: ‘Isn’t there one marker we can use?’ No. We couldn’t then and we can’t now, and science is making it more

difficult and not less, because it ends up showing us how much blending there is and how many nuances, and it becomes impossible to point to one thing, or even a set of things, and say that's what it means to be female."⁶¹³ Dreger even stressed that the I.A.A.F. has an inkling about the rhetorical body, citing that the organization "knows that women naturally vary substantially in their androgen levels."⁶¹⁴ When it came to the "female athlete," the organization was anything but consistent about naturalization because "sex is not precisely definable."⁶¹⁵ Dreger found, for example, that while they policed Caster Semenya's body, the "I.A.A.F. [has a] policy [that] allows a woman with adrenal tumors – who may make more androgens than the average man – to compete as a woman."⁶¹⁶ Dreger's point, and Levy's larger one, spoke to the fact that nature is an impossible precedent from which to legislate because there is no singular notion of "woman."

Given these challenges Levy argued the most reliable precedent of "woman" in sport is a rhetorical one. In Dreger's words, "what we're doing in biology is creating categories that work pretty well for certain things that we want to do with them."⁶¹⁷ She claimed this was distinctly different from a rhetoric against rhetoric, which amounts to "simply making a list of things that exist."⁶¹⁸ Fausto-Sterling made a similar point in her work arguing that at the end of the day, we are left with rhetoric. Thus, she noted, "labeling someone a man or a woman is a social decision. We may use scientific knowledge to help us make the decision, but only our beliefs about gender – not science – can define our sex."⁶¹⁹ Or put another way, she stressed, "Choosing which criteria to use in determining sex, and choosing to make the determination at all, are social decisions for which scientists can offer no absolute guidelines."⁶²⁰

Instead of a particular mechanism of naturalization, Fausto-Sterling, Dreger, Butler, and Levy collectively suggested that once we embrace the role of rhetoric, both bodies and science are transformed in a way that makes sport more manageable and livable. In Dreger's words, what

we are dealing with here is “the crazy sport of sex,” one she bet “no one ever told Semenya she would have to play.”⁶²¹ Despite rhetorics against rhetorics advanced by Chuene and Hurst, the rhetorical nature of Semenya’s body and its dealings were apparent. Butler noted, “the negotiated agreement with Semenya is not based on the ‘facts’ of sex, but on a consensus achieved among the various parties to the case about how to proceed.”⁶²² This consensus, she emphasized, bore no resemblance to “nature.” As Butler put it, “it is important to keep in mind that we can invoke certain standards for admission to compete under a particular gender category [in sport] without deciding whether or not the person unequivocally ‘is’ that category.”⁶²³ Instead of focusing on ontology, she argued that, “sex is a social negotiation of some kind.”⁶²⁴ The body in sport, in other words, was made intelligible by recourse to rhetoric. With Semenya’s case, rhetoric figured predominantly. Butler queried, “are we, in fact, witnessing in this case a massive effort to socially negotiate the sex of Semenya, with the media included as a party to the deliberations?”⁶²⁵ Largely because the body was rhetorical, gender and sex did not have to be mutually reinforcing. Butler argued, “standards for qualification [in sport] do not have to be the same as final decisions about sex, and these can certainly be distinct from larger and overlapping questions of gender.”⁶²⁶ Like Butler, Fausto-Sterling also claimed that instead of a definitive science, we have a discursive one containing “many imperfect options.”⁶²⁷ Dreger too suggested that the body and its relationship to science was deeply rhetorical. For her, the body would always be assembled in different ways and the way it figured in Semenya’s case – in any case for that matter – depended on the way component parts are or are not privileged. “In the end,” Dreger opined, “these doctors are not going to be able to run a test that will answer the question. Science can and will inform their decision, but they are going to have to decide which of the dozens of characteristics of sex matter to them.”⁶²⁸

By parsing science from nature, Dreger, Fausto-Sterling, and Levy problematized the nexus between nature and fairness in sport. Based on her work on Semenya, Levy concluded, “There is still no such thing as a level playing field in sports. Different bodies have physical attributes, even abnormalities, that may provide a distinct advantage in one sport or another.”⁶²⁹ Moreover, she claimed, a preoccupation with fairness missed the point because “There is much more at stake in organizing sports by gender than just making things fair.”⁶³⁰ Her critical counterparts advised more of the same. A true fairness only existed in the realm of the definitive “woman,” which is to say it doesn’t exist at all. Dreger argued that, “Athletes left the realm of the natural a long time ago.”⁶³¹ In fact, their very participation in sport on such an elite level suggested there was something decidedly unnatural about their bodies. She claimed that science only displaced and complicated fairness in sport. Instead of affirming what is just and unjust in athletics by way of the body, “Science now makes it possible to know far more about who really has what inside, and so we’re faced with even more questions about what’s fair.”⁶³²

Despite its obfuscating properties, a boiled down (anti-rhetorical) notion of science ruled in sport as the adjudicator of fairness. Dreger argued that sport remained stuck in a mythical “nature,” “based on vague principals like ‘level playing fields’ and ‘natural’ advantages.”⁶³³ However, a rhetoric against rhetoric had no place in sport’s inescapable truths. Dreger wondered, for example, “How can such old-fashioned, romantic ideals stand up to today’s realities?”⁶³⁴ She conceded that, “Sure, in certain sports, a woman with naturally high levels of androgens has an advantage. But is it an unfair advantage? I don’t think so.”⁶³⁵ Instead, the truly unfair thing about sport was the “whole lot of ‘unnatural’ technology” used to naturalize hybrids.⁶³⁶

Science’s discursive nature was ultimately evident in Semenya’s story when the I.A.A.F. published their policy on hyperandrogenism. Dreger claimed their decision was nothing short of

a technique of naturalization. She observed, “Women who test in the male range for functional testosterone will have to have their levels chemically squashed in order to play.”⁶³⁷ To Dreger this meant that the rhetorical practices of the I.O.C. and the I.A.A.F. were instrumental in making sport functional and “women” functional within it. It meant science was rhetorical. “The reasoning behind this policy,” she found, “is to make a move toward creating the mythical leveling playing field. But what is really being leveled here is the bodies of female athletes. Thus the game being played seems to be a kind of controlling who will count as a sexually appropriate woman: submit to being made sexually ‘normal’ through hormone treatments or you cannot compete.”⁶³⁸

Nation

Levy added another component part to the rhetorical body by foregrounding its connection to South African nationalism. South Africa, in her estimation, shifted to a rhetorical nation because it turned toward the resources of rhetoric to adjudicate the controversy over Semenya’s body. It was also rhetorical because it repurposed shared public memories about sport, democracy, and race. On account of both of these characteristics, Levy embraced a rhetorical nation, not a nationalism attached to a rhetoric against rhetoric as Chuene and Hurst had done. Nation, with its emphases on deliberation and public memory, added to the formulation of assemblages that made Semenya’s body.

In her story she confronted the relationship between science and nation and their figuration in Semenya’s case with regard to her body specifically. Levy explained that the mechanisms of naturalization that were applied to Caster Semenya retained a particular national significance because they reopened a shared wound among South Africans about apartheid. She observed, “The classification and reclassification of human beings has a haunted history in this

country. Starting with the Population Registration Act of 1950, teams of white people were engaged as census-takers. They usually had no training, but they had the power to decide a person's race, and race determined where and with whom you could live, whether you could get a decent education, whether you had political representation, whether you were even free to walk in certain areas at certain hours."⁶³⁹ Given such a racially charged practice of classification, it was no wonder that "South Africans particularly black South Africans," Levy wrote, "have rallied behind their runner with such fervor."⁶⁴⁰ Semenya's rhetorical body, in this way, figured as a metonym for a country's memory of practices once waged on their people. Therefore, Semenya's body was rhetorical for her gendered performance but also because of the rhetorical practices applied to her. Given past memories and present illustrations of power in such a colonial vein, nationalism was an inevitable response in Levy's story.

Moreover, nationalism was deeply significant to Levy's rhetorical body because of sport's past relationship to democratic politics in South Africa. Sport was a democratizing force and a purveyor of nationalism. Levy explained the connection when she wrote that, "Sports have played an important role in modern South Africa history."⁶⁴¹ Specifically a pivotal moment came "during the 1995 rugby World Cup [when] Nelson Mandela managed to unite the entire country behind the Springboks, the South African team, which had been a hated symbol of Afrikaner white supremacy. It was pivotal to his success in avoiding civil war and in establishing a new sense of national solidarity."⁶⁴² Levy argued the memory of sport's democratizing effect was reintroduced with Caster Semenya.

The country did not support her through a state-sanctioned natural body or a colonial body but as a rhetorical one who saw her performance as the impetus for a nation coming together. This was a rhetorical nationalism because Semenya's body served as the impetus for

public deliberation and advocacy. Winnie Madikizela-Mandela urged citizens, “I think it is the responsibility of South Africa to rally behind this child and tell the rest of the world she remains the hero she is and no one will take that away from her.”⁶⁴³ Nationalistic sentiment wasn’t premised on a political antagonism toward science like Chuene or a supposed ignorance of science like Hurst, but instead on the body Semenya introduced to the “world” in Berlin.

According to Levy, the nationalism that took hold with Semenya’s case was pronounced and leveraged for democratic politics. Nationalism was rhetorical on account of deliberation over the corporeal and corporeal advocacy. It was evident as soon as Semenya returned home from the World Championships where “thousands of cheering supporters waited to welcome her” and where “President Jacob Zuma met with her to offer his congratulations” as well as Nelson Mandela.⁶⁴⁴ Levy recounted a meeting of the African National Congress in which delegates debated “whether to pass a resolution in support of Caster Semenya.”⁶⁴⁵ A rhetorical nationalism was ever present as Levy told readers about “The South African Minister of Women, Children, and Persons with Disabilities, Noluthando Mayende-Sibiya” who spoke about their “young star Caster Semenya.”⁶⁴⁶ Mayende-Sibiya stressed, “She is our own. She comes from the working class.”⁶⁴⁷ Absent of any technique of naturalization, Caster Semenya’s performance was the impetus for countrywide support. Mayende-Sibiya was certainly not alone. There were numerous attendees who applauded Semenya’s sporting performance. Levy wrote of a rhetorical nation: “The crowd blew horns in support and some people ululated.”⁶⁴⁸ With the cries of a nation behind her, Mayende-Sibiya declared, “You cannot be silent! The human rights of Caster have been violated.”⁶⁴⁹ Given the shared perception that her rhetorical body was wrongly violated, Levy detailed that, “The resolution passed with unusual alacrity.”⁶⁵⁰ The nationalism that Levy connected to democratic politics was equally a local phenomenon. She wrote of young runners,

including Joyce, who told her “I want to be the world champion. I will be the world champion. I want to participate in athletics and have a scholarship. Caster is making me proud. She won. She put our [running] club on the map.”⁶⁵¹ The body her nation rallied around carried with it backing from even this northernmost province of South Africa.

The nationalism that emerged in the wake of Semenya’s controversial win took issue with the I.A.A.F.’s handling of her. To South Africa’s citizens, that handling embodied a decidedly European advancement of Science No. 1. Levy chronicled that Mayende-Sibiya “asked the United Nations to get involved in Semenya’s case.”⁶⁵² Mayende-Sibiya wondered, for example, “Why pick up on her? What were the reasons?”⁶⁵³ When she wrote the I.A.A.F. for answers and received no response, she found, “that to me raises questions on how it conducts business.”⁶⁵⁴ On the whole, she concluded, “There is a lot that has gone wrong in this process.”⁶⁵⁵

Yet, it wasn’t just outsiders against a nation that prompted national advocacy. Levy emphasized that politics were complex within the country. One only had to mention Leonard Chuene to know this was the case. Toward this end, Levy explained how nationalism also coalesced around condemning the embattled leader. She noted that, “countless editorials have accused Chuene of sacrificing her in his quest for a gold medal and have demanded his ouster.”⁶⁵⁶ Furthermore, “the A.N.C. asked him to apologize; its rival party, the Democratic Alliance, demanded his resignation, and the Deputy Minister of Sport called him a liar.”⁶⁵⁷ Chuene’s state-sanctioned natural body was, in this sense, lacking the nationalism he suggested defined it. A rhetorical nation was far more powerful.

South African Feminism and Levy

The power of a rhetorical nation and the nationalism that ran through it was equally the impetus for a South African feminist politic. I emphasize this discourse alongside Levy's to underscore the point that Levy did not so much speak for others as she really lent herself to broader feminist politics. Voices from South Africa, the United States, and locations in between materialized toward this end, emphasizing the importance of privileging Caster Semenya's preferred identity, complicating the policies of the I.A.A.F., and questioning naturalizing approaches to Semenya's body such as those advanced by Hurst. In short, this body of advocacy challenged visual and/or scientific interpretations of the body and the mechanisms that underscored them. This feminist position asked, "Who is to say Semenya cannot know and enjoy who she is? Who is to say that her 'profoundest sense of self' lies with being considered and treated like a 'girl'?"⁶⁵⁸ Critically important, this position tried to undercut I.A.A.F. procedure and Chuene's own cover-up. Although it seems obvious that Semenya might be part of that collective, her role as a consistently "*unwilling* poster girl for the issue" points to the fact that while others certainly cannot speak for her, there are other voices which do advocate on her behalf in productive ways.

The notion of shared gender oppression underscored a great deal of feminist advocacy spanning Levy and local leaders. In a simply titled "Open Letter by South African Gender Activists" its writers argued of Caster Semenya and all the surrounding brouhaha "this really boils down to gender politics."⁶⁵⁹ In particular, problematizing "what people perceive to be 'normal' for girls or women" was at stake with her story.⁶⁶⁰ The writers elaborated on what exactly constituted gender discrimination at the locus of the body and how that articulation of discrimination, however shared, mattered because of place: "At the core of this issue are ideas

about gender – how girls/women and boys/men look and behave and perform (in this case perhaps a young woman winning by 2 seconds ahead of the field is not seen as ‘normal’).”⁶⁶¹

Activists emphasized that gender discrimination (like Semenya’s) crossed racial lines.

Supporting this position, they emphasized that, “Many white girls who do not ‘look’ as society expects will tell similar humiliating stories of being stopped from entering female public toilets or being questioned as to whether they [are] male or female.”⁶⁶²

In problematizing “normal” physical appearances, writers of the letter pointed a finger at those who advanced the argument that Semenya’s body somehow should have been preemptively disciplined. This argument suggested if only we had taken “care” of Semenya’s out-of-bounds body, or “protected” her as Hurst counseled, then this whole scandal could have been prevented. Her gender could have been neatly reeled in by the proper authorities, if someone or some body had just thought to do so. Yet, as Levy commented, this boils down to “a question that no one has ever been able to answer” or adjudicate for that matter.⁶⁶³ The letter writers argued it was unfair to expect there was an a priori answer to this question. “Comments within the press and on talk shows are unwittingly guilty of this ... problem,” gender activists explained, “in placing ‘blame’ at Athletics South Africa or her coach’s door.”⁶⁶⁴ They contended that “placing blame” was a form of gender discrimination and evidenced by statements in the press that expressed that “authorities should have pre-empted this situation, given her prior experiences (at the hands of the teachers, members of the public and previous authorities).”⁶⁶⁵ That preempting acted as a kind of stopgap measure against the rhetorical body and Semenya’s claim, “I’m a lady.” It acted as a rhetoric against rhetoric. As Levy and the letter writers found, Semenya did nothing wrong. Thus, calls for placing blame for the mismanagement of her body were surely misguided.

The letter's signees were so vehement in their position that gender figured dominantly in Semenya's case that attention paid to South Africa's colonial past and its present memory would somehow overshadow or elide the gender discrimination they saw as front and center. An "Open Letter" reminded readers, "Framing the discrimination as racism or imperialism without reference to gender discrimination as the main issue risks reinforcing gender stereotypes."⁶⁶⁶ It was the precisely intersectional nature of colonial practices that made them resonant in Semenya's case. To forget this, risked losing the point entirely. Levy too reminded readers, "Taxonomy is an acutely sensitive subject, and its history is probably one of the reasons that South Africans – particularly black South Africans – have rallied behind their runner with such fervor."⁶⁶⁷ In light of Semenya's story, letter writers argued for a more performative notion of gender identity in the future. They suggested, "Societies have a long way to go in terms of changing the dominant ideas on how women and men should look and behave and perform, and in some cases, dress – and allow for variations in 'looks' and roles to be underpinned by what people would like to be and do, rather than societies' current dominant expectations."⁶⁶⁸

This South African feminist position embraced the tenet that the body is complex, and therefore, not something that is *by nature* to be categorized, unlike historical colonial practices and more contemporary techniques of naturalization in sport. Assertions like, "gender is malleable and elusive, and we need to become comfortable with this fact, rather than afraid of it" underscore this position.⁶⁶⁹ Levy as well emphasized the same point when she wrote that, "All sorts of things can happen, and do."⁶⁷⁰ In the "Open Letter," then, its writers sought to drain the historically reoccurring ontology found in "nature" – about gender and sex as mutually reinforcing and binary based – of its power. They suggested this boiled down to interrogating and uprooting "deeply held dominant ideas about what is 'female' and 'male'."⁶⁷¹ Those

“dominant ideas,” they argued forced sport, bureaucracies, and nations to operate under an unsavory “bipartite division” by “declar[ing]” what “is natural or artificial” about “women.”⁶⁷² Activists warned that the dividing line between nature and rhetoric always proves ineffectual and continually acts as a breeding ground for oppressive gender politics. They underscored this point opining that the visual body is an especially culpable component piece of gender discrimination: “It is these ideas and actions that promote gender discrimination. This leads to men, who in societies’ terms do not look ‘masculine enough’, being called ‘sissies’ and women who look not ‘feminine enough’ being labeled ‘butch’.”⁶⁷³ Such “deeply held dominant ideas” were locally manifest. An “Open Letter’s” writers observed, “This is what has been so hard to address locally in South Africa, despite our progressive constitution.”⁶⁷⁴

Much like Levy, the South African feminist position turned away from modernity in order to emphasize the colonial legacy of policing bodies in South Africa and present day neo-colonial discourses (like Hurst’s). They argued that a colonial past and neo-colonial present collided in Caster Semenya’s case at the level of her body. Munro articulated this interplay nicely, arguing that, “One cannot make sense of this spectacle without thinking about the afterlife of imperialism under globalization, the international politics of race, and how models of sex and gender normativity are produced and circulated in this context.”⁶⁷⁵ Put simply, “We cannot and should not ignore the abhorrent neo-colonial, mediated discourse that surrounded” her.⁶⁷⁶ An “Open Letter” pointed to the relevancy of that historical past and its present political practices, situating Semenya’s story alongside “issues of racism and imperialism [that] have and will continue to apply in various circumstances and have a sensitive history in terms of women’s bodies, particularly in Africa.”⁶⁷⁷

Levy among others found that the response to Semenya reinscribed apartheid-like practices, especially in terms of the categorization of racialized bodies. Toward this end, she merged the contemporary moment of Semenya's case with mechanisms of naturalization. In Levy's words, "Many South Africans feel that white foreigners are yet again scrutinizing a black female body as though it did not contain a human being."⁶⁷⁸ South African activists too recalled their history to confront Semenya's body: "This is akin to what might have happened during the apartheid era where actions may have tried to stave off racism by negotiating black people's entry into racially reserved sporting or cultural events before the time."⁶⁷⁹

From the feminist vantage point expressed by the letter writers and Levy, comparisons between the raced and gendered practices of colonial oppression and Caster Semenya's global reception were equally as important as the history of nude parades and chromosomes. That particular memory mattered because of the relative racelessness of nude parades and chromosomes. The relative racelessness of the latter history left the impression that "all women" from "all places" were subjected to these disciplinary mechanisms. With the addition of a colonial history, they drew attention to the extent that Caster Semenya's body was actually thrice disciplined (nude parades, chromosomes, colonialism). Furthermore, both histories were not all that far apart in that they both shared a particular relationship to science and medicine. Letter writers reminded readers that "science and medicine" were anything but "value-neutral."⁶⁸⁰ With Semenya they found that the wounds of racial categorization and gender discrimination on this basis were reopened. As the "Open Letter" indicated, "tackl[ing] the science issue" was of the utmost importance for interrogating the politics ingredient in Semenya's case.⁶⁸¹ For activists, it wasn't an out-and-out antagonism against science, but rather a suspicion of science's apolitical nature deployed in the "public domain," in the name of what they called an "inappropriate so-

called enquiry” about Caster Semenya’s body.⁶⁸² It was a suspicion born not of the moment but of a past that was surely hard to forget. This position was strengthened with one particular comparison.

The starkest reminder of the colonial legacy that figured in South Africa’s present was the parallel between Caster Semenya and Saartjie (or “Sara”) Baartman, which numerous citizens emphasized. As Levy wrote, “South Africans have compared the worldwide fascination with Semenya’s gender to the dubious fame of another South African woman whose body captivated Europeans: Saartjie Baartman.”⁶⁸³ To activists, Baartman and Semenya represented two South African women whose bodies in different centuries were poked and prodded for various “scientific” and entertainment purposes. In 1810, Baartman was taken to Europe “where she became a traveling human exhibit of racial and sexual difference. She ended up in France, becoming the object of pseudo-scientific study ... After she died, her sexual organs and her brain her displayed in the Musée de l'Homme in Paris until 1974.”⁶⁸⁴ Numerous writers merged their histories into one. Samuelson wrote, “Nearly two centuries after her death in 1815, Sara Baartman’s story remains hauntingly pertinent, as evidenced by the international furor around South African athlete Caster Semenya in 2009.”⁶⁸⁵ Schultz argued, “At times, the public scrutiny to which Semenya and her body were subjected, particularly those questions about her genitals, smacked of the same insidious European exhibition and enfreakment of Saartjie Baartman, the ‘Hottentot Venus,’ in the 19th century.”⁶⁸⁶ Ratele too noted that Baartman and Semenya occupied a distant yet eerily similar cultural space and that Semenya reopened deep cultural wounds about the objectification, display, and otherization of distinctly African bodies. She detailed, “In the light of the history of the colonizing patriarchal gaze, her objectification was reminiscent of another woman from South Africa whose body was turned into object – Sara Baartman ... With

the historical figure of Sara Baartman in the shadow of the Semenya debate, against the backdrop of violent colonial histories which have shaped post-colonies, as well as the contemporary debates about racialized gender power in South Africa, the controversy around the athlete inevitably was about race as well.”⁶⁸⁷ Munro drew a direct line from Baartman to Semenya, related not by blood but by embodied circumstance: “South African history, in particular, can be read through a series of international sex/gender/sexuality scandals that seem to rebound upon one another, from the exhibiting of Sara Baartman, ‘the Hottentot Venus,’ ... to Caster Semenya.”⁶⁸⁸ Among South Africans, Semenya reintroduces “a chapter of imperial history that has been central to post-apartheid nationalist discourse.”⁶⁸⁹ With the Baartman link, Caster Semenya’s body served as the impetus to confront practices not so firmly located in the past but memorialized contemporarily in forms of testing, media spectacle, and capital profit. The racial politics that Chuene attempted to underscore in his public campaign came to fruition once more when more critical voices entered the cultural fray. While Chuene’s racial politics were emphasized for far more expedient ends pertinent to his personal cover-up, the racial politics of the same memory emphasized among feminists figured in a different way. That is, even as Chuene leveraged them, Semenya’s body remained visual. Here, however, Semenya’s body retained the material reverberations of racial colonial practices. The Baartman recollection was case-in-point.

The “Open Letter” illustrates that when definitions of science and nation shift, the rhetorical body is brought to the fore. It becomes the impetus for feminist politics, malleable to agendas transcendent of visual and/or deep conceptions of the body. When science is *not* conceived of as an anti-rhetoric but rhetorical in and of itself, points of transformation are possible. That is, as it turns rhetorical, and is dethroned from the position it occupied with

Chuene and Hurst, discursive space for the rhetorical body opens up, controversy is made to matter, and the politics of the controversy are the focal point of deliberation. Such a space was filled by the “Open Letter” which drew attention to the naturalizing properties of science used in Semenya’s case, its implications for gender politics, and its relation to South Africa’s history. Further, when notions of nation shift from a state-sanctioned natural body to a colonial body to finally a rhetorical nation, self-serving agendas and neo-colonial agendas are equally made points of contention. No longer sweeping and a-rhetorical as they were for Chuene and Hurst, nation is equally in the service of rhetoric on account of the deliberation and advocacy about Caster Semenya’s body.

Fairness

Caster Semenya’s performance led some to take a critical turn away from modernity. Ariel Levy initiated this turn by merging together varied component parts that combined to make Semenya’s rhetorical body. It would be impossible however to suggest there is somehow a happy ending to her story or to how “women’s” bodies are functional in sport. While Levy’s account advanced another take on the body or feminist voices compelled us to consider histories beyond the scope of parades and chromosomes, they remained in competition with tendencies to push toward visualness and/or deepness. Always lurking were other actors who sought to undo the rhetorical body, viewing Semenya as excessive, threatening, and dangerously confusing. For some, this boiled down to issues of fairness in sport.

Here especially, Hurst’s body was foregrounded by others in the public domain. Levy lost ground to those driven by the depths of the body, rather than, as she saw, its threads or component parts. The logic of that conversation seemed to suggest it was permissible to talk about Semenya’s corporeality because the tests granted the cultural and rhetorical license to do

so. In other words, by linking her identity to scientifically sanctioned proclamations of the body, then there was a way to address, to struggle over, and to above all, understand what her body meant in the context of sport and its fairness imperative. Time and again the results of the tests were the means to discuss “fairness.” As Daniel Cornelius remarked of the notion in relation to Caster Semenya, “We all accept ... and she accepts ... within sports you have to perform within certain guidelines, or else it will be chaos.”⁶⁹⁰

In this case fairness in all its component parts was predicated not on material resources, geographic location, or any other marker. Levy’s Limpopo story was gone. Fairness was adjudicated from the locus of the body. Some have countered that fairness carries more relevant complexities than a body’s insides. Bruce Kidd, for example, argued, “Personal household and national income is far more relevant to performance than hormonal makeup.”⁶⁹¹ Kidd noted, “The countries with the highest GDP produce the most gold medals. The richer the athlete, the higher the likelihood of a winner.”⁶⁹² Or put another way, “the salaries of your parents are a more accurate success indicator than testosterone.”⁶⁹³ Of the testing, Kidd then concluded, “We don’t require this kind of radical equality for other factors that make a difference, so why should we single out this?”⁶⁹⁴ The lack of interrogation of issues relating to, as one critic put it, “sexism, racism, and classism” warrant a more critically informed notion of fairness.⁶⁹⁵ To some, a fairer fairness would consider “those who have access to athletic opportunities, high-level training, state-of-the-art facilities, and cutting-edge technologies to enhance their performance.”⁶⁹⁶ That is, fairness ought to subsume “Access to coaching, technology, sport science, and training opportunities.”⁶⁹⁷ All things being fair, one might consider Semenya’s own loving but notably impoverished “background in the rural province of Limpopo.”⁶⁹⁸ It was precisely this kind of problematization of fairness that was obscured – even erased – when

fairness was legislated so definitively against one measure. That one measure could be found in Chuene's fears and Hurst's journalism.

Despite positions like Kidd's, the Semenya story kept fairness through testing as a bottom line in sport. But also by way of her story, it kept the unsubstantiated fears alive about hybrids in sport. In this way, fairness remained aspirational or a warranted form of surveillance for potential transgressions, seeking out future Caster Semenyas feared to be lurking in the background. Or put another way, "The right to punish ... [was] shifted from the vengeance of the sovereign to the defense of society," and in this particular case, "to the defense of" a pure notion of sport held together by the natural "female" body.⁶⁹⁹ From the perspective of the I.O.C. and the I.A.A.F., fairness mattered because of what might occur. The I.O.C.'s and the I.A.A.F.'s ruling on hyperandrogenism illustrate this point. With it, "Instead of catching cheaters, the gender verification procedures actually fish out decent athletes with various intersex conditions, people who are not different in their natural distinction and good faith from tall basketball players and robust pugilists."⁷⁰⁰ The pursuit to make "women" in which "sports organizations can measure female athletes' testosterone levels and compare them to predetermined ranges of acceptable scores" dilutes fairness from something clearly complex to a one-dimensional form of power.⁷⁰¹ It silences the rhetorical body and it suggests that the Chuenes and Hursts have the upper hand.

The reductive nature of legislating Semenya's body produced equally reductionist accounts of the runner in the press among journalists, officials, and others. The critical turn made by Levy clearly had detractors. Their reductionism was evident in the criminality Semenya's body possessed and the potential for future criminal offenses by other monsters. Findlay queried about the issue this way: "Semenya and other women like her face a complex question: Does a female athlete whose body naturally produces unusually high levels of male hormones, allowing

them to put on more muscle mass and recover faster, have an ‘unfair’ advantage?”⁷⁰² Bermon argued of Semenya and potential transgressors, “They have an unfair advantage ... more muscle mass, easier recovery and a higher level of blood red cells.”⁷⁰³ Echoing Hurst in particular, fairness advocates argued that potential testosterone excess could be combatted through the laboratory, therefore properly aligning “all” “female” bodies. It was only logical to conclude that in Semenya’s case, “the expert medical panel must conduct a clinical examination.”⁷⁰⁴ In defense of their policy, I.A.A.F. officials and their supporters argued fairness registered in just this way, by testing Caster Semenya and anyone else. For example, “Dr. Stephane Bermon, coordinator of the I.A.A.F. working group on Hyperandrogenism and Sex Reassignment in Female Athletics, says the prevalence of women with higher levels of male hormones is greater than most believe.”⁷⁰⁵ For entire sport organizations fairness functioned as a euphemistic technique for policing the body.

While Levy did in fact introduce another remaking of Semenya’s body, her corporeality was equally prevalent in its other modes (visualness, deepness). The Pretoria tests and the I.A.A.F. tests cleared a cultural path for Semenya to be figured out, labeled, and neatly put back on the shelf. Although Levy did not perceive an end to her story, others did by way of the test results. Moller’s notation of the tests was emblematic of this position: “Caster Semenya was asked to take a sex test. The result: She is technically an intersexual – chromosomally, hormonally, and physically possessing a mix of male and female characteristics – and therefore does not conveniently fit either of the two sex boxes.”⁷⁰⁶ Those results dictated the future course of Semenya’s participation in sport, this time on “fair” grounds. It was rumored that following the I.A.A.F.’s testing of Semenya, the organization would only reinstate her pending some kind of “treatment.” With a fair test, came a fair prescription for fair participation. Daniel Cornelius, a

track and field manager at the University of Pretoria told a reporter, “I know she gets treatment. What the treatment entails, I can’t give the details.”⁷⁰⁷

Upon Semenya’s reentry into track, the tests and the treatment did their job by reintroducing her body as properly naturalized. The messiness of her corporeality dissolved (to a degree), and one might say, the memory of Levy’s body account died with it. Semenya’s reintroduction (re)understood her body by its relation to “women” not hybrids, with all things being fair now. She was celebrated for returning to track. That elation, however, was contingent on a body made with the help of mechanisms used in the service of the natural “female” body. Findlay, for example, found upon her reintroduction to track, all the visual cues were there: “She wears a tight turquoise polo over her fit, feminine body. Relaxed, poised and, it must be said, pretty, the young woman with an irresistible smile is almost unrecognizable from photographs taken during the height of the controversy.”⁷⁰⁸ It was much easier to embrace Semenya when her body was visually and deeply “female.” The celebratory motif of Caster Semenya’s return to sport emerged popularly when she prepared to run in the 2012 London Olympic Games and carry her country’s flag at the opening ceremony. Laud for Semenya equally served as laud for the nude parade-chromosome history that naturalized “female athletes” through medicine and science. Like that history, some were crude. News outlets, notably, the *Atlantic Wire* “published two side-by-side pictures of Semenya with crude red arrows pointing at her jawline (slightly less masculine than before?) and waist (does it seem nipped in?).”⁷⁰⁹



The legacy of visual techniques and chromosomal ones remained at the forefront of accepting Caster Semenya as a “woman” in sport. This is not to suggest that Levy’s story did not matter or the “Open Letter” went unnoticed. They did a great deal by shifting the terms of the debate, especially with regard to science and nation. The postmodern turn inflected in this work leaves hope that the rhetorical body is not a lost entity in the context of sport and sport procedure.

Conclusion

The rhetorical body that Ariel Levy pieced together in her story provided a feminist point of transformation in Caster Semenya’s case. Through biography, science, and nation, she made the case that the choice between artificial and natural was a manufactured one advanced by individuals, organizations, and entire nations. The inability of the I.O.C. and the I.A.A.F. to determine once and for all what makes a “woman” a “woman” through various technologies was finally conceded with Levy. By not lending her conceit to naturalism, she called off the search. In doing so, she paved the way for the rhetorical body in which the assemblages of Semenya’s preferred identity shined through in spite of culturally sanctioned codes or technologies. In denaturalizing so-called natural dictates, structures, policy, and power players, Levy made Caster Semenya’s self-declaration that she was a “lady” all but inevitable and utterly rational.

As much as Levy undertook a critical turn, the endurance of disciplinary forces in Semenya's story is hard to ignore. Whether it was the scientific opinion of physicians conducting nude parades, the science of chromosomal testing and its iterations, or the array of authorities that were consulted to make a determination about Caster Semenya's body, science as a rhetoric against rhetoric endured in part. Its authoritative legacy with Caster Semenya's story – in some ways – remains intact. With their policies on hyperandrogenism, the I.O.C. and the I.A.A.F. extended the myth of the natural "woman" whereby a testosterone level was "presumed to be a natural, biological facticity of the body, existing outside the bounds of culture and discourse – a 'prediscursive' reality."⁷¹⁰ The uncertainty and malleability of science and medicine in sport might speak to its waning power, but instead it only grows stronger, changing form over time to naturalize hybrids. As Shani and Barilan observed, "instead of giving up on scientific answers to cultural questions (whether gender separation is relevant to sport and how to arbitrate it)," science simply becomes all the more relevant, its authority all the more necessary, and its practices all the more intertwined with athletics.⁷¹¹ Perhaps it is unsurprising that, "sport administrators, lay people, scientists, and even athletes keep searching for newer biomedical findings and techniques."⁷¹²

Organizations, medical commissions, and numerous invested auditors (Chuene and Hurst among them) found political power in preserving the natural "woman," just as Levy did in destabilizing the same idea. But, as I have demonstrated, the naturalness they associate with a particular embodiment is anything but a natural state of affairs. It is indeed "man-made."⁷¹³ Visions of Caster Semenya's body and their different sticking points with different actors teach us that. Her body – the body – is one legislated through policy, policed with the naked eye, molded through science, and made to matter or not by various assemblages. The "historic" and

“performative” qualities of Caster Semenya therefore remain alive and well; we only have to look for them.

Conclusion

The natural “female” body remains elusive in sport. Despite its ineffability, Caster Semenya’s story reminds us of its discursive viability for various organizations, individuals, and even nations in the realm of athletics. In this dissertation, I have demonstrated that “women” in sport are not an ontologically sound category, but rather the product of various mechanisms of naturalization. Sex was always a prize to be won in sport, rather than an a priori given. As I have explained, “women” never quite fit in sport, except as hybrids, monsters, or “freaks of nature.” Thus, it was only with the intervention of particular practices of “femininity verification” that their athletic performances became palatable. Toward this end, through nude parades, chromosomal analysis, and genetic testing, “women” have always been the product of rhetoric. My examination of gender testing underscores that what makes a “woman” a “woman” centers on the “effects of institutions, practices, [and] discourses with multiple and diffuse points of origin.”⁷¹⁴ I believe this emanates from the mechanisms that sporting organizations historically devised and implemented. These various practices drew the dividing line between who was in the game and who was not, effectively separating the “female athlete” from “women.”

When the I.A.A.F. and the I.O.C. separately convened to deal with the presence of yet another hybrid in sport, Caster Semenya served as evidence of the very discomfort that deviant bodies procured on the track and elsewhere. Their consensus in the form of policies on hyperandrogenism indicated that the measure of a “woman” in sport is specifically tied to a particular level and/or amount of testosterone present in the body. Scholars have pointed out the risks of this decision. Jordan-Young and Karkazis opined that, “Testosterone is one of the most slippery markers that sports authorities have come up with yet. Yes, average testosterone levels are markedly different for men and women. But levels vary widely depending on time of day,

time of life, social status and – crucially – one’s history of athletic training. Moreover, cellular responses range so widely that testosterone level alone is meaningless.”⁷¹⁵ Despite powerful objections like this one, the I.O.C. and the I.A.A.F. legislated that if an athlete does not naturally fit this parameter, she must alter her body or not compete at all. To participate in athletics as a legitimate competitor means quite literally ensuring that one aligns their body not with their natural self per se, but with an operational definition of “woman.”

Summary

In Semenya’s case, the problems in concert with the “female athlete” were replayed. Semenya’s obviously masculine appearance drew accusations of hybridity and a boisterous chorus of detractors when she took gold at the 2009 World Championships. All of the mechanisms that sport has historically relied on to purify hybrids were brought to bear in her story. I suggest that these mechanisms of naturalization specifically materialized with the rhetorical productions advanced by Leonard Chuene, Mike Hurst, and Ariel Levy. With respect to each writer of Semenya’s body, the logic and the materiality of these practices were repurposed to turn her from hybrid to “woman,” or conversely, the logic and the materiality of these practices were undercut, so as to do away with the presumed authority they were believed to possess. While nude parades, chromosomal testing, and genetic analysis have been abandoned as a universal method of disciplining femininity, ending in 1992 for the I.A.A.F. and 1999 for the I.O.C., their memory lives on through different policies by these organizations, the cultural preoccupation with the enactment of femininity in sport, and for the purposes of my project, through the rhetorical productions of Caster Semenya’s body that materialized through Chuene’s, Hurst’s, and Levy’s intervention in her story.

In each case, I find that Chuene, Hurst, and Levy struggled over the relationship between the rhetorical body and the natural body. Chuene and Hurst worked hard to advance different notions of the natural body for different political purposes. Levy, on the other hand, argued on behalf of the rhetorical body, situating rhetoric and nature not as polar opposites but as mutually reinforcing entities that have come to matter a great deal in sport. Whereas Chuene and Hurst engaged in a flattening out of the body, Levy claimed that its individual component parts warranted scrutiny.

Each of their rhetorics had a corresponding vision of science and nation. In Chuene's case, science was an enemy to his cover-up and therefore to his visual body. He used his suspicion of science to argue on behalf of a state-sanctioned natural body. The only science he accepted was seeing-and-knowing. In Hurst's case, science was an adjudicator of controversy and a powerful tool to shut other discourses down about Semenya's identity. He leveraged science's controversy-ending properties against a colonial nation, arguing that South Africans were simply unenlightened about the facts on the ground based on the science he suggested was plain as day. Both Chuene and Hurst conceived of their rhetorical productions as anti-rhetorics. Whether the visual or deep body, each of them used their rhetorical productions to stop deliberation. In each case though, the deliberation kept going, the lie of their historical technique was proven, and the rhetoric shined through the cracks in their stories. In Levy's case, science was just as political but specifically not advanced as a rhetoric against rhetoric. She demonstrated that science was rhetorical and something historically struggled over in sport. It was, therefore, not the anti-rhetoric others saw it as. Levy's notion of a rhetorical science was bolstered by an equally rhetorical nation. Caster Semenya's body, she found, forced a nation to

be rhetorical – to deliberate about her body – and it forced a nation to recognize the rhetorical body that her performance enacted.

With Leonard Chuene, he sought out the natural “female” body in order to advance his cover-up of his own knowledge of tests conducted on Caster Semenya prior to the World Championships. Before the World Championships, he knew of the suggestion for testing, approved Semenya undergoing examinations, and was made privy to those results. This all meant that Chuene was well aware of Semenya’s “confusing” body. It was what he did with this knowledge that was so newsworthy. Despite what he knew and even what he helped to sanction, Chuene advanced what I call the visual body, arguing that Semenya’s sex could be known simply by looking at her. The look-and-know method of discerning the visual body suggested that, “Experimental performances and their products had to be attested by the testimony of eye witnesses.”⁷¹⁶ Looking and knowing demarcated the boundaries of Caster Semenya’s body.

For Chuene’s purposes, the visual body functioned as a rhetoric against rhetoric, the perfect complement to a cover-up of political misdeeds because it was universal in application, all-encompassing of the body’s boundaries, and entirely authoritative in its scope. It was tautological. All one needed to know about the visual body was contained by it. Chuene argued that this visual body belonged solely to the province of nature, not rhetoric. Put simply, he “used rhetoric to attack rhetoric” with the visual body he applied to Caster Semenya.⁷¹⁷ Even while disowning rhetoric, Chuene hoped his visual body would essentially stop the rhetoric and all the talk about Caster Semenya’s body. He hoped all the suspicious onlookers would simply look at Semenya and be satisfied, as he purported to do. Chuene reasoned that as a result of this public directive he would “minimize uncertainty and controversy.”⁷¹⁸ In the place of rhetoric, Chuene wanted quite simply an explanation of “women” found in nature.

Chuene's rhetorical production was only as strong as the historical practice of naturalization that it repurposed. Toward this end, Chuene recycled the nude parade method for his particular mission. His political agenda and the historically located practice merged on account of logic and deeds. That is, both Chuene and the nude parade were driven by a looking-and-knowing logic/practice in order to naturalize the "female athlete" and in order to legitimate Caster Semenya as a "woman" in sport. The nude parade essentially suggested that the natural "female" body was recoverable by the plainness of one's sight. Chuene's cover-up essentially suggested the same, claiming that Caster Semenya's sex would be forever understood by opening one's eyes to the obvious reality of her femaleness on account of her body's surface. While Chuene was successful in propagating a cover-up, it was short lived. The lie of the nude parade was proven once again when the artificiality of his public defense campaign became shared knowledge. Chuene's cover-up underscored the inefficacy of the nude parade itself and its unsuitability for making "women" in sport. Although they naturalized the "female athlete" over the years, the viability of the nude parade remained contingent at best, only to lose out to other methods thought a degree closer to nature.

Mike Hurst also argued on behalf of the natural "female" body in sport. Like Chuene, his conceit remained with the rhetorical body and the natural body. With Caster Semenya, Hurst sought the natural "female" body in order to adjudicate fairness in sport, provide himself with a rationale for publishing the so-called results of the I.A.A.F.'s tests on Semenya, and resolve definitively what he often called the "crisis" facing the track community. In order to see this agenda to fruition, Hurst advanced what I call the deep body. For Hurst, Semenya's body could be understood – indeed be properly naturalized – by peeling back her skin and looking inside for particular contents and components. Through his bodily modality, Hurst initiated a laboratory

turn, a turn toward science and medicine and what they might tell us about the body in sport. This was modernity's introduction to sport. Given his investment in modernity, Hurst's rhetorical production was similar to Chuene's in that it also constituted a rhetoric against rhetoric. That is, "Rather than exposing citizens to the arguments for various sides of an issue and thus facilitating controversy, ... [his] rhetoric promoted certainty or consensus by aligning the will with conclusions of science, conclusions that were, by definition, uncontroversial or incontrovertible."⁷¹⁹ Hurst equally went after the dissolution of the rhetorical body, instead preferring a natural one in order to make a determination about fairness in sport and rule on whether or not Semenya's body met that gauge of fairness.

The deep body that was at the crux of Mike Hurst's journalism repurposed the chromosomal and genetic mechanisms of naturalization that sport relied on starting in the late 1960s. Sport's turn toward the laboratory equated a turn toward modernity, specifically by its leverage of practices of naturalization tied to science and medicine in particular. With chromosomal testing and later genetic testing, the treatment of the "female athlete" in sport was thought to be markedly improved, far more advanced, efficient, and full-proof. No longer would the "female athlete" be subjected to the gaze of a physician while naked. Instead, her clothes would remain on and the inner contents of her body brought under scrutiny. Sport's laboratory turn was not without its problems, however. The certainty of chromosomes proved less than reliable when detractors raised their doubts, when it was learned that chromosomal configurations were far less revealing than once thought, and when the detection of "female hybrids" in sport persisted. In 2008, Boyland chronicled that, "Over the past 40 years, dozens of female athletes tested in this manner have tested 'positively' for maleness. That's because these tests don't measure 'maleness' or 'femaleness.' They measure – and not always reliably – the

presence of a Y chromosome, or Y chromosomal material, which no small number of females have.”⁷²⁰

Despite the very problems ingredient in sport’s modern mechanism of naturalization, Mike Hurst fashioned it for his own purposes in his journalism on Caster Semenya. In turning to the deep body, Hurst equally turned to the laboratory, suggesting her body mattered to the extent that science and medicine could figure her out for the public’s consumption. For Hurst, science could access the natural “female” body and bring an end to the controversy surrounding her. With the deep body underscored by the laboratory turn, Hurst too articulated a rhetoric against rhetoric, one that “sought to end rhetoric as a practice of controversy” and instead situate rhetoric as a container of controversy.⁷²¹ The lie of chromosomes as a pathway to the natural “female” body was again proven with Hurst’s journalism. Their rise and fall was echoed in his work as they were anything but a container of controversy. Quite the opposite in fact, as Hurst’s journalism garnered prestigious acclaim in the form of an award and vocal criticism from South African citizens to Judith Butler. The reverberations of his deep body were felt across various constituencies and met with varied responses. To the extent then that chromosomal testing provided a decidedly modern naturalization of the “female athlete” absent of controversy remained unclear despite Hurst’s insistence to the contrary.

Both Chuene and Hurst applied techniques of naturalization to Caster Semenya’s body. Chuene naturalized Semenya as a “woman” in order to save face and allegedly “protect” her. Hurst naturalized Semenya as a “woman” in order to legislate fairness in sport and crudely sensationalize her story. In these cases, Chuene and Hurst’s rhetorics acted as the conduit for bringing forth divergent modes of disciplining the “female athlete” in sport for their own agendas. As a result of these discourses, and the historical practices they carried forward, Caster

Semenya's body was repeatedly written and re-written. She was forcibly embedded in "nature" to fulfill the agendas of different actors.

While Chuene and Hurst championed less noble causes, Levy's account of Semenya's body undercut myopic framings of corporeality in sport (and their historical practices) and modeled an alternative way in which the nature/rhetoric distinction could be abandoned. In her work, Levy advanced the rhetorical body. Rather than suggesting that the rhetorical body and the natural body were polarized opposites and coextensive as a binary configuration, she melded the two together as discursive productions. To carry out this proposition, Levy suggested the body was rhetorically made. Semenya's corporeality was then not based on what she secretly knew or what science revealed to her but by the component pieces that combined together to make her body – its assemblages. In approaching Semenya on these terms, Levy stopped searching for a natural "female" body as Chuene and Hurst did. She conceded that it was at all important or even that it existed in the first place. What could be known were the pieces that together made Caster Semenya's body. Thus, if there was a technique of naturalization at work in Levy's story, it was a technique to undo the naturalization attempts waged by others at Semenya's expense. Here, both Chuene and Hurst come to mind.

The story that Levy published about Caster Semenya paralleled neither nude parades nor chromosomes and genetics. It paid recourse to no particular mechanism of naturalization as a requirement for framing, understanding, figuring out, or otherwise disciplining Caster Semenya. Rendering the body a distinctly rhetorical pursuit, Levy did not rely on the lie of the nude parade or chromosomes. She wrote of their rise and fall, but did not apply them to Semenya as way to make her body intelligible. Still, she did underscore that science played a part in Semenya's case. In this way, then, her work repurposed the tenuous moment in sport when universal practices of

“female” naturalization were abandoned, critical theory crept in, and far more narrowed approaches to the “female athlete” in policy acted as the law of athletics. Levy’s story should not be understood as an out-and-out reflection of sport’s concession that the body was utterly rhetorical, always performative, and grounds for celebration whatever one’s embodiment. Things were simply not that easy or one-sided. Sport has never and will never take that position toward the “female athlete.” However, given its abandonment of universal examination, space for critical voices was far more possible than it ever was before under the reign of nude parades, chromosomes, and genetics.

It is this possibility that Levy picks up on in her work and runs with by way of Caster Semenya’s rhetorical body. With the rhetorical body, Levy specifically problematized mechanisms bound up with nature, politicized science and medicine, made neo-colonial practices a distinct reality, and invited all sorts of component parts into the fold for the purposes of constituting what it means to be a “woman.” Rather than hide or obfuscate the rhetoric, Levy foregrounded it in her story. In her words, Semenya “didn’t look like an eighteen-year-old girl, or an eighteen-year-old boy. She looked liked something else, something magnificent.”⁷²² The positive point of transformation that Levy illustrated certainly was not the only one, nor am I suggesting that she spoke for the whole. The feminist discourse from pieces like the “Open Letter” speak to the fact that there were numerous voices that emerged to advocate beyond or at the very least struggle with techniques of naturalization. While I do not suggest that Levy advocated for all of them, her rhetoric provides a starting point to think about rhetorical productions that model renderings of the body that take to task sport’s enduring techniques of naturalization.

Limitations

There are some limitations to my project. First, given the attention I devoted to three particular actors invested in Semenya's case, other components to her story were less fleshed out or explained completely. For example, the extent to which the detailed and very messy contours of democratic organizing on Semenya's behalf in South Africa and elsewhere were addressed in this project is not quite fully represented. A story like Semenya's entails endless details, and all of them, especially those posed by the divergent forms of activism and intervention for better or worse, were not all explained within the scope of this project. Second, Caster Semenya's case is a contemporary one, so contemporary in fact that the story is not finished yet. The unfinished aspects of her case mean that several components are still inevitably evolving. In particular, Semenya's future athletic participation, updated I.O.C. and I.A.A.F. policies, and even details related back to the 2009 crisis are always possible and coming to fruition. For example, she only recently publicized her hopes to participate in the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio. How exactly she prepares for this major event, in the inevitable backdrop of Berlin, will matter in ways this project cannot cover. This point underscores the challenges and limitations posed by doing particularly contemporary work. It is precisely for this reason that turning to the past as I have done in this project is of particular import for the crux of my project's argument. Third, another limitation of this project is the extent to which all of "feminism" is represented here. To be clear, it is not. By choosing Ariel Levy as the foci of chapter 4, I focused largely on a Western, white, and privileged portion of feminist activism. I do not suggest that Levy speaks for the whole or for Caster Semenya for that matter. My focus on Levy illuminates a key point of feminist transformation but there are others, emanating from, for example, L.G.B.T.Q. communities across academic and activist contexts. A final limitation of my project has to do with

methodology. Bruno Latour's actor-network theory emphasizes that there is always something more to include in a particular assemblage in order to fully explain a particular moment in time, crisis, rhetorical situation, or any object of analysis. Surely, this is the case here. While I have attempted to trace and fold in as many human and non-human actors in this story, undoubtedly pieces are missing. An assemblage is perhaps always unfinished and its unfinished status is represented here.

Directions for Future Research

Given these limitations, there are several directions for future research. First, there is more research to be done on Caster Semenya's story and South Africa. The history of sport's naturalizing techniques is to a large degree a Western one. Yet, these naturalizing techniques are doubly worrisome in the context of South Africa because of the country's enduring relationship to colonial rule, apartheid, and practices based in medicine and science, the body figures in an even more politicized way. The public memory of these practices and how they are remembered in Semenya's story is worth interrogating further. Second, there is more research to be done about the varied responses to Caster Semenya, especially within South Africa. While some rallied behind her (Jacob Zuma, Nelson Mandela, ETC.), others were less enthusiastic and this point was reflected in their rhetoric. For example, the African National Congress Youth League made headlines when they proclaimed that they "will never accept the categorization of Caster Semenya as a hermaphrodite, because in South Africa and the entire world of sanity, such does not exist."⁷²³ Future research on "female athletes" and Caster Semenya in particular should explore the discursive struggle that her story prompted in public discourse. While some groups and individuals radically defended Semenya, others clearly confronted her body with crisis, concern, and apparently, without any rhetorical options beyond the binary. Third, future research

should continue to explore in a variety of contexts the relationship between rhetoric and science. In general, science and technology studies and rhetorical studies have a lot to say to each other. Yet, this conversation is not really as robust as it could be. By drawing upon critical theorists like Bruno Latour in rhetorical studies, science could be further explored. Certainly rhetoric has been doing a good job so far. One only has to go as far as Kenneth Burke to find science in the realm of rhetoric. But, all the same, this is just one version and just one version of how science is indeed rhetorical. As Latour shows us, science is not this impenetrable, unchanging, always categorically correct force. It is far more than that; it is a rhetorical production. By owning up to this, rather than simply resigning ourselves to the claim, “It’s science!” the scope of rhetorical studies could surely be broadened and enriched.

The Promise of Rhetoric

Perhaps it would be easy to suggest that sport should simply give up its binary figuration in order to avoid future “Caster Semenyas.” Undoubtedly though, the reality is that sport will probably never abandon distinctly men’s and “women’s” events. This set up is ingrained in sport’s organizational DNA. Doing away with it is equally unrealistic as it is unfair to the “women.” Karkazis and her colleagues, who blasted the I.A.A.F.’s and the I.O.C.’s policies on hyperandrogenism, acknowledged that categorization of some kind is necessary. In their words, “Considerations of fairness support an approach that allows all legally recognized females to compete with other females, regardless of their hormone levels, providing their bodies naturally produce hormones.”⁷²⁴ Even Judith Butler argued for “standards for qualification” in sport on the basis of “sex.”⁷²⁵ Nor am I suggesting that such a distinction be thrown out in sport despite the obvious problems it has caused over the years.

Yet, the fact remains that techniques of naturalization still have traction in elite sport. All one has to do is consider the story of Caster Semenya. Nude parades, chromosomal testing, and genetic analysis were all applied to Caster Semenya's body and advanced in the rhetorical productions of Chuene and Hurst. They are constitutive of sport in earnest and certainly in its cultural imaginary. Simply put, they remain ingredient in sport way past their abandonment and despite the fact that the lies of nude parades and chromosomes have again and again been proven. Techniques of naturalization play out in utterly sexist ways. Caster Semenya's excessive body warranted tempering and reigning in, but the same cannot be said of male athletes. As Levy observed, "The N.B.A., for instance, has had several players with acromegaly – the overproduction of growth hormone. Michel Phelps, who has won fourteen Olympic gold medals, has unusually long arms and is said to have double-jointed elbows, knees, and ankles. Is Caster Semenya's alleged extra testosterone really so different?"⁷²⁶ "Women" in sport continue to provoke anxiety in a way that is simply not the same across the sexes. With Semenya, "the ways that sport governing bodies used the historical power and authority of science to sidestep the social and cultural mechanisms that create gender identity are not questioned."⁷²⁷ Thus, concerns about "women" somehow transcending their "nature" are still, and problematically so, a viable option.

The rhetoric against rhetoric that squashed deliberation in Semenya's case illustrates what happens when the resources of rhetoric are abandoned. With the proclaimed absence of rhetoric, controversy, advocacy, and performance are all prevented from realizing their potential, relevance, or usefulness. In Semenya's case, her body was unfairly adjudicated and the self-serving agendas of "rhetoricians in denial" won out. The presence of rhetoric, its foregrounding, and its wielding as a tool "to trace more sturdy relations and discover more revealing patterns"

serves an alternative to a rhetoric against rhetoric.⁷²⁸ In my dissertation, one form of rhetoric that emerged toward this end was found with a networked vision of rhetoric, one evidenced by Levy. More than symbolic action, her accounting of Semenya's body with its assemblages provides for a rhetoric that is networked, or activated by its nodal points as opposed to essences. This is the way of actor-network theory. A networked rhetoric composed of human and non-human elements is promising, especially for some of rhetoric's most traditional functions, like deliberation in public discourse. Bringing more elements into the fore, rather than excluding them, has a place in rhetorical studies, and certainly in Caster Semenya's case. A networked rhetoric also has a stake in feminism. Through it, debilitating forms of power are exposed, and equally, points of transformation are enacted.

With sport, one alternative to the repurposing of technologies of naturalization – to a rhetoric against rhetoric – can be found in rhetoric itself. What if instead of trying to naturalize the “female athlete” into something she is not naturally speaking, why don't we conceive of her as rhetorical? Categories in sport, in other words, would not have to rely on naturalization. Why don't we consider the rhetorical body to legislate sport on far more fair, pure, and natural grounds? In his work, Fouché has taken on such a proposition arguing that the “fictitious construction of a natural athletic body based on outdated sex differences” be “replaced ... with the currently existing cyborg athlete.”⁷²⁹ The rhetorical possibilities of the body do not do away with sport's category imperatives all together, but they do provide a much easier path to some of them and far more breathing space when it comes to gendered and sexed bodies. After all, sport's obsession with gender frauds is historically fear-based rather than empirically true. A slew of gender imposters never infiltrated sport as officials and organizations feared they would and there is never bound to be an influx of hybrids hell-bent on destroying the purity and fairness of a

mythical athletics. Rather than fighting rhetoric as Chuene and Hurst did, an embrace of rhetoric just might ensure Caster Semenya and all future Caster Semenyas a spot in something they so willingly want to partake in. Rhetorical bodies help to make techniques of naturalization warrantless and the nexus between “femaleness” and athleticism far less suspicious and much more of a possibility.

Notes

Chapter 1

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