Thesis Outline - FANTASY TEAM

The paper will take the form of personal anecdote followed by academic research.

I. The beginnings of the project

A. Driving to Indiana and seeing a billboard for *Baseball Hotties: Studs We Love* at the Louisville Slugger Factory and Museum. The campiness of the exhibition - especially the “Field of Dreamboats” piece. Finding the *Great Day Live!* segment where women are seen as the “obvious” (and only) viewership of this exhibition.

B. Thinking about the queer viewer in relation to all of this. Going unacknowledged, even though the exhibit is, to me, the definition of camp. The exclusionary language of “obvious” and “only” - the male co-hosts effeminate reporting - the female co-host driving homosexuality into a realm of unthinkability.

C. Visiting a card shop when I got to Indiana and buying some baseball cards - thought I’d use them as collage materials, or simply as brainstorming for a new piece based on the issues raised by Baseball Hotties. Checking out, the cashier thumbed through my selection and asked me, “Are you a White Sox fan?” I replied no, knowing nothing about the White Sox (or what it would mean to associate myself with the team). He replied, “Oh, are you just buying the guys you like?” My eyes widened as I said “yes,” and thought *more so than you know, sir.*

D. John Bloom’s *House of Cards* homoerotic conclusion: musing on the men who hide their card hobby from peers and refer to themselves as “closet collectors”

1. “Perhaps the parallel to a metaphor for secret homosexuality is appropriate. Collecting may have allowed some boys to explore homoerotic desires, and to fantasize about masculine heroism and strength, without facing the peer condemnation that goes along with homosexuality in high school settings...Baseball cards allow teenage boys a way to stare at men in private spaces without the fear of being caught.”

II. Thesis Statement

A. My work seeks to make a place for the queer viewer in sports fan culture. By reinterpreting and reappropriating fan culture’s practices and rituals through the eyes of a queer viewer (“culture poaching” *is this your term?*), I hope to show (remove this passive voice) that the two cultures are not as diametrically opposed as one stereotypically imagines. *Something like, “the work shows...”*
If this is your thesis statement, I would offer that you broaden the language to include more of an umbrella idea of popular culture, signs and signifiers specific to queer society. Baseball, broadly fan culture, is the tool by which you are examining these things.

Questioning prescribed codes of viewing, aka stereotyping. Is it at all important to acknowledge or discuss queer notions of self-stereotyping? I’m not sure I know exactly what the hell I’m suggesting….maybe something that suggests that all groups, subgroups of a society, experience an isolating visual culture and ritual behavior. Hell’s Angels, Buddhist monks, nudist colonies, polyamory, fraternities, church sects, etc.

1. a definition, and explanation of, culture poaching. De Certeau argues that audiences are not passive consumers but instead active interpreters. I love this each person creates their own meaning from the same text. Allows consumers to “individualize” mass culture. Henry Jenkins talks about media fan culture and points out how “poaching blurs the line between producer and consumer”

2. Poaching as a form of cultural resistance and subversion - an “underground” practice. Jason Weidemann quoting John Fisk: “In the study of popular culture, poaching has come to be regarded as a strategy of resistance. In Understanding Popular Culture, John Fiske regards poaching as a positive strategy for the individual, inherently weak in relation to the dominant culture industries which ‘control the places and the commodities that constitute the parameters of everyday life’ (Fiske, 33). For him, the powerful are ‘cumbersome, unimaginative, and overorganized’ and the weak are ‘creative, nimble, and flexible’ (Fiske, 32). The weak, then, are able to employ ‘guerrilla tactics against the strategies of the powerful, make poaching raids upon their texts or structures, and play constant tricks upon the system” (Fiske, 32)."

III. Sports as an “unsafe arena” for the homosexual athlete (or viewer)

A. The reason for poaching: the sports world as a hypermasculine (and violent) realm. - “taking the power back” in a way (if we read into Fisk’s proclamations)

1. Haven’t exactly figured out the anecdote here. Could involve: Making it through grade school relatively unharmed, I avoided the jocks and rejected sports culture as a whole. Knowing I fell outside the normative masculine realm, I completely disavowed sports because I didn’t see it as having a place for me - not welcoming, not accepting, etc. Possibly tie in
the threat of queer bashing (one occurring in my hometown during my high school years) to solidify the idea of threat and unsafe space?

B. Eric Anderson and Brian Pronger, two authors who have written extensively on sports and homosexuality -- how sports culture is so homoerotically charged, the persons involved in the culture must "police" homosexuality so that their sexuality and "normative" practices are not called into question.

C. A history of out (baseball) athletes and their struggles - Glenn Burke, Dave Pallone, etc.

IV. Inspirations for the work itself

A. My dad meeting fellow Minnesota Vikings fans in a Pizza Hut in rural SC - Darren's (one of the fans) "Viking Room". Memorabilia lining the walls, artificial turf carpeting. Bobbleheads, pennats, a birdhouse - a plethora of different objects adorned with the Vikings logo or their historical athletes. Inspired my dad to take over our “home office” (the room with the lone computer) and transform it into a Viking Room of his own -- incidentally infringing on my abstract queer space (the internet - meeting gay men across the globe, looking at gay-themed websites, etc). Exploring my own queer identity while being surrounded by sports memorabilia (action figures, photographs, signed helmets, etc). There is tenderness in some of these personal anecdotes that the work doesn't show. Work tends to follow more of a laugh track... just an observation Robert! May be interesting and effective for you to analyze in some portion of your writing or thinking why the chosen method of display is more advantageous than say, FGT's method...

1. The idea of a "sports room" as the main inspiration, and re-examining all the memorabilia I was surrounded by.

B. Felix Gonzales-Torres

1. The poetic, subversive and subtle as opposed to in-your-face and confrontational. Speaking in codes and metaphors - Perfect Lovers, Portrait of Ross in L.A., etc.

   a. Richard Meyer's Outlaw Representation book - examples of Torres' older work (Bold, eye-catching, HEALTHCARE IS A RIGHT) to his more metaphorical later work. His later billboards (with the beds) "sets up a more complex dialogue between desire and its frustrations"
b. Even though FGT's work is bound up with AIDS (which is way more serious and pressing than the issues I'm exploring—see above statement), his mode of delivery is inspirational.

C. Artists "queering up" materials / dealing with sexual connotations
1. Mike Kelley, *More Love Hours*…
   a. Samuel Draxler’s essay, “Working It” that touches on Kelley’s work as a mode of drag

2. Claes Oldenburg’s Soft Sculptures - fetish objects.

V. Conclusion

A. Making a place for the queer viewer through culture poaching and exploring different ways aspects of fan culture can be read.

B. This is NOT to imply that fandom contains a homoerotic dimension (although many would argue that it does). Offering the perspective of the queer viewer, and validating it -- bringing it out into the open to contest the “fear” associated with sports world and intense (orthodox) masculinity.

*This just may be the new outline I show as my example to future senior thesis students!! Good job in fleshing out the body of each section. The more specific you can be within each subtext, the easier the paper will be when it comes to forming the sentences.*