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Dr. Canada and Dr. Ocobock

Anthropology of Sports

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Unessay Project Statement

My format of choice for this project was a painting of a uterus over a baseball field (since they are similar shapes) to represent several factors pertaining to the presence and treatment of women in sports. As a note, this painting is not meant to exclude any transgender women who have not had their gender affirmation surgery. I painted the background black to represent the minority women in sports who need even more representation, equity, and respect. They face more struggles than even white female athletes regarding their portrayal in social media and medical testing. One example we discussed in class was Serena Williams and the cartoon released by The Herald Sun after Williams hit her racket on the ground because she was frustrated with her match. The issue is that the cartoon presents Williams in a racist way as her features that are commonly attributed to being African American are accentuated, as well as the fact that when male tennis players show emotion or throw a fit, which is very often, they are not criticized like Williams was by the media (Held). Another example from class is Caster Semenya, Christine Mboma, and Beatrice Masilingi who are all professional female track runners and have all been tested and punished for having naturally high testosterone levels- key word “natural.” Testosterone levels are not a cut and dry marker for athletic performance, but many athletic committees are still operating on the idea that they are which puts women like Semenya, Mboma, and Masilingi at a disadvantage when it comes to participating in their chosen

sport at higher levels (Granville). Overall, I wanted to create something that pushes for the need for a change from associating sport and athleticism with men and masculinity to these things being inclusive of all groups of people, as well as better treatment, representation, and presentation to society of women who are currently in sport. Women, both cis and trans, deserve fair pay, more respect, as well as increased amounts of women and women of color in coaching, referee, broadcasting, & analyst positions, and more leniency when it comes to expressing emotion because currently female athletes get criticized for certain behaviors while men who do the same thing are not questioned, and my painting aims to stress this. Another change I push for is an increase in female researchers and research done on females, specifically on the menstrual cycle (hence the uterus) since little to nothing is known about how it affects female athletes' performance. This is a personal topic for me because I want to see about starting research here at Notre Dame that focuses on female athletes and how their cycles affect their performance and because I plan to go into sports medicine as an orthopedic surgeon, potentially specializing in female athletes.

A big challenge I faced while completing this assignment was executing my idea, as I am by no means an artist. I was also worried what I am trying to portray doesn't all come through the painting, but I think it's like any painting or piece of art in which the interpretation is up to the viewer. This project showed me how much I learned from this course and that I truly understood the material because I was able to tie together a lot of the information we covered and advocate for something I am passionate about. I truly think I put forward my best work with this painting because, again, I am in no way an artist, but I hope others are able to take away the points about women in sport I am trying to portray.

Works Cited

Granville, Samantha. "Namibian Teens Vow to Fight Olympics Testosterone Ban." *BBC News*, BBC, 7 July 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-57748135>.

Held, Amy. "Controversial Serena Williams Cartoon Ruled 'Non-Racist' by Australia's Press Council." *NPR*, NPR, 25 Feb. 2019, <https://www.npr.org/2019/02/25/697672690/controversial-serena-cartoon-ruled-non-racist-by-australia-s-governing-press-bod>.