The equation,” Victoria A. Roworth explains in her contribution, “The Competitive Closet,” in Sportskies, “has always been simplistic: ‘sports are masculine; women in sports are masculine; therefore, women as sports are feminine.’ Simplicistic, but not simple. Sports training masculinizes women’s bodies, but this does not make them less feminine. The simplistic logic of the argument (and the positive message of femininity it implies) has fueled the dya-battling which has haunted women’s sports for decades. Consider the LPDA (Ladies Professional Golf Association), which has been the target of such bashing and management railing since its inception in 1950. The LPDA continues to be marginalized by the male sportswrestling establishment because one of its founders, Beke Delacoe, had well-known affairs with other women on the tour. Today, nothing has changed, and one can consider the recent example of CBS golf analyst Ben Wright, whose hemophiliac and synchronized swimming, or 2010’s inspiring story of an entire section is dedicated to “Our Hennessie, or, Maritza.” It is here, too, that Joan Hill’s comic strip, “Viva Barcelona!” appears, first published in Gillock magazine — an important source for material — telling the story of a woman who becomes a上游head during the summer Olympics. Falling in love with the US women’s volleyball team, she feels she has to be discreet, which wouldn’t be necessary if there were more openly gay athletes. But this would require a revolution in sports and society, the better, and the contribution to Sportskies’s faith. In a previous column, I mentioned Elliott Gilmour’s lament for the lack of attention given to sports by students of cultural studies. With the publication of his edited collection, Mohammed Al! The People’s Champ, he comes across with the goods. Al may have believed that Jack Johnson is the greatest fighter of all time, but for Gilmour is truly the greatest. It needs to be kept in mind that Miles Davis is no stranger to William Clinton’s documentation of 1970. Jack Johnson is a jazz fussion juggernaut that has no equivalent in the civil army — at least not yet. Al once released an offer to play Jack Johnson in a Hollywood version of his life story. Al’s career remains a contested text. His athletic accomplishments were the focus of many articles, sometimes provocations. His personal life was a political minefield. The explosion began when he changed his name upon converting to Islam. Let’s not forget that with the murder of Malcolm X in 1965, Al became the most visible minister of the Nation of Islam, and President of the Muslim world, which Al would suspend him in the late 1960s just as his boxing career was being revitalized. It wasn’t until the mid-1970s that Al was accepted back into the Nation’s fold. Indeed. Al was all aloof, given that his major black sports figures such as Len Alc plead (basketball) and Bobby Moore (football) did the same upon converting to Islam. Al also raised the political consciousness of black athletes during the Olympic boycott/riot of 1980 directed against the participation of South Africa. Perhaps most significantly, Al’s opposition to the Vietnam War precipitated a legal struggle with the American government that lasted five years (1965-1970) and, for a time, cost Al his heavyweight championship. He returned to the ring in 1970 to defeat Jerry Quarry, dubbing “the great white hope.” Thus began his ascent to the title that he would recapture in 1974 with his stunningly orchestrated defeat of the younger and larger George Foreman. It was then that Al spoke to James Earl Jones, who played the part of Johnson in the film. The Great White Hope, understood that his experience was parallel to that of Johnson’s, and that the shoddy-old years that separated them had not changed the racism they encountered. (Johnson had to defend the heavyweight title he won in 1905 against a “white hope” contender.) Yet Al had schwedl, for religious and political reasons, the laboratories in which Johnson adopted his activities and displays, Charlie’s Angels as one contributor, note of “white pragmatic.” Al’s sexism, his work for the boycott campaign, and even his efforts to “engage” boxing, with claims of his as a patriotic and the poetry that filtered from his lips ("North as a bullet, sing like a bird") are all brought into critical focus in Gilmour’s book. What makes these readings of Al’s work — despite the enemies of one of the contributors — is that boxing is not removed by any top organizational devices. Whether it is by religion or destruction, from race politics, this is "race cool" is not played in relation to boxing as it was somehow separate. Boxing is a political medium and race (by whatever means) is one of its constitutive features. [1] Books and Articles Mentioned: Don Delillo, End Zone, New York: Washington Square Press, 1972. Elliott Gilmour (ed.) Mohammed Al! The People’s Champ, Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1990. Mary Jollemore, "White in trouble again over lesbian comments," The Globe & Mail (Dec. 6, 1989).
Why, you might ask, would a man give up a promising literary career - there were some good notices - to become a sportswriter?

Richard Ford, The Sportswriter

SPORTS

GIRL JOCKS

“The equation,” Victoria A. Rowomorth explains in her contribution, “The Communist Closet,” in Spokesides, “has always been simplistic: sports are masculine; women in sports are masculine; therefore, women as sports are feminine.” Simplistic, but not simple. Sports training masculinizes women’s bodies, but this does not make them lazier. The simplistic logic of the argument (and the positive motives of feminism it implies) has fueled the female-bashing that has haunted women’s sports for decades. Consider the LPGA (Ladies Professional Golf Association), which has been the target of such bashing and management wrangling since its inception in 1950. The LPGA continues to be marginalized by the male sports writing establishment because of its founders. Bobby Locke, who had well-known affairs with other women on the tour. Today, nothing has changed. If one considers the recent example of CBS golf analyst Ben Wright, whose homophobic and misogynist slurs were widely reported, Mary Jolliett, in The Globe and Mail, thought it sufficient to let him implicate himself with his own words, thus miss- ing the opportunity to expose the fact that opinions like his - not to mention decisions like hers - have been replaced for some five decades. One positive lesson is that an episode like this one puts into relief the significance of Spokesides in promoting the view of women as important and relevant. In this, Spokesides maps out the personal meanings of these events for spectators and young athletes alike. An entire section is devoted to "Our Henries, or, Martinas." It is, too, that Jean Hilly’s comic strip, "Viva Barcelona," appears, first published in Getlock magazine - an important resource for material - telling the story of a soccer who becomes a strikehead during the summer Olympics. Falling in love with the US women’s soccer team, she feels she has to be discreet, which wouldn’t be necessary if there were more openly gay athletes. But this would require a revolution in sports and society, the better, as the contribu- tion to Spokesides traffic.

SPORTS

REVENGE OF THE PIGSKIN

In a previous column I mentioned Elliott Gorn’s lament for the lack of attention given to sports by students of cultural studies. With the publication of his edited collection, Muhammad Ali: The People’s Champ, he comes across with the goods. All may have believed that Jack Johnson is the greatest fighter of all time, but for Gorn, Johnson is the greatest fighter of all time, but for Gorn Johnson is the greatest fighter of all time, but for Gorn Johnson is truly the greatest. It needs to be kept in mind that Miles Davis’s documentary on Jack Johnson, 1908 Johnson, is a jazz fusion juggling that has no equivalent in the Ali-camp at least not yet. It once released an offer to fight Jack Johnson in a Hollywood version of his life story. All’s career remains a contested test. His athletic success and fighting were the objects of sometimes provocations. His personal life was a political minefield. The explosion began when he changed his name upon converting to Islam. Let’s not forget that with the murder of Malcolm X in 1965, Ali became the most visible of the New Nation of Islam, even if Elijah Muhammad would suspend him in the mid-60s, as he was again dismissed. It wasn’t until the mid-1970s that Ali was accepted back into the Nation’s fold. Indeed, Ali was not alone, given that major black sports figures such as Lew Alcindor (basketball) and Bobby Moore (football) did the same upon converting to Islam. Ali also raised the political con- sciousness of black athletes during the Olympic boycott/protest of 1968 directed against the participation of South Africa. Perhaps most significantly, Ali’s opposition to the Vietnam War precipitated a legal struggle with the American government that lasted five years (1965-1971) and, for a time, cost Ali his lightweight champi- onship. He returned to the ring in 1970 to defeat Joe Frazier, dubbed "the great white hope." Thus began the ascent to the title that he would recapture in 1974 with his stunningly orchestrated defeat of the younger and larger George Foreman. It was then that Ali, speaking to James Earl Jones, who played the part of Johnson in the film The Great White Hope, understood that his experience was parallel to that of Johnson’s, and that the 1960s, which separated them, had not changed the racism they encountered. Johnson had to defend the heavyweight title he won in 1910 against a “white hope” contender. Yet Ali had achieved, for religious and political reasons, the Raymond Miroveli that Johnson adopted as his nickname and display, as one contributor notes, of "white pachyderms." All’s success, his work for the Human Rights Movement, and even his efforts to "engage" boxing, with claims of his on a pretense and the poetry that issues from his lips ("Praise that but the way... it’s all been brought into critical focus in Gorn’s book.

Here these readings of Ali’s story, as an object of the con- tribution - is boxing not removed by any caputalistic devices, whether it is by refereeing, or extraction, from race poli- tics? Is this "real" not played in relation to boxing as it is somehow super- seding. Boxing is a political medium and race (and gender) is one of its constitutive features.

Books and Articles Mentioned:


Mary Jolliett, "Wright in trouble again over racial comments," The Globe & Mail (Dec. 5, 1985).

THE LOUISVILLE LIP