

I'm not really into boxing very much (I'm a lover not a fighter,) so it came as a bit of a surprise to learn that less than 12 months ago it was illegal for women to box each other in NSW. Obviously this has now been overturned and the ladies can take their pugilism all the way to the London Olympic games. But it did make me stop and wonder why we had previously been prevented from doing so. My answer came from an unlikely source - Arthur Tunstall. Yes it is possible that poor ol' Arty has received one too many blows to the head, but his statement: "I am totally opposed to women's boxing. A woman is a petite person, not to be knocked about", demonstrates that even today your gender is supposed to be the predominant indicator of appearance, skill set and attitude.

Just ask Caster Semenya, the South African runner who has to prove to the International Association of Athletics Federations that she actually is a woman. Never mind that not only has she already undergone previous tests to prove her gender but also that her school photographs reveal she has looked different from a very early age. Physically she doesn't look, and athletically she doesn't act like a girl is 'supposed to' and therefore she must verify her gender. And it is in fact these tests that demonstrate gender is a very complex thing, taking three weeks or more to pinpoint Caster's girliness (or lack of) systemically.

It's not a matter of lifting your skirt / dropping your strides and checking if you have an innie or an outtie. Attitudes toward the sexes need to be changed to think of gender as a spectrum, much like sexuality (but that's a rant for another day), rather than a binary system in which you can only exist in one state or the other. Lets embrace our manly sisters and sissy bothers.

I look forward to a time when comments left on the youtube video where Lady Gaga's penis is allegedly visible read 'that's hot' rather than 'dude, that's sick!'