Aesthetics and Athletics: Staring at Difference in ESPN the Magazine’s “Bodies We Want”

Lorin Shellenberger

ESPN the Magazine unveiled its October 19, 2009 issue with one of six covers, each of a very naked to partially naked Serena Williams (tennis), Dwight Howard (basketball), Gina Carano (mixed martial arts), Carl Edwards (NASCAR), Sarah Reinertsen (triathlon), or Adrian Peterson (football). ESPN called this issue “The Body Issue,” explaining, “The Magazine has long been fascinated by athlete’s bodies …. We think of the following pages as a celebration and an exploration of the athletic form” (2009, 49). Yet despite this clear intention to celebrate the athletic form, only one of these cover photos depicts an athlete in the midst of her respective sport, that of Gina Carano. Williams, Reinertsen, and Peterson are merely pictured sitting down, all with their legs drawn towards their chests, while Howard and Edwards are pictured from the waist up, with Howard crossing one arm in front of his chest and Edwards pictured in profile, flexing his bicep by holding up a tire. The cover images from the 2009 Body Issue are not the only instances of athletes photographed in such demure, almost suggestive poses. ESPN’s Body Issue consistently depicts athletes, and in particular female athletes, as objects of the gaze, reinforcing the long history of women as the surveyed. In this essay I use psychoanalytic theory, feminist film theory, and a Foucauldian analysis to argue that far from celebrating the athletic form, ESPN’s Body Issue relies on relationships of biopower that capitalize on the differences in social presence between men and women. The viewers of these images are encouraged to view the athletes as spectacles, and in particular, to view women, African Americans, and disabled athletes as exotic others. Such images invite the full extent of what Michel Foucault would call surveillance, and work to normalize the body, further making docile the already highly disciplined bodies of athletes. This analysis demonstrates not only the extent to which sport is just one other mechanism through which power operates on the body, but also argues the excessive consumption of sport-related media, particularly sport-related images, in American society.
further subjugates the bodies of athletes and situates the bodies of nonathletes as somehow lacking.

Fig. 1-6 ESPN the Magazine cover images for the 2009 issue (top left to bottom right): Serena Williams, Dwight Howard, Gina Carano, Carl Edwards, Sarah Reinertsen, and Adrian Peterson.

A Celebration of What, Exactly?

When the first Body Issue was released in 2009, ESPN framed the issue as a “celebration of athletic form,” attempting to distinguish the issue from other brazen forays by sports magazines, such as Sports Illustrated’s annual Swimsuit Issue, though both publications heavily rely on ideas of spectatorship and desire in their respective viewers. Despite obvious comparisons to Sports Illustrated’s Swimsuit Issue, ESPN The Magazine’s Editor-in-Chief Chad Millman claims the Body Issue was never intended to rival the Swimsuit Issue. In a 2011 interview with USA Today reporter Michael McCarthy, Millman argues the Body Issue is different from the Swimsuit Issue because the Swimsuit Issue is “not about sports and it’s not about athletes,” while the Body Issue is “only about the athletic form .... We’re not about just showing people who are buff and trying to excite the masses” (McCarthy). However, excite the masses they did. General Manager and Editorial Director Gary Hoenig told CNBC’s Darren Rovell that the 2009 Body Issue drew the most advertising in the month of October since the magazine’s 1998 launch, and 35 percent more advertising than the (non-Body) issue for the same week the previous year (Rovell). In addition, sales of the 2009 Body Issue were almost double that of other regular issues. According
to Hoenig, the 2009 issue “was our biggest seller on the newsstand since the college football issue in 2007 and it’s likely in the top five best selling in the last five years” (Rovell). Though ESPN attempts to situate the Body Issues as aesthetic, artistic representations, it is clear they are also interested in producing the biggest spectacle for an excited audience.

ESPN’s audience has in fact remained largely excited about the Body Issues and ESPN continues to defend the issues against their few critics by relying on an idealized “natural” aesthetic for both men and women. ESPN staff writer Leslie Goldman supports the 2011 Body Issue by claiming:

Unlike other shall-remain-nameless sports magazines that annually feature (for no apparent reason) naked or near-naked non-athlete women posing in G-strings and body paint, the Body Issue showcases athletes themselves. The images highlight their accomplishments on and off the field and capture their strength in a beautiful, respectful way. A diverse rainbow of body types are featured, from 5-foot-1 Sacramone to 6-foot-1 Fowles. (Men are featured, too, so one could argue it’s—at the very least—equal-opportunity exploitation.) (Goldman)

But exploitation might be quite fitting here, as ESPN photographer Nancy Weisman, who shot Venus Williams, Philippa Raschker, Amare Stoudemire, and Diana Taurasi for the 2010 issue, reflects on the shoot in an online feature called “Body Blurbs.” Referring to the photo shoot with Venus Williams, Weisman says, “We were told upfront that Venus would not get nude. Nor would she take off her top like Serena did last year. Before I left for the shoot I was urged by our editor-in-chief, ‘Get her naked Nancy.’ Maybe I’m losing my touch because she stood firm” (Weisman). Despite its claim to celebrate the athletic form in a “respectful” way, Weisman was clearly directed to convince Venus Williams to go against Williams’s prior expressed wishes. Apparently ESPN is fine with celebrating the athletic form in all of its diversity, so long as that diversity is naked: Venus Williams was not featured in the main photographic portfolio for the 2010 issue, and every woman featured in that portfolio was completely nude, compared to only five completely nude female athletes of the 10 featured in 2009. And since the inaugural 2009 issue, every athlete featured is completely nude.
In addition, though Goldman claims the magazine celebrates “athletes themselves,” the context in which many of the athletes are featured is hardly representative of their athletic accomplishments. For example, many of the athletes, male and female, are pictured with no reference to their respective sports. Surfer Stephanie Gilmore, who appears in the 2011 issue, is shown reclining on a red lounge chair, and in the same issue, football player Steven Jackson is featured standing on top of a cement structure that looks more like a high dive than an end zone. Furthermore, all of the women featured in the Body Issues have had their hair and makeup done before the shoot, appearing much differently than they might for athletic competition. Olympic track and field athlete Lolo Jones, for example, has her hair curled and falling loosely and no glasses in her ESPN photos, while she often competes with her hair pulled back in a ponytail and wearing sports glasses. The deceiving depiction of these athletes only further inscribes them as objects of desire and situates them as Other from the viewer.

Fig. 7 A non-naked Venus Williams. This image appeared in the first few pages of the magazine, not in the main portfolio.

Fig. 8-10 Clockwise from top right: Lolo Jones, Stephen Jackson, and Stephanie Gilmore.
“Bodies We Want”: Athletes as Objects of Desire

From its inception, ESPN’s Body Issue has relied on the objectification of its featured athletes and the spectatorship and associated desire viewers bring to the images. ESPN opened the central photographic portfolio of their inaugural 2009 Body Issue by claiming, “The best bodies in sports grab us because they can accomplish things we can only imagine. In all their shapes and sizes, they are, quite simply … bodies we want” (2009, 50, emphasis mine). In this introduction the athletes included in the issue are referred to as merely bodies—their identities as athletes are stripped, and their ability to garner attention is explained only as a result of their bodies, as if their athletic accomplishments are exclusively due to some bodily abnormality and not because of hours of training. Feminist visual studies scholars Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright explain that photographs in particular work to situate a difference between viewer and subject. According to Sturken and Cartwright, photographs are “a medium through which that which is defined as other is posited as that which is not the norm or the primary subject” (106). The ESPN Body Issues draw attention to the athlete as other, establishing an explicit difference between the imaged athletes and the viewers of their images, which in turn situates the viewer as lacking.

In fact, the phrase “Bodies We Want” immediately hails the viewer into a particular sort of response to these images, that of desire, and this phrase would become the title or catchphrase for the featured photographic spread in each of the Body Issues, continually reinforcing ideas of desire and lack. Sturken and Cartwright argue the act of looking produces a sense of oneself in the person who looks, both in the eyes of him or herself and of others, and also in relation to natural and cultural contexts that make up the field of the gaze (103). In this way, the subject is composed both consciously and unconsciously. Jacques Lacan’s theory of the mirror-phase, or the moment in human development in which the child can recognize him or herself in the mirror, and thus identifies itself as Other (other than mother) and separate from his or her mother, is helpful here. As Sturken and Cartwright explain, Lacan’s concept of the gaze stems from the mirror-phase: the recognition of oneself in the mirror creates the concept of the gaze, but the gaze “does not make the subject knowable to itself or to others,” because it relies on a misrecognition of self; the image one sees in the mirror is not oneself, but a representation of oneself. The gaze is instead part of a “desire for completion of oneself through the other,” or the representation one sees in the mirror (122). In other words, the viewer gazes on the image and sees a reminder of an incomplete or fragmented self, a self apart from its mother. This notion of
incompleteness, of lack, operates anytime the viewer gazes on an image. In connection to the ESPN images, the viewer gazes on the images of idealized athletes, sees the lack in his or herself, and desires completion through the other, through the representations of the athletes. In this way, the athletes pictured in the images become objects, and more specifically, objects of desire. Viewers are reminded of this desire yet again through the title “Bodies We Want,” which reinforces the subjectivity of the athletes pictured.

Normalized Bodies

Unfortunately, these images do not just present overly idealized images, they also effectively work to normalize the body through systems of power, individualizing extraordinary athletic bodies while also differentiating them from the viewer’s body. Foucault argues that many relationships of power are in fact exercised on and through the body, a phenomenon he refers to as biopower. Foucault explains the body is “directly involved in a political field; power relations have an immediate hold upon it; they invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs” (25). American culture has been largely obsessed with bodies—ideal body size, ideal body shape—and we have invested a great deal of power and importance to athletes, in part because of the power relations involved with the body. Foucault explains that the distribution of ranks or grades, which arise in part through military, education, and health care systems that individualize and measure bodies, “marks the gaps, hierarchizes qualities, skills, and aptitudes” at the same time that it rewards and punishes (181). Sport culture in the United States effectively pits bodies against each other, constantly measuring the skills of athletes and ranking them according to batting average, points scored, yards receiving, or sheer speed. Bodies that are more highly disciplined—and it is clear that athletes are incredibly disciplined—are rewarded, in this case with a higher rank in the social system, celebrity status. Paradoxically though, the higher the ranking the more disciplined the body, and the more disciplined the body, the more it is subjected to power and the more it operates to normalize other bodies in comparison with itself.

Photographs and other images, including the ones featured in ESPN’s Body Issues, are used to reinscribe relationships of power, tying this power to the body at the same time that it forces the body to be subject to this power. As Sturken and Cartwright suggest, photographic images used in media and advertising “produce homogenous images for us of the perfect look, the perfect body, and the perfect pose” creating a “normalizing gaze that viewers turn
on themselves” (111). Disciplinary power, enacted in part through systems of ranking and the increased social presence awarded to certain bodies, which is evident in the widespread distribution of media such as ESPN’s Body Issues, functions to differentiate and exclude, normalizing the athletic body in relation to the viewer’s body. The athlete’s bodies are forced to carry this homogenous image, which not only divests the athletes of any agency, but also divests the viewer of any influence over his or her own self-image.

**Differences in the Male and Female Ideal**

Quite obviously, ESPN’s Body Issues point out the ideal—the young, athletic body, whether male or female, but in these images, it seems there is a different measure of ideal for the male and female body. There is quite a drastic difference between the way male bodies and female bodies are featured in each of ESPN’s Body Issues. In the most recent 2013 issue, 21 athletes—10 men and 11 women—are featured in 28 total images. Of the 11 female athletes, only six are featured in the midst of their sport. Three other images are static, but at least show the women with their athletic equipment, while the other two images contain little evidence that the women are athletes. In contrast, with the exception of baseball player Giancarlo Stanton, all of the images of male athletes feature at least one image of them in action—in a running stride or performing their respective sports. And unfortunately, this is an improvement over previous issues, which feature images of female athletes lounging seductively. In several of these images, women appear across the centerfold, not unlike the pinup one might find in *Hustler*. The most glaring example is of U.S. women’s soccer goalkeeper Hope Solo, who is featured in a two-page spread standing in the middle of a front yard holding a garden hose.

![Fig. 11 and 12 Soccer goalies Hope Solo (above) and Tim Howard (below), as featured in the Body Issues.](image-url)
In contrast, the photo of U.S. men’s soccer goalkeeper Tim Howard, who was featured in the 2010 Body Issue, shows Howard lunging horizontally in mid-air, as if diving to block a shot. Howard also wears his goalkeeping gloves, which helps to further suggest his sport, even though there is no soccer goal pictured behind him. While Solo stands idly, Howard actively demonstrates his athleticism, reflecting the differences in how men and women are imaged and therefore idealized in the Body Issues.

Film studies scholars Jill Dolan and Laura Mulvey have both noted the differences in the roles of men and women within cinema, and I believe their critique applies here as well. According to Mulvey, women, in their “traditional exhibitionist role” are “simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness” (19). Drawing again on psychoanalytic theory, Mulvey explains that “woman displayed as sexual object is the leitmotif of erotic spectacle … she holds the look, and plays to and signifies male desire” (19). In contrast, Mulvey claims the man’s role of advancing the story line is an active role, and the spectator is drawn to identify with the main male protagonist (20-21). Dolan builds on Mulvey’s analysis, adding that by associating with the male protagonist, the spectator “vicariously pursu[es] the woman in the narrative as the object of his desire,” duplicating Lacan’s mirror-phase (48-49). Meanwhile, Dolan explains, “the woman is reduced to the Other—she who lacks the phallus,” to the extent that men are seen as active subjects, and women as passive victims (48-49). The pleasure in looking, according to Mulvey, is therefore “split between active/ male and passive/ female” (19). This active/passive, male/female binary is clearly operating in the images of Howard and Solo. Howard, the active male hero, flings himself in the air, sacrificing his body to prevent the imaginary goal, while Solo, the passive victim, stands off to the side, grasping for, or perhaps wrapped up in, her phallus—the garden hose—and
gazing after the water it emits. The phallic image of the garden hose is unmistakable in marking Solo as an erotic spectacle, while Howard’s active movement advances the storyline.

This representation of female athletes is unfortunately consistent throughout the Body Issues. For example, the 2009 issue featured 10 women, two depicted in action, and the other eight posed. Of those eight, only four are featured with equipment that suggests their respective sport. This issue actually objectifies nearly all of its featured athletes, since of the 10 men included, eight are posed, and two are in action, much like the women. Of the eight posed male images, four suggest the respective sports of the athletes by featuring equipment for that sport. In the 2010 issue, 10 women are again featured, three of which appear in action. In the other seven images, two images, that of basketball player Diana Taurasi and alpine skier Julia Mancuso, are very reminiscent of images that might be found in *Playboy*. These women’s photographs appear as centerfolds, further suggesting they be viewed as objects of the male gaze. The U.S. women’s water polo team is also featured as a centerfold, with the entire team imaged underwater in various positions, begging for comparison to erotic water nymphs. Of the 10 men featured in this issue, five are in action, and five are posed. The 2012 issue features 11 men and nine individual women, not including the seven women in the U.S. women’s volleyball team photos. Of the 11 images of men, nine feature men in action and only two images are posed, compared with only four images of women in action. Three images of female athletes could be in any men’s magazine—there is nothing in the background to suggest the sports each woman participates in.

![Alpine skier Julia Mancuso (left) is imaged very differently than basketball player Blake Griffin (right).](image)
John Berger’s work in *Ways of Seeing* is helpful in further explaining the differences in the imaging of the male and female athletes in these issues, differences that further reinscribe women as spectacle. According to Berger, in images and film women and men are depicted quite differently “not because the feminine is different from the masculine—but because the ‘ideal’ spectator is always assumed to be male and the image of the woman is designed to flatter him” (64). Like Mulvey and Dolan’s respective analyses, Berger suggests the imaged woman is designed for the desires of a male spectator. In addition, Berger claims the social presence of men and women are different. A man’s presence is “dependent upon the promise of the power which he embodies … the promised power may be moral, physical, temperamental, economic, social, sexual—but its object is always exterior to the man” (45). The 2011 Body Issue is especially full of male athletes in the midst of powerful movements, very directly embodying the promised power Berger describes, in stark contrast to the female athletes included in the issue, who are more likely to be shown in static positions rather than positions that show their physical power. Berger also importantly argues that a woman’s social presence results from “a woman’s self being split into two,” explaining:

A woman must continually watch herself. She is almost constantly accompanied by her own image of herself …. And so she comes to consider the surveyor and the surveyed within her as the two constituent yet always distinct elements of her identity as a woman …. That part of a woman’s self which is the surveyor treats the part which is the surveyed so as to demonstrate to others how her whole self would like to be treated. And this exemplary treatment of herself by herself constitutes her presence. (46)
Incidentally, LPGA golfer Belen Mozo, who appears in the 2011 issue, unwittingly points out this split in a video interview conducted shortly after her photo shoot. In the interview, Mozo notes, “when I looked at myself, when you look at the pictures, you feel like it’s a different person because the lighting and your face and your figure” (Mozo). The separation of self results in women objectifying themselves, such that, Berger argues, “men act and women appear. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at … the surveyor of woman in herself is male: the surveyed female. Thus she turns herself into an object—and most particularly an object of vision: a sight” (47). Mozo does not identify herself in the photographs taken of her, effectively turning herself into an object, “a different person.” As Mozo’s own interview suggests, ESPN’s Body Issues only further reinscribes woman as spectacle, as object of the gaze, while at the same time reinforcing the political power of the male body.

Racialized Bodies as Exotic Others

In addition to portraying women as spectacles, the Body Issues have often additionally reinforced the idea of the racial other as spectacle. In its 2011 issue, African American WNBA player Sylvia Fowles is depicted in profile, in a plank position with a desert scene, not a basketball court, as the background. Her hair is loose and blowing in the wind, and the image evokes a very raw, primal feeling. The light catches Fowles’s forehead, cheekbones, and jaw line, emphasizing the bone structure of her face rather than the musculature of her legs or arms. The attention to the shape of Fowles’s face and head is reminiscent of early anthropologists’ efforts to distinguish among races based on skull size, and signals to the viewer that Fowles is exotic and different from the viewer.
Likewise, Major League Baseball player Hanley Ramirez is also shown as spectacle in the 2010 issue, with Ramirez featured in what appears to be a bedroom, ironing shirts in the buff. This image not only exotizes Ramirez, but it also carries racist undertones of the slave working for the master. Far from highlighting his abilities on the baseball field, this image depicts Ramirez as a mere houseboy. Curiously, Ramirez’s photo also appears in black and white, which perhaps implicitly reminds the viewer of his racialized difference.⁶ Artist and visual studies scholar Coco Fusco notes “racial difference has been seen as a spectacle and a commodity over the course of a century,” and photography in particular has “played an absolutely fundamental role in the construction of racialized viewing as a positive, pleasurable, and desirable experience” (19-20). As Fusco suggests, images of racial difference likewise normalize bodies, and perhaps additionally specify a white male as the ideal viewer. In this way, viewers insert themselves into the ranked hierarchy encouraged by these images, placing themselves above the raced spectacle, and, as Fusco argues, gaining pleasure from that experience.

Like the images of female athletes, some of the images of African American athletes—male or female—also reinscribe these athletes as exotic others, but even worse is the double inscription of racialized female bodies, which have been intensely eroticized dating back to images of the Hottentot Venus. Furthermore, Fusco argues that photographing racial difference has always been “lucrative business” (41). For ESPN, it is even more lucrative if you can photograph nude racial difference: Although Serena Williams was not the only African American (nor the only woman) to grace the cover of the 2009 Body Issue, her cover sold the most issues (Rovell).

**The Disabled Super-Athlete**

Similar to the exotic spectacle of racialized female bodies, the depiction of disabled female athletes is even more troubling for its two-fold reinscription of these athletes as both normalized and extraordinary objects of male desire. The images of Sarah
Reinertsen, a triathlete who appears in the 2009 issue, Esther Vergeer, a wheelchair tennis player in the 2010 issue, and Oksana Masters, a Paralympic rower in the 2012 issue, all show the women in static positions. Reinertsen is shown standing in profile, her prosthetic leg closest to the viewer, with her long blonde hair blown back. Vergeer is featured sitting in her wheelchair in what appears to be a sunny dining room or breakfast nook looking out on a backyard garden, with not a tennis racquet in sight, and Masters is pictured sitting on a dock, which at least hints at her sport (Masters is also shown without her prosthetic legs, which she does not use in the water). First, far from celebrating variations in the athletic body, these images, much like the other images that appear in the Body Issues, situate these women as spectacles of the male gaze. Disabilities studies scholar Rosemarie Garland-Thompson even draws interesting comparisons between both the female and the disabled body. According to Garland-Thompson, the female body and the disabled body are both marked as deviant and somehow inferior, and “both are defined in opposition to a norm that is assumed to possess natural physical superiority” (19). Using Aristotle’s typing of male and female bodies in *The Generation of Animals*, Garland-Thompson notes the male, white, able body becomes marked as “natural” and “seemingly eclipsed by” the female, black, or disabled body, ultimately arguing, “without the female body to distinguish the shape of the male, and without the pathological to give form to the normal, the taxonomies of bodily value that underlie political, social, and economic arrangements would collapse” (20).

The bodies of Reinertsen, Vergeer, and Masters in part invite spectacle because they are exposed bodies like those of the other athletes featured in the Body Issues, and in part because they are exposed *disabled* bodies, at once “sympathetic, grotesque, wondrous, or pathological—in a complex relation between seer and seen,”

![Fig. 19-21 Clockwise from top left: rower Oksana Masters, triathlete Sarah Reinertsen, and tennis player Esther Vergeer.](image-url)
between the opposing subject positions of the intensely embodied, reified, and silenced object and the abstract, unmarked, disembodied normate,” as Garland-Thompson explains (136). For Garland-Thompson, “feminization prompts the gaze; disability prompts the stare,” because such bodies invoke what Drew Leder calls *dys-appearance*, in which the body “appears as thematic focus, but precisely as in a *dys*-state,” remembered or garnering attention particularly because of its limitations (28; Leder 84-86). In the ESPN images, the disabled female athletes are doubly spectacle: their naked female bodies invite the gaze, while their disabled bodies invite the stare.

As images of disabled athletes though, these images also provide an alternative, though no less encouraging reading of Leder’s *dys-*appearance, that of Joseph Shapiro’s conception of the *supercrip*, in which through super achievement, the disabled person is seen as worthy of respect rather than pity, though this respect comes “only at the point of having accomplished some extraordinary feat” (60). However, the idea of the supercrip privileges a normalized body, at least in function, if not appearance, creating, as Amanda Booher points out, “an expectation that all disabled bodies should (and by assumption, can) achieve” (72). According to Booher, the narrative of the supercrip prompts a “double effect” in which an able-bodied normalcy is reified, at the same time that the prosthetic is recognized, “calling attention to their achievements of ‘normal’ despite their lack of physical ‘normalcy’” (72). In the ESPN images, the bodies of disabled women like Reinertsen, Vergeer, and Masters are then doubly troubling because they reinforce normalized expectations for both the female body and the disabled body, at the same time that they draw attention to the abnormal body.

The disabled female body is then subject, to use Foucault’s framework, to both surveillance and spectacle. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault differentiates between the Napoleonic period, where the state inflicted power on bodies through the public spectacle of torture, and the modern period, where the state inflicts power over bodies through constant surveillance and subsequent normalization. Foucault’s explanation almost perfectly captures how ESPN’s Body Issues operate as systems of power: “under the surface of images, one invests bodies in depth … the circuits of communication are the supports of an accumulation and a centralization of knowledge; the play of signs defines the anchorages of power” (217). In other words, through the widespread distribution of these images, one is subjected to a normalizing effect. But this mechanism of power operates slightly differently for the supercrip. While Foucault argues that modern society is one where surveillance, not spectacle operates on bodies, that “it
is not that the beautiful totality of the individual is amputated, repressed, altered by our social order, it is rather that the individual is carefully fabricated in it, according to a whole technique of forces and bodies,” when the individual actually is amputated, then that body is both fabricated by society and under surveillance, and also outside of society, a spectacle excluded from the social order (217).

ESPN’s Body Issues effectively normalize and exoticize women, African Americans, and the disabled as objects of desire. Using psychoanalytic theory and feminist film theory, these images reinforce the male spectator as the ideal, and situate the viewer as somehow lacking. In addition, a Foucauldian analysis reveals the ESPN images as the results of intense examination or surveillance, which works to normalize bodies, further disciplining the already highly disciplined bodies of athletes. As such, the ESPN Body Issues situate sports as an additional mechanism through which power operates on the body, and demonstrates how sport-related media images, particularly those in ESPN The Magazine, merely reinscribe power relationships that position women as objects of the gaze, and further subjugates the bodies of athletes, at the same time that it situates the bodies of nonathletes as lacking. Even more troubling, the depictions of disabled athletes reveal the double disciplining of disabled bodies through both surveillance and spectacle.

**Notes**

1. Many of the images from ESPN’s Body Issues are available through their online photo gallery.

2. Goldman refers to the 2012 *Sports Illustrated* Swimsuit Issue, which features its usual array of scantily clad models along with female athletes Alex Morgan (U.S. National soccer), Natalie Coughlin (U.S. Olympic swimming), and Natalie Gulbis (LPGA) in body-painted swimsuits.

3. It is interesting to note that in the 2009 issue only three of the 10 male athletes featured were completely nude. The other seven wore boxers or shorts of some kind.

4. This issue features multiple images of a few athletes: five male athletes have two images, and one female athlete has two images. It is interesting to note that excluding Stanton, if a male athlete is posed, there is also another image of the same athlete in action. The only woman with more than one image, golfer Carly Booth, is shown swinging a golf club in one image, and lounging on an upholstered bench in the other.

5. The most recent 2013 issue contains five images of women across
the centerfold, compared with only three images of men that appear across the centerfold.

6. Of the 20 images in the 2010 Body Issue, only four others are in black and white, though the black and white images include one other African American athlete and three European American athletes.
Works Cited


Weisman, Nancy. “Body blurbs: Stories from the Body Issue
