Jibbing the Gender Order: Females in the Snowboarding Culture[1]
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This article analyses the female snowboarder phenomenon. It examines the snowboarding culture and considers the possible reconstruction of gender relations within. The research adopt a classical historical sociological approach drawing on theories of social and cultural change, sport and leisure, and youth cultures, documentary and visual analysis and participant observation. The article comprises three distinct components. Based on raw empirical data, the first two sections paint contrasting pictures of the female snowboarder, one of social progress, the other of social constraint. The focus then shifts to placing the empirical evidence in theoretical context. The final section is a theoretical debate between liberal feminism and radical feminism. The objective is to place the experiences of the female snowboarder into a broad social picture. The article concludes that liberal feminism in snowboarding has the potential to radically alter gender relations.

It is a bluebird morning and the snow is fresh. My heart pounds as I slash in and out of the trees; the only sound other than the snow whispering beneath my board is an occasional gleeful holler from one of my buddies putting their own fresh tracks into another slice of this wintry fantasyland. The adrenaline rushes through me when I see the lines our crew takes; I grit my teeth and launch off the rock drop. I fill with relief as I stomp the landing and then flow out into the endless powder for a few more turns. I am buzzing when we meet at the bottom of the run. We wear grins from ear to ear as we ride up the chair and chatter excitedly. It is only when my buddy exclaims, ‘Hey, that was pretty good for a girl’, that I sink back to reality[2].

Sport is created ‘by men and for men’[3]. Historically, sport has been a proving ground for masculinity. Snowboarding, however, developed in a different social context to organized modern sport. Its birth coincided with increasing female involvement with sport in the 1970s and thus it emerged along with the decline of sport as an exclusive male bastion. Initially snowboarding offered ‘alternative youth’
space to cooperate, express individuality, and play in an environment that ran counter to the controlled, competitive and rule-bound system of mainstream sports[4]. Unlike modern and some alternative sports, females participated in the early forms of snowboarding. Although fewer in number than men, women participated alongside males and the activity was not ‘burdened’ by ‘years of entrenched sexism that plagues most sports’[5].

When television and corporate sponsors recognized the huge potential in extreme sports as a means to tap into the young male market segment, alternative activities such as skateboarding and snowboarding underwent rapid commercialization. Of all the extreme sports, snowboarding has made what seems to be ‘the most spectacular, and sudden, entrance into the public eye and popularity’[6]. Snowboarding quickly took on the trappings of other modern sports: rationalized systems of rules, hierarchical and individualistic star systems, the creation of heroes, heroines and ‘rebel’ athletes who look like walking corporate billboards, and win-at-all-costs values[7]. This is the context in which I explore the phenomenon of the female snowboarder.

Females carved growing space in snowboarding culture, wherein they created independent identities distinct from roles traditionally played by women. This essay analyses the female snowboarder phenomenon and broadly focuses on the role of women in snowboarding, how they came to achieve their present status, and the paradoxes inherent in their contemporary social position. More specifically, it explores the construction, renegotiation and possible reconstruction of gender relations within snowboarding culture. Adopting a classical historical sociological approach (drawing on theories of social and cultural change, sport and leisure, and youth cultures, documentary and visual analysis and participant observation) this essay consists of three sections. Based on raw empirical data, the first two sections paint contrasting pictures of the female snowboarder, one of social progress, the other of social constraint[8]. The focus then shifts to placing the empirical evidence in theoretical context. The final section is a theoretical debate between liberal feminism and radical feminism. Theorizing about structures and the relationships between structures, agents and culture, it signposts possible future changes for the role of female snowboarders. This essay concludes that liberal feminism in snowboarding has the potential to radically alter gender relations. Already it seems that a new gender order is on the horizon and that females are onboard and making ‘fresh tracks’ towards this goal.

On Board: Embracing Women

Snowboarding emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s in North America and the pioneers where predominantly males. Early perceptions were that the activity was best suited for ‘13–18 year olds with raging hormones’ who liked skateboarding and surfing; certainly it was not an activity for women[9]. Although males pioneered snowboarding, women were early trailblazers.
Within snowboarding’s brief history there have been three generations of female snowboarders. The first generation took to the slopes in the late 1980s and early 1990s[10]. Some where among the first to compete in snowboarding competitions and gain sponsorship[11]. However there was a certain amount of tokenism regarding women at this point. During the late 1990s the essence of snowboarding changed and a second generation of female snowboarders emerged[12]. This was the first group of women to benefit from the recently commercialized form of snowboarding and some were shortly making six-figure salaries. The third generation of female snowboarders comprises current ‘up and comers’[13]. These young women participate in different ways to females from the past: they train under the guidance of coaches in highly organized structures in which snowboarding is not only an Olympic sport, but also a highly profitable career.

Instead of settling for ‘space’ on the margins many females took proactive roles within the culture. The female snowboard demographic grew 133 per cent between 1988 and 1997[14]. By 1998, 29 per cent of snowboarders were female up from 20 per cent in 1994. Current estimates put the numbers of female snowboarders at between 30 and 40 per cent of all riders[15]. The 2000 Transworld Snowboarding Business and National Ski Areas Association End-of-Season Resort Survey estimated that 36 per cent of snowboarders would be female by 2005. This section examines some aspects of the progress made by female boarders under the broad headings: camaraderie, role models, female snowboards, women in the snowboarding industry, equal opportunities and jibbing the gender order.

Camaraderie

Camaraderie between the early top female riders and women in the industry played an important role in presenting women as a united group. The female clothing and accessories company ‘Cold as Ice’ motto sums up this force: ‘United we stand . . . together we ride’[16]. This camaraderie among a network of dedicated individuals meant that women were not easily intimidated or marginalized by a male fraternity. Professional rider Cara Beth Burnside says that ‘we challenge each other in a good way. We’re all super supportive, we’re not competing or vibing each other out’[17]. The support structure evident during the 1990s set snowboarding aside from the surfing and skateboarding cultures where fraternal structures left females isolated[18].

Role Models

Within this supportive network highly-skilled female athletes emerged. Much of the progress in female snowboarding can be attributed to strong, talented individuals. Among their number are Shannon Dunn, Tara Dakides[19], Barrett Christy[20] and Cara Beth Burnside[21]. These women ‘had the right attitude’ and ‘charged the industry strong, rather than being timid about it’[22]. In doing so they have helped
secure space for women in snowboarding and the general board sports industry. For example, professional snowboarder Shannon Dunn’s résumé includes medals from the Winter X Games, US Open and the Olympics. Playing an active role in the industry, Dunn was the first female snowboarder to have her own pro-model board and, with colleague Tina Basich, she launched the first women’s clothing line in 1994; Prom has since been identified as the ‘locus of the girl revolution’ in snowboarding[23]. She has used the publicity and prestige gained from her athletic success to promote ‘Boarding for Breast Cancer’ and has organized events to ensure females continue to enjoy opportunities in this sport[24]. For example, she organized the Shannon Dunn P-Jamma Party, an all female, non-competitive event that aims to maximize female exposure in the forms of editorial photos and TV/video coverage[25].

While it is difficult to decipher the extent to which role models inspire and alter behaviour, it is impossible to ignore their contributions to snowboarding. The increasing visibility and identifiableness of female role models may inspire the next cohort of female boarders to follow in their footsteps and similarly undermine the maleness of snowboarding.

Women’s Snowboards

The making and marketing of boards for women was a significant sign that the industry was ready not only to include women, but also to cater to their needs in both fashion and function. There were technical reasons for women’s snowboards: women have smaller feet, are typically lighter and often have a narrower stance. In 1994 Sims tested the US market and launched a full-scale marketing campaign that touted its ‘First Women’s Pro Model Snowboard’ with Shannon Dunn as the rider. It was a success; Sims found the market and surpassed their estimated financial goals five times over[26]. By 1995 numerous companies were producing female-specific boards with graphics chosen and designed by women. Women’s boards are now standard products in the snowboarding market. The snowboarding industry’s accommodation of women helped break down barriers and the popular sentiment that snowboarding is a ‘boys sport’. Such mechanisms of incorporation have contributed to the increasing numbers of female snowboarders.

Women in the Industry

The success of females in snowboarding can also be attributed to women taking positions of responsibility in the industry as manufacturers, representatives, CEOs, filmmakers, publishers and event organizers. For example, the snowboard company Chorus was founded in October 2000 by five professional world-class female snowboarders. Chorus manufactures progressive, innovative products for women. The company’s philosophy is to ‘inspire women to . . . push themselves’ and to advocate on their own behalf[27]. Professional rider and co-founder Roberta Rodger proudly claims to have ‘created a voice for women in this industry’[28]. The women’s
movement within snowboarding has lead to a rethinking of the value of snowboarding for women, and such women-only endeavours are all directed at supporting female riders and expanding their market.

Equal Opportunities

Modern competitive snowboarding began in 1981 with the first American national titles held at Suicide Six (Vermont), and has been an annual event since. In 1982 the first international snowboard race was held at Suicide Six; the goal of the race was survival. Early competitions such as these were unorganized and male dominated. In the late 1980s snowboard competitions developed apace and in 1988 a group of devotees formed the United States of America Snowboarding Association (USASA) to standardize rules and organize events.

With the increasing regulation of these events, spaces for female competitors emerged. In 1988 the first Half Pipe competition held at Stratton (Vermont) had a male and female division. Females were not only encouraged to participate in the female categories of most events but they were often equal to their male counterparts as shown in the prizes awarded to the winners. The first US Open in 1988, which consisted of the Half Pipe, Slalom and Downhill events, awarded Suzuki Samurai’s to both the male and female winners. Female categories encouraged female participants: this is an example of how snowboarding broke ground in the world of board-sports, as traditionally surfing and skateboarding competitions resisted female involvement[29]. Surfing and skateboarding conventionally held privileged male events, only later providing a marginal space for women. By contrast snowboarding events existed for both sexes from the early years.

Although snowboarding competitions have undergone many changes since these early events, female inclusion remains highly valued. The first Winter X Games held in 1997 achieved equity between male and female boarders. The Games included male and female categories in the Slope Style and Boarder X events. This annual event continues to provide an arena for snowboarders of both sexes to showcase their skills and styles. If female boarders had been excluded from such a global event the general public attitudes towards female boarders would not be as supportive as it is today[30]. The 2003 women’s Super Pipe attracted 10,700 fans and it was difficult to ignore the legions of teenage boys who shouted out the names of their heroines. The opportunities for female riders continued into the 1998 Nagano Winter Olympics; snowboarding was the only snow sport not to differentiate between men and women. In the Half Pipe event, female riders use exactly the same equipment, perform on the same course, are judged on the same criteria and attempt similar tricks to the male riders.

Equal prize money and sponsorship deals are further evidence of the respect and status of female riders. Although there are generally fewer female competitors in snowboard competitions, it is becoming increasingly common for equity in prizes; this is distinctly different from other alternative sports and most organized sports.
also. Providing highly visible spaces for females to compete encourages acceptance of female boarders in both the snowboarding population and the broader society. Offering females the opportunity to compete on equal terms as their male counterparts helps deconstruct any preconceived ideas that snowboarding is a boys sport.

**Jibbing the Gender Order**

While traditional competitive institutionalized sport played a significant role in the creation and reaffirmation of masculine identities and the exclusion/control of women, the positive progress made by females in the snowboarding culture raises questions concerning the power-based hierarchy of plural masculinities and femininities, otherwise referred to as the ‘gender order’[31]. The increasingly active and significant role of the female snowboarder suggests that the gender relations in snowboarding are dynamic, rather than fixed, and contested, rather than agreed. This section deliberates the renegotiation and reconstruction of the gender order and considers the possibility that females may be moving beyond the status quo in snowboarding. Firstly, I explore how the appropriation of the new aggressive riding style has won some women credibility among male boarders. Secondly, I analyse the development of a pluralized complex of masculinities and femininities in snowboarding and the possible implications on the gender order. Finally, I describe how the disappearance of ‘asymmetrical gender markers’ signifies positive progress for female boarders and may be symbolic of an impending new gender order[32].

The dominant style of snowboarding has become more aggressive, perilous and exhibitionist. The prevailing style rests upon creativity, jibbing and technical manoeuvres, many of which have been inspired by skateboarding. Many female riders have embraced this new, more aggressive style and in so doing have won women credibility among male and female peers. When announcer Dave Duncan comments that Tara Dakides is ‘by far the toughest and most fearless rider out there right now’, he is acknowledging that aggression, confidence and the ability to take risks are traits that gain respect within this culture, regardless of gender[33]. By successfully adopting this new school style of snowboarding, women are breaking down assumptions of what it means to be female riders, as well as historically and socially constructed notions of masculinity and femininity.

Although snowboarding is predominantly a site where young males construct masculine identities, a range of masculinities and femininities exist. Power relations between male and female boarders are being constructed, negotiated and contested as women gain greater access and status within the culture. Definitions of femininity and masculinity are continually evolving as changes in structural contexts and values in the snowboarding culture unfold. Bob Connell argues that at any given historical moment, there are competing masculinities – some hegemonic, some marginalized and some stigmatized[34]. The meaning of ‘being a snowboarder’
differs between groups of men and women in the culture. Core participants include those snowboarders, male and female, whose commitment to the sport is such that it organizes their whole lives. For these participants snowboarding has become what Robert Stebbins terms ‘serious leisure’ and their lifestyle, behaviour and appearance reflect their status within the culture[35]. Core snowboarders orient their lives around snow predictions and conditions, often subordinating commitments such as work, family, health and relationships to maximize time snowboarding.

Among the core participants a hierarchy exists that privileges physical prowess, authenticity, attitude, commitment, equipment and clothing. Visual signs, including clothes and fashions, vehicles driven, and equipment, which are distinctive and identifiable from both mainstream and other sports cultures mark snowboarders identity[36]. However, members cannot ‘buy’ their way into the core of the culture and less committed snowboarders including novices, poseurs or ‘weekend warriors’ have lower cultural status[37]. The snowboarding hierarchy is not divided by gender, and the core female boarder shares many of the same values and identities with core male riders.

The chase for thrills, the increasing fiscal opportunities associated with professional snowboarding, the media and corporate imperatives, and technological advances have taken snowboarding beyond the reach of a large proportion of the snowboarding population. While many snowboarders are embracing the more aggressive and perilous styles of snowboarding, others, male and female alike, do not subscribe and may even choose to abandon it. But fragmentation of the culture into different categories has not marginalized women, alternatively masculine and feminine gender categories have subdivided into various masculinities and femininities. As this differentiation process accelerates, the maleness of snowboarding is losing clarity and the status quo is dissolving[38].

Snow-surfing began as a male dominated activity, but in the past ten years females have stormed the snowboarding culture and industry, pushing the activity closer to gender-neutrality. Signifying the advancement of females within snowboarding is the disappearance of ‘asymmetrical gender markers’[39]. The early media constructed women riders as ‘others’ using gender markers such as ‘female snowboarder’, ‘girl boarder’ or ‘chick rider’. Male riders attracted no gender markers; the culture positioned them as neutral snowboarders and standardized their dominant position. The active roles taken by many females have challenged snowboarding as a male domain and currently the term snowboarder is almost gender neutral; no longer do interviews, articles or advertisements marginalize females with unnecessary classification. The vanishing of asymmetrical gender markers is a sign of a changing gender order in the snowboarding culture.

The empirical evidence thus far paints a positive picture of the female snowboarder. Gender relations appear to be unparalleled with females ‘onboard’ the wave of snowboarding popularity. Unfortunately, this is only half the picture. The following section examines the other side of the coin.
On Edge: Discriminating and Differentiating Women

Whereas the previous section examined positive progress towards a new changing gender order in snowboarding, this section analyses how male snowboarders and the broad snowboarding culture maintains control and power over women. Professional snowboarder Roberta Rodger explains snowboarding as ‘a male-dominated sport – on the slopes, in the magazines, and in the management of every snowboard company’[40].

The snowboarding culture employs a variety of overt and covert strategies to reinforce female ‘otherness’ and male superiority. This section exposes several paradoxes and suggests that much of the evidence of positive progress is superficial.

Increasing Individualism

Initially in the cultural margins, snowboarding survived in relative autonomy, unfettered by rigid institutional structures. Within this autonomy, female snowboarders supported rather than challenged each other[41]. However, since the formation of snowboarding organizations[42], professionalism, and commercial interest from television and corporate promoters, snowboarding has appropriated some of the gender relations obvious in other sports. The increasingly competitive nature of snowboarding encourages individualism and the structural subordination of girls and women. The social ideology of individualism manifests as an aggressive desire to get to the top, or to be seen as better than others; it is hierarchical and destroys the sense of community that once existed among female boarders. Within this structure, the unified front that initially fostered female participation fragmented. Initially, womanhood itself served as a foundation of unity and bonding for many female snowboarders. As professional rider Hillary Mayberry put it, ‘there are so few (pro) women ... that we all have to be friends’[43]. But individualism and egocentricity undermined snowboarding’s sorority. Professional Gretchen Bleiler recognizes that ‘there’s definitely a change going on ... there’re young girls who are really hungry to win, it’s changing the overall feel at the top of the half pipe’[44].

No longer do female snowboarders constitute a homogeneous category. A variety of competing femininities exist, some of which actively challenge the maleness of snowboarding while others passively accept and support male hegemony. Women experience snowboarding in diverse ways and this diversity nurtures various identities among women. For some women, snowboarding is a gratifying experience and an important site for the creation and negotiation of cultural identity, in which they earn status as core boarders, not as women. Core riders are assessed by male standards of sporting prowess and commitment[45].

For others, their passivity conforms to traditional gender roles. The fashion seekers, poseurs, pro hos (snowboarding’s equivalent of groupies) and so-called girlfriends are often less committed snowboarders. Many of this group negotiate an identity in the mixed sex environment by emphasizing their heterosexual femininity, particularly through their clothing and feminized appearance. Arguably, these females set out to accommodate the
interests and desires of men rather than involve themselves in the snowboarding culture; Bob Connell calls this compliance with subordination 'emphasized femininity'[46].

Connell observes a range of femininities in the broader social gender order and he emphasizes the complex strategic combinations of compliance, resistance and co-operation amongst the different forms. He notes that the interplay among femininities is a 'major part of the dynamics of change in the gender order as a whole'[47]. However, the resentment between the different types of snowboarding femininities arguably helps to preserve the gender order. A comment posted on a snowboard forum by Jenni Cambell is indicative of the hostility: 'girls who do things like stare at boys and sit in the pipe and on the sidelines of the park are just fking poseurs. They need to get a life and go have a sleepover in their thongs'[48]. Such disparaging interplays between some snowboarding femininities helps to maintain rather than challenge the contemporary gender order.

Role Models

The snowboarding industry and media characteristically talk of professional female riders as role models who inspire others to be strong, independent and self-confident, and to adopt progressive riding styles. On the other hand however, Garry Whannel argues that the concept of role model rests upon out-dated and discredited functionalist model of socialization[49]. Moreover, holding sports stars up as role models has major limitations. Many athletes are 'not qualified to serve as role models because they are too young, too immature, too self-centered, or often too involved in deviance'[50]. Professional snowboarders may possess qualities that make them great athletes, but they do not necessarily make great people. Indeed, some argue that educators should discourage youth from emulating their sporting role models beyond their physical skills[51]. For example, Dakides’ riding style is widely emulated, but hopefully few will be inspired to follow her example of dropping out of school at sixteen.

Many of the more recent heroines of snowboarding are, in Jennifer Hargreaves’s words, ‘selfish heroines’, who seek individual glory and financial gain. They are products of the sports industry and the same ideologies of aggressive and exploitative competition that construct the male sport hero. Top female snowboarders train, and are marketed, for entertainment and spectacle; they are the products of a system that continually induces them to risk their bodies and produces them as sexual commodities for global audiences. Hargreaves also warns that ‘because popular heroic narratives are so concerned with the creation and representation of the individual, collective struggles and achievements are underplayed and often ignored’[52]. The main thrust of women in snowboarding has been to follow the men and to ignore the dark side of the sport, in which males remain superior. Unfortunately, the creation of commodified and glamorous heroines of snowboarding legitimizes hierarchies and inequality.

Female Snowboards

Initially, the construction and marketing techniques of female snowboards were dubious and only recently have they improved. Female boards were traditionally of
lesser quality based on assumptions that ‘women tend to be less destructive of their boards’[53]. It is condescending for manufacturers to suggest that snowboards built specifically for women should be ‘soft as noodles’ because women are not as strong as men and cannot power the stiffer performance boards[54]. Despite the inferior quality of many women-specific boards, they still carried the price tags of male boards.

Graphics and names of male and female specific snowboards reinforce traditional concepts of femininity and masculinity. Women’s boards carry names such as Empress, Feather, Nymph, Zen Peace, Wild flower, Bella, Liberty, Amber and Diva. By comparison male boards wear labels like Destroyer, Shadow, Tribal Fear, Machine, Zen Energy, Fury, Bonehead, Evil Cluster, Punisher, Exile and Dark. Graphics on female boards include flowers, birds and cartoons, with the prevalent colours being white, pink and pastels. Male boards feature predominantly scary, morbid or creepy images of skulls, skeletons, flames, devils, warriors, dragons and monsters; the recurring colours are black and red[55]. These images appeal to masculine toughness, or the ability to tolerate unpleasant experiences; interestingly Becky Beal found similar masculine images in skateboarding[56]. While the graphics and naming of male boards encourage participation in the new aggressive style of riding, female boards endorse a more feminine, passive involvement that fails to actively challenge the maleness of the sport.

Women in the Industry

Despite their active roles in the snowboarding industry – as manufacturers, representatives, CEOs, filmmakers, publishers and event organizers – women’s positions of power remain limited. Brotherhood Boards owner Angelica Sage notes that the snowboarding industry can be a ‘lonely business for women’[57]. Janet Freeman, designer and owner of Betty Snowboard clothes, observes continued prejudice against women reps in the industry. Most hard goods companies shy from hiring female sales representatives on the grounds that they are ‘not always taken seriously by the shop owners who buy the product’[58].

Snowboarding magazines are predominantly male productions. Only 12 per cent, 4 per cent, 10 per cent and 13 per cent of the staff are female at New Zealand Snowboarder, Australian Snowboarder, Snowboarder Magazine and Transworld Snowboarding respectively, with males holding the top editorial positions in each of these publications. The common sense mentality that males are naturally superior snowboarders negatively impacts on the job opportunities for females within the industry.

Limited Opportunities

Male governed organizations determine the opportunities available to female riders. Institutions including the International Snowboard Federation (ISF), the International Ski Federation (FIS), the International Judging Committee (IJC),
Professional Snowboarders Association (PSA), and the New Zealand Snowboard Association (NZSBA) remain predominantly male. While females serve on the committees, they hold positions of lesser power and are out-numbered. With the majority of principle actors being men, it is unsurprising that the ‘systems of rules, conventions, allocations or resources and opportunities, and hierarchical authority and status systems’ privilege the male boarder[59]. This section explores the limitations placed on female participation in snowboard competitions.

Females were not completely excluded from early competitions but male boarders defined their levels of participation. One early female competitor, ‘Holly’, reported being put in the female skiing category, explaining, ‘I didn’t place or anything because the skiers went down first. Since I was the only girl they just wanted to put me in with the girls rather than the guys’[60]. Since the inception of competitions in New Zealand, female snowboarders have been included in most events. Exceptions however include the Ride/Surf/Snow and NZ Extreme in which the absence of females illustrates how snowboarding events have traditionally been organized primarily for the male boarder.

The unequal prize monies in these early competitions also illustrate a disparity. In 1996 top New Zealand snowboarder Pamela Bell complained that ‘women get about two-thirds of what men get’, and noted that the US Open held in Vermont was the only race that had equal prize money[61]. By limiting and devaluing female participation in the early stages of competitive snowboarding, the industry was able to establish the sport as a predominantly masculine activity and constructed female riders as ‘naturally’ weaker and less skilled than male riders.

Despite significant increases in the number of female competitors, their participation is still marginalized and this is evident in Big Air contests. The Big Air is an event in which snowboarders perform technical tricks on a big jump, competing for large prize monies in front of thousands of spectators. The Big Air is a high-risk event: the higher the perceived risk the more exciting for spectators. However, designing these competition courses around the abilities of male competitors serves only to marginalize females. Extreme levels of difficulty limit female participation or place them in situations where they risk serious injury. Professional boarder Torah Bright admits that Big Airs ‘intimidate’ her. She frequently asks herself whether she ‘really wants to do this?’[62]. Journalist Melissa Larsen predicts the end of Big Air contests for females[63]. However, I want to debunk the common assumption that females lack ability and courage to enter these events.

The organizers of a winner-take-all (US$10,000) Big Air contest in Aspen (Colorado) in 1996 invited men only[64]. In 1997 the US$100,000 Bud Light Boarder Battle was held at Copper Mountain Resort (Colorado) with 90 men and 35 females[65]. The men’s events included the Half Pipe, Big Air and Snowboarder Cross, the female riders could only compete in the Half Pipe and Snowboarder Cross events; and were ineligible for the Big Air division. Similarly, the 1999 Pulsate Wanaka Big Air (New Zealand) was held on the ‘biggest jump of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere’ on which only males were invited to compete[66]. When the 2000 Wanaka Big Air also excluded females, the organizers where faced with ‘complaints from a large number of
shocked individuals. Top New Zealand rider, Sharon Parker, demanded ‘an explanation from whomever made the sexist decision’ to exclude all female participants. Parker herself recognizes that ‘there could never be an acceptable reason to discriminate us like that’. Her complaint that ‘girls who wanted to enter were told they couldn’t be part of the competition but they could have a go after the men’s competitions was over’ exemplifies the overt marginalization of females in Big Air contests. Seeking acquittal, the organizer, Tony Harrington, replied that safety was the primary reason for excluding women. Harrington claimed that ‘because we had not had testing by girls’ any female hurt would jeopardize the sponsor’s and the event’s liability[67]. This poor excuse epitomizes the organization of such events, which regularly prioritize male participation and sponsorship over the inclusion of women.

Large numbers of spectators and significant media interest contribute to the high visibility of Big Air competitions, which in combination with the lack of female representation feeds public perceptions of female snowboarders. Ignorant of the constraints placed on potential female participants, many spectators assume that female boarders are inferior in ability to men. The real issue is that this event is then taken as representative of all. Many of today’s female riders participate in snowboarding competitions. Yet males continue to define the rules and conditions of competition and inclusion, and they accommodate only those riders who conform to their standards. In short, female riders must fit into male space and conform to the regulations designed by males for males.

**Symbolic Masculinities**

Historically the institutional organization of sport embeds definite social relations, including ‘competitions and hierarchy among men, exclusion or domination of women’[68]. Bob Connell claims that these social relations ‘are both realized and symbolized in the bodily performances’ and thus serve as ‘symbolic proof of men’s superiority and right to rule’[69]. The snowboarding culture continues to construct the sport as a naturally male endeavour. The masculinity of snowboarding appears common sense through the emphasis on male physicality and power with a focus on war, violence, injury and risk taking. The prominence of the male physicality in snowboarding is a ‘subtle form of symbolic domination rather than overt physical control, which contributes to the reproduction and reinforcement of power relations inherent in the existing gender order’[70]. The gender order in snowboarding in which the male is superior is thus constructed as natural, rather than something that has been socially constructed and thus open to change. The physicality of snowboarding plays an important role in the construction of dominant notions of masculinity. Snowboarders earn prestige and respect from their peers through displays of physical prowess, which includes finely-honed combinations of skill, muscular strength, aggression, toughness and, above all, courage[71]. Among the general population such attributes are natural male traits.
Research illustrates the links between the tolerance of risk and violence and how many male athletes value these notions as masculinizing mechanisms[72]. Historically, violence has been a means of exhibiting masculinity in sport and the dominant sports creed requires that ‘real’ men play sport in an intensely confrontational manner[73]. The various football codes and other contact sports all emphasize physical strength and toughness, and the attention we lavish upon these games illustrates their continuing importance for constructing masculinity. Although a non-confrontational and individual sport, snowboarding also values physical strength and toughness and provides youths with a public platform for celebrating masculine ideals[74].

Early snowboarders expressed their masculinity through ‘violence, threats and intimidation’; fights between skiers and snowboarders occasionally occurred as the two groups fought for territory and eminence[75]. Thus, physical violence in snowboarding helped young men to gain status and prestige among peers. While acts of physical aggression are less common on the slopes today, the culture continues to symbolically glorify physical violence in a number of ways, including; a) the naming and marketing of snowboarding products, b) the language used in the snowboarding media, c) the use of sport/war metaphors, and d) the interpretations of male risk taking, injury and pain.

Marketers of snowboarding merchandise often promote the physicality of the activity using symbols and language of war. Army camouflage appears on boots, bindings, boards, jackets, pants, gloves and goggles. Snowboarding companies contribute to this war theme giving their products names such as ‘Grenade Gloves’, ‘Destroyer Series’ (boots) and ‘warrior’ (boards). Transworld Snowboarding advocates ‘a good set of imitation fatigues’ for the ‘little man’ who needs ‘courage and valour’[76].

The media seizes snowboarding/war metaphors. A recent feature in Transworld Snowboarding covers a snowboarding trip with the title ‘A tour of duty in Big Sky territory’[77]. Articles in Transworld Snowboarding use violent metaphors: ‘Coming Next: Ripping, Killing and Slaughtering – in a Good Way’ and ‘Fresh Kill: Early Season Slaughter in the Land of Shred’[78]. Much of the jargon in the culture uses violent metaphors to encapsulate high performance: ‘killing it’, ‘slashing it’, ‘tearing it up’. Within this language structure, female riders who participate in the new ‘aggressive’ style of riding and are willing to act, at least metaphorically, like men have been accommodated[79].

War has traditionally been an important test of manhood and a masculine activity. Sport/war metaphors exaggerate and celebrate differences between male and female riders in a covert way, idealizing and valorizing men and masculinity, making heroes of the aggressive male and female snowboarders while marginalizing non-recruits. Symbolic violence has replaced acts of physical aggression as the means of constructing snowboarding as a masculine activity. In his theory of symbolic violence, Pierre Bourdieu defines symbolic violence as the ‘imposition of systems of symbolism and meaning (i.e., culture) upon groups or classes in such a way that they are experienced
as legitimate'[80]. The snowboarding culture systematically reproduces gender relations and legitimizes male superiority by privileging symbolic violence.

Sport fosters a culture of risk that encourages male athletes to ignore or deny injuries and pain, and where admitting to injury or suffering is tantamount to admitting weakness[81]. Tolerance of physical risk carries enormous symbolic capital in the ‘evaluation of masculinity’[82]. In an activity based on risk taking and pushing individual limits, demonstrations of toughness, courage and persistence are highly valued in the snowboarding culture. Everyday discourses and popular humour within the snowboarding culture are illuminating here. A joke in *Transworld Snowboarding* highlights the commonly assumed differences between male and female riders. Question: ‘What’s the difference between snow-men and snow-women?’ Answer: ‘Snow balls’[83]. Media coverage of male injuries and risk taking behaviour reinforces the popular belief that male snowboarders are superior because they ‘have balls’ and take more risks. In this context male snowboarders frame serious injury as a masculinizing experience[84]. Engaging in risk and injury proves dedication and toughness, and male snowboarders who perform while injured gain ‘kudos within peer groups’[85]. This philosophy has become internalized by athletes and spectators alike.

The glorification of male injuries is an emerging trend in the snowboarding culture. Interviews in magazines usually include ‘worst injury’ questions with replies reported in detail. Likewise, every snowboard film has its ‘slam-section’[86]. Snowboard magazines feature photos of male riders proudly displaying their gashes, black eyes, bruises, stitches, swelling and broken bones. These photos reinforce snowboarding as an activity requiring manly courage. By contrast magazine articles ignore female risk takers and injuries[87]. Both male and female snowboarders take physical risks and crash, but the visibility of male riders and the invisibility of female riders reinforce the existing notion that male riders take more risks and are more adventurous. *Transworld Snowboarding* emphasizes the health risks associated with aggressive snowboarding: ‘ever slam so hard that you get that weird metallic flavour in your mouth?’ asks the magazine before advising readers that ‘it’s cerebral fluid released on impact’[88]. Helen Lenskyj argues that ‘the clearest way that health-compromising sport is consolidated as male territory is through the exclusion of women from sport on the basis that it is too risky’[89]. Women may not be excluded from snowboarding but the culture’s glorification of injury undoubtedly deters many females.

The snowboarding media insists on revealing the gory details, prompting riders for the particulars of their injuries: ‘So did they rip it straight out of you?’ ‘It took off the cartilage?’ ‘You cut off your tongue as well?’ ‘Did you pass out?’[90]. These accounts construct the rider as a hero, for risking physical injury and tolerating pain. Injured male athletes respond to media inquiries in a traditionally manly manner, de-emphasizing fear or pain; ‘I thought I was fine – it wasn’t even bad’[91]. Invariably the interviewee refers to their almost immediate return to snowboarding: ‘only two weeks and its all healed back on. I’m f—kin fine, I went sledding yesterday’[92]. The acts of riding while injured and resuming full participation as quickly as possible provide symbolic evidence of a male rider’s dedication to snowboarding.
Despite its extensive coverage of male risk taking, injury and pain, the media directs very little attention to female riders injuries. Even where interviewers discuss female injuries, detailed descriptions or photos are rare. The media marginalizes female snowboarders’ pain and injuries while glorifying male experiences. The top female riders break bones and bruise and batter their bodies as they push their limits in an effort to be more than ‘good for a girl’. Professional rider Tara Dakides recalls her injuries: ‘I’ve fractured my back, dislocated elbows, and torn ligaments in both knees. I’ve gotten whiplash six or seven times this year and who knows how many concussions. This sport is all or nothing.’[93]. But instead of proclaiming these tough, strong, daring female snowboarders, the snowboarding media silences their heroics and maintains the maleness of snowboarding. In a similar example of the gendering of risk, Janice Kaplan described how a Mexican cliff diver justified the exclusion of women: ‘this is a death defying activity – men are taking a great gamble to prove their courage. What would be the point if everyone saw that a woman could do the same?’[94]. By lionizing the physical injuries experienced by male riders the snowboarding media strengthens the image of the dedicated male rider, as one who takes more risks and, by default, is tougher and more courageous, than females.

Despite many women (and some men) resisting the gendered construction of the activity, the broad snowboarding culture maintains control and power over women by exerting authority through ‘symbolic power’. This has been achieved through a process Bourdieu calls ‘misrecognition’, whereby ‘power relations are perceived not for what they objectively are but in a form which renders them legitimate in the eyes of the beholder’[95]. Through the appropriation of a variety of symbolic masculinities, the snowboarding culture has made male domination appear commonsense, thus protecting themselves from the challenges posed by the female snowboarder.

Like most other modern sports, snowboarding is a social institution created by men, for men. It appears that the challenge to the maleness of snowboarding posed by women has been ideologically contained and the men have been separated from the girls. As Bob Connell has argued, social practices that exaggerate male and female difference ‘are part of a continuing effort to sustain a social definition of gender, an effort that is necessary precisely because the biological logic . . . cannot sustain gender categories’[96].

Female Phenomenon: A Theoretical Interrogation of the Evidence

The empirical evidence paints two pictures of female snowboarders. The first is of overwhelming progress with women rushing to the slopes on boards, filling administrative positions, winning the praises of media and sponsors, and breaking down gender divisions. The second picture is of constrained progress, with women’s participation marginalized by industry, media and cultural mechanisms. How should we interpret these apparently conflicting sets of evidence? Can the two pictures be reconciled? What lies at the heart of these different sets of evidence? Arguably the differences reside in two competing notions of feminism, a liberal version and a radical
version. The former focuses on the achievements of individual women, the latter on the transformation of broader gender relations and structures. In reconciling these disparate images of female boarders, this section outlines these two versions of feminism and, in so doing, it attempts to contextualize the two pictures and to demonstrate that both show versions of reality.

Liberal feminists working in the realm of sport want girls and women to have the same opportunities and resources as boys and men; they want to remove the barriers to participation that constrain women. Over the past two decades, liberal feminist activism has succeeded in gaining ‘easier access and better facilities for women in sports, improved funding and rewards, equal rights with men under the law, top quality coaching on par with men, and an equivalent voice with men in decision making’[97]. Moreover, women’s increased involvement and participation in sport has ‘challenged the naturalization of gender difference and inequality’[98]. Summarizing this situation, Michael Messner believes that increasing female athleticism in sport represents a genuine quest by women for equality, and control of their bodies and self-definition. And as such it represents a challenge to the ideological basis of male domination[99]. From this perspective, female snowboarders whether consciously or unconsciously challenge the naturalization of the maleness of the activity, and thus the enduring patriarchal ideologies that equate physical power with masculinity.

From a liberal feminist viewpoint, the increasing acceptance of female riders amounts to ‘individual equal opportunity’[100]. Enhanced opportunities for individual female snowboarders to purchase female-specific products, win equal prize monies, participate in events and competitions, earn media approval[101], and obtain sponsorship deals and industry support, are all signs of progress. Affirming progress, professional boarder Barrett Christy says that ‘being a female has not been a setback’, while Tina Basich notes that ‘being a women in snowboarding’ has ‘always been easy’ for her[102].

Advocates of liberal feminism, however, typically overlook deeper and more serious structural issues. Liberal feminism incorrectly endorses the commonsense notion that increased opportunities reflect a ‘broad political and ideological consensus’. And, in doing so, it ‘fails to examine oppositional values which relate to broader structures of power’[103]. Ultimately, sexual equality cannot be achieved through women’s agency alone; these require ‘major alterations in the deepest social and psychological structures’[104]. Women have worked hard to gain access to more sports, including snowboarding. But it can be argued that in their failure to analyse patriarchal society and its influence on male structures, female snowboarders have yet to achieve freedom, equality and empowerment within their culture.

Liberal sports feminism takes for granted the distinctly masculine modes of thought and practice in snowboarding. Thus it is commonsense for women to follow in the footsteps of men. Male boarders, the media and females typically compare their performances to male standards. Olympic gold medallist Kelly Clark comments, for example, that she wants to ‘push it right up there to where the men are now’[105]. To gain access to the male dominated institution of competitive snowboarding, women
must adopt the hierarchical and aggressive values and consciousness underpinning competitions and competitive relationships. But by encouraging women to participate in this male defined sport, female snowboarders may be contributing to their own marginalization. Jennifer Hargreaves argues that women who subscribe to ‘models of male sport characterized by fierce competition and aggression’ not only illustrate how ‘hegemony works in sport’ they ultimately ‘collude in its reproduction’[106]. Similarly, females who endorse ‘no pain, no gain’ philosophies and adopt aggressive styles of riding, unwittingly contribute to the masculinization of snowboarding. Ironically, as equal prize monies, media attention and sponsorship deals encourage more female participation, the numbers of females participating, competing and being judged on male standards rise. Individuals that find success in this male model such as Christy, Dakides, Burnside and Dunn enter a lucrative lifestyle rich in financial rewards and status. But it can be argued that a single-minded liberal feminist push to increase opportunities for individual women will not translate into a movement for greater equality. The increasing visibility of females within this male model diverts attention away from the production and reproduction of a gender linked value system, and fosters acceptance of the dominant ideologies that support them[107]. Far from challenging the maleness of snowboarding, liberalism endorses it.

Female snowboarders have come a long way. The mass movement of girls and women into snowboarding has empowered women in ways that have challenged and destabilized the masculinist centre of the sport. As women have gained access to compete and participate within the previously male-dominated institution of snowboarding, those who have most successfully adopted the competitive, meritocratic and fratriarchial values of the sport have achieved individual glory, financial gain and social status. However, the language of individual opportunity tends to inhibit development of movements that aim to transform deeper structures. Female boarders are now implored to follow in the footsteps of individual men, rather than challenge the deeply gendered structure and values of the snowboarding and sporting world. Yet, we must not assume that female snowboarders will continue to accept and support this male model of snowboarding. Liberal feminist endeavours have helped carve out a space in the culture, a place where girls and women can develop their own strong and independent identities. Some of these females may be among the next cohort to challenge the maleness of the culture.

While the achievements of individuals point towards positive social change, closer analysis reveals complexities and contradictions in women’s participation in snowboarding culture. The paradoxes exposed earlier in this study suggest that the negotiation of identity and the broadening of access to cultural and social space remain framed by the parameters of material and structural influences and constraints. Furthermore, changes in the status of individual females do not necessarily challenge the social role that snowboarding plays in the construction of gender difference and inequality.

As in many other modern sports, the power of men over women in snowboarding has been institutionalized. The bonds of the snowboarding fraternity remain deeply
embedded in the social structure of the culture. The primary goal of radical feminists is to transform hierarchical structures and gender relations. The following analyses the snowboarding fraternity and the attempts by women to resist this male structure by providing separate opportunities. It concludes that institutional transformation is far below the horizon.

As females gained more opportunities, they became highly skilled and serious snowboarding athletes. While some men and boys have adjusted their perceptions of women’s capabilities, institutional constraints remain, including those surrounding the fratriarchy. A fratriarchy is a group of young males who compete for prestige through demonstrations of physical prowess, courage and gameness. Across the social world, men engage in action situations in which they display, test and subject their behaviour to social evaluation. John Loy argues that such modern tribal groups provide young men with comradeship, a sense of community, an experience of adventure and excitement, and a release of youthful aggression[108]. This fratriarchial behaviour is also apparent in snowboarding. However, while the fraternal structure of snowboarding provides potential benefits to young male participants, it simultaneously constrains and marginalizes female boarders. New Zealand Olympian Pamela Bell, for example, complains of the ‘unfair expectations of girls’ abilities, as if there is only one scale of judgment – the boys’ scale’[109]. The fraternal structure of snowboarding has played a significant role in defusing the potential for women to challenge the maleness of the culture.

In considering the power of the snowboarding fraternity we should not underestimate the importance of male bonding as an exclusionary practice, or of men’s extreme desire to differentiate themselves from women. Loy notes that the presence of women as objects of ridicule, humiliation and abuse helps strengthen fraternal bonds and reinforce male domination[110]. While blatant abuse on snowboard fields is rare, media representations ridicule and humiliate females by promoting them as sex objects. For example, an advertisement for Treble Cone resort in a recent edition of New Zealand Snowboarder features a male snowboarder glancing back at a near naked female tied to his bed as he leaves to go snowboarding; the accompanying text reads, ‘Sorry babe. Extremely big powder day’[111]. Mark Stranger found similar sexist attitudes among male surfers: women seeking genuine companionship and shared relationships quickly discovered that their expectations ‘clashed starkly with the pattern of a surfer’s life that prioritized the search for surf over virtually all else’[112]. Like surfing, the fraternal structure of snowboarding culture devalues women to help men define their masculinity. Unlike surfing however, many female snowboarders have refused to be marginalized in this manner and some have actively challenged the fraternal structure of the culture.

Separate organizations for female snowboarders offer women easy access to a masculinized sport, create wider definitions of sporting femininity, and provide women with opportunities to administer and control their activities[113]. The philosophy of separate development shares common assumptions with radical feminism. Some feminist sports groups argue that women should not emulate
the hierarchical, competitive and aggressive nature of men’s sports, but that they should build alternative models. The Shannon Dunn P-Jamma Party and Queen of the Mountain are good examples[114]. Events such as these encourage participation on the basis of feminist sporting principles such as recreation, fun and friendship; they allow women to define and shape their own boarding experiences.

Many women have taken steps to rectify inequalities as is evident in events such as the Gathering of the Goddesses[115], Chorus Snowboards, and Boarding for Breast Cancer. Organizations like XX Productions that produce female-only snowboard films, and all-female magazines such as Fresh and Tasty and PLOW also challenge inequalities. Some of these events and organizations emerged as a political response to powerlessness and frustration. Through these collective agencies some women empowered themselves to change oppressive male-dominated snowboarding institutions. Economical motivations encouraged other separatist endeavours as women responded to the growing female market and the popularity of women-only sports sessions. Whatever the motivation, women-only ventures have positive aspects. They provide women with space for female bonding, free from discrimination and sexism, and they give them a sense of control and autonomy. Women-only structures celebrate the athletic achievements of female riders, providing positive images and role models for others.

But the separatist approach is not without limitations. Paradoxically, sex segregation can make gender concerns ‘appear to disappear’[116]. While women-only magazines, films and competitions seem positive steps toward female equality, in reality separatist endeavours actually let the big brother structures avoid social responsibility in terms of the moral requirement publishers, filmmakers and organizers have to accommodate and represent women. With women represented in other areas, the so-called real snowboard magazines, films and events can justify their male-exclusive approaches. When women boarders congregate around female specific alternatives, male dominated institutions remain unchallenged; they stand above gender and assume a naturally superior position.

Some radical feminists argue that separatism does not improve the status of women within the snowboarding culture, and that separatism involves further complexities, contradictions and problems by recreating gender divisions. However, significant bodies of empirical evidence suggest that separatist endeavours have been successful in increasing female participation in snowboarding. Females do benefit from women-only activities as they provide opportunities that would otherwise be largely unavailable in the male order. Moreover, the obvious empowerment and self-actualization gained from these events and from snowboarding per se may actually encourage some females to actively challenge the maleness of snowboarding and perhaps even provide women with the confidence to also act in other areas of society.

Radical feminists argue that women will not achieve equal opportunities in the present society because the system itself is fundamentally patriarchal. They advocate the destruction of patriarchal ideologies and the abandonment of hierarchical, male dominated institutions and relationships. While such radical changes seem far below
the horizon, ironically liberal strategies may lay the groundwork for more far-reaching changes in the future[117]. Put another way, the increasing opportunities and cultural imagery initiated through liberal and separatist endeavours have created opportunities for new kinds of interactions, which will inevitably challenge and shift institutional structures[118].

Conclusion

This essay has explored the phenomenon of the female snowboarder through the eyes of liberal and radical feminists. Rather than conceiving of female snowboarding experiences in terms of a dialectical struggle between empowerment and constraint, I have shown that resistance to, and complicity with, traditional notions of femininity coexist within the same cultural space. The individual and collective endeavours of the female snowboarder demonstrate that cultural change can be contingent, gradual, partial and a matter of negotiation within existing social relations. The possibilities of renegotiating gendered power relations in snowboarding and contemporary society signals the potential for a changing gender order in the future. The liberal and feminist perspectives show female snowboarders as both the ‘active agents in the transformation of culture’ and ‘determined by structures’ respectively[119].

The current structure of snowboarding continues to privilege males. However the growing levels of participation and opportunities for female snowboarders brought about by liberal endeavours are supporting the development of strong, individual women, unafraid to challenge their male counterparts. Liberalism in snowboarding will lead many of these women to utilize personal empowerment and to bring about more radical changes in the organization, practices and value systems of snowboarding so that equality between the sexes can become an enduring reality. In short, it is conceivable that, to paraphrase Zillah Eisenstein, there is a ‘radical future to liberal feminism’ in snowboarding[120]. A new gender order is on the horizon and females are on board and making fresh tracks towards achieving this goal.

Notes

[1] Jibbing: A playful sub-style of freestyle snowboarding that uses all kinds of obstacles such as trees, stumps, rails, etc. Jibbing can also be synonymous with ‘goofing around’ on a snowboard; doing small technical tricks in a playful manner. More recently ‘jibbing’ has come to symbolize the adoption of the ‘new school style’ of aggressive snowboarding on rails and jumps. Boarders are continually creating new manoeuvres on these obstacles.
[2] Having spent eight consecutive winters snowboarding in New Zealand and North America, I am a cultural insider. But my knowledge and understanding of the culture was initially tacit rather than clearly articulated or theoretical. Thus, driven by an innate sense of curiosity in my immediate world, I set out to gain a deeper understanding of snowboarding culture.
To increase the likelihood that the phenomenon of the female snowboarder was being understood from various points of view and ways of knowing I utilized multiple methods of data collection. Documentary and visual sources, combined with participant observation, provide the empirical evidence upon which much of this study is based. Snowboard magazines and websites have been an important source for this study, encompassing as they do dominant ideas, statements and knowledge at specific junctures in snowboard culture. Previous cultural experience enabled me to complete a participant observation phase focused on a snowboarding community centred in Queenstown, New Zealand, over three months. Observations were made in natural settings both on and off the snow, including lift lines, chair lifts, resort lodges, snowboard competitions, prize givings, bars, cafes, local hangouts and snowboard shops. The main aim of the participant observation phase was to refine and develop the analytical themes that had emerged in the study of documentary and visual sources, as well as potentially to produce new areas of inquiry.

Among their number were Barrett Christy, Tara Dakides, Shannon Dunn and Cara Beth Burnside. These women remain dominant figures within the current snowboarding culture and are renowned for their aggressive styles of snowboarding and for ‘narrowing the gender gap’.

Current ‘up and comers’ include Hannah Teter, Kelly Clarke and Torah Bright.

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her revolutionary back-flip, a trick no woman had attempted in competition. She has played a significant role in altering the perceptions that female riders were less capable than their male counterparts. As one fan explains 'your riding destroys all preconceived notions and inspires a playing field devoid of gender separation'. In Jardine Hammond, 'Hot Seat With Tara Dakides', Transworld Snowboarding, http://www.transworldsnowboarding.com/snow/snowboard_life/article (20 Oct. 2000).

[20] Barrett Christy has been a professional snowboarder for 15 years. She features in the Guinness Book of World Records as the holder of more X Games medals than any other athlete. She has her own signature manoeuvre, the Barrett Roll and she designs boards for GNU. Barrett has her own action figure with X Toys, a name character in multiple video games, and became the first athlete ever to have a Nike All Conditions Gear (ACG) signature shoe line designed in her name.

[21] Cara Beth Burnside has pushed the gender barriers for herself and the next cohort of female board-riders. Not only has she won numerous medals from the X Games and been an Olympian, she is also a co-owner of Chorus Snowboards. Burnside has utilized the exposure gained through her snowboarding career and has put her energy into developing a similar 'positive' female movement in skateboarding. In 1997 she helped organize and promote the first All Girls Skate Jam, which has become an annual event and paved the way for the next generation of female skaters.


[24] Boarding For Breast Cancer (B4BC) is a non-profit, youth-focused education, awareness, and fundraising foundation. Their mission is to increase awareness about breast cancer and the importance of early detection among today’s youth. For more information visit: http://www.b4bc.org


[30] Winter X Games 2000 attracted an estimated 201,000 spectators and was viewed on ESPN, ESPN2 and ABC-TV to combine 25 hours of original coverage to the 8.2 million cable subscribers.


[34] Connell, Gender and Power, pp.98–9.


[41] Coulter-Parker, ‘Going over board’.
[42] Snowboarding organizations include the International Snowboard Federation (ISF), the International Ski Federation (FIS), the International Judging Committee (IJC), and the Professional Snowboarders Association (PSA).
[43] Coulter-Parker, ‘Going over board’.
[45] Within this core group of female riders various other identities exist. There are those who prefer the half pipe, ‘jibbers’ who ride terrain parks on jumps and rails; other females prefer big mountain riding which may involve dropping off rocks, riding down chutes and ‘steep and deep’ snowboarding in powder and possibly amongst trees.
[54] Johnston, ‘Giving Her the Edge’.
[57] ‘Wouldn’t You Like to be a Goddess Too?’ Transworld Snowboarding http://www.transworldsnowboarding.com/snow/snowbiz/article/0,13009,244149,00.html (28 April 2000).
Ibid.


Ibid.


Ibid.


Anderson, 'The Construction of Gender in an Emerging Sport', p.64.

'Surplus', Transworld Snowboarding, April 2003, 60.


Joe Dubbert, cited in Young, McTeer and White, 'Body Talk', 177.


Young, McTeer and White, 'Body Talk', 175–94.

Ibid., 176.

A slam section is a section of snowboarding crashes and injuries, similar to many skateboard and surf videos.

For an example of the media focus towards male riders injuries see 'Broken Off: Five Wicked Wipe-outs', a feature article in the Dec. 2002 Transworld Snowboarding. This section includes a sequence of photos of male riders crashing, pp.168-78.

Ibid.

Helen Lenskyj, cited in Young, McTeer and White, 'Body Talk', 178.

'Broken Off'.

Gabe Taylor after rupturing his spleen during a snowboarding competition at Snow Summit, California. 'Take one for the team', Transworld Snowboarding, Sept. 2002, 132–3.


[95] Jenkins, Pierre Bourdieu, 104.
[100] Messner, Taking The Field, p.84.
[101] The sport-media-commercial complex has responded to female snowboarders in several important ways: by reducing the number of scantily clad models used to sell snowboard products, and by increasing representations of female snowboarders in both gender neutral and skill photos.
[103] Hargreaves, Sporting Females, p.29.
[114] The first annual Queen of the Mountain snowboard contest was held on 22 February 2003 at Mountain High Resort (California); female athletes competed for US$10,000 in prize money.
[115] In 1994 the Gathering of the Goddesses brought together female pioneers in the snowboarding industry. Now an annual event, the gathering is the premier networking event, inspiring and empowering women in action sports, fashion and music industries.