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Using Critical Race Theory to Read Fantasy Football

A Dissertation Presented For the Doctor of Philosophy Degree

University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Stephanie Rene Hill

May 2010

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to young black girls everywhere who believe they can be among the 1 in 800,000 who will receive a Ph.D.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are numerous people who have helped me throughout my journey. Many have provided guidance and support for which I am immensely grateful. First, I want to thank my wonderfully supportive family. Mom, Dad, Jackie, and Chris thank you for loving me in spite of my outspokenness. Each of you has planted seeds within me that have firmly taken root. To my grandmothers, aunts, uncles, cousins, and God-family it has been important knowing you were all just a phone call away. To my friends, old and new, thank you for being there. Most importantly, to my late grandfather, Arthur Beard Sr., you showed me how to get exactly what I want out of life.

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ABSTRACT

Fantasy sports are the latest addition to the sports industry. Fantasy sports (FS) participants compete against one another by using players from the "real" world to create a virtual team. FS simulates the structures of the real sporting world. The most popular FS is football, due to the success of the National Football League (NFL) (World Fantasy Games, 2009). Black males represent a vast majority of the athletes in the NFL and are often bought and sold by white participants who represent a critical mass of FS players. The purpose of this dissertation is to read fantasy football participation and consider the un/conscious commodification, fetishization of black masculinity, which is used for cultural transmission. Using Critical Race Theory (CRT) to analyze interdisciplinary literature enhances the discourse surrounding the intersectionalties of race, gender, sexuality, and sport. Critically reading FS, employing bricolage has made it possible to pragmatically analyze FS. I argue race is central to the acquisition, maintenance, and exposition of power that is paramount in sport, and evidenced within FS. The paradox of allowing the masses of white sport consumers to exercise virtual control over black bodies via FS is that it reveals cultural dogma of racialized masculinity with psychosocial links to fetish.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Fantasy sports are the latest addition to the sports industry. The World Wide Web is the primary site for fantasy sport participation. Fantasy sports participants compete against one another by using players from the "real" world to create a virtual team. Each participant compiles the stats of their players each week to determine a winner at the end of the season. For detailed FS participation information see Appendix A. Fantasy sport participants may receive intrinsic and extrinsic rewards (i.e. entertainment, arousal, feelings of power/control, social interaction, and monetary rewards). Fantasy sport simulates the structures of the real sporting world, and due to the success of professional football, by way of the National Football League (NFL), the most popular fantasy sport is football (World Fantasy Games, 2009). Birrell & McDonald (2000) contend that football has replaced baseball as our 'national pastime' due to its overt violence and aggression. Plymire (2009) argued:

> The National Football League is the most powerful sports organization in the United States. Through the magic of television, the NFL has represented itself to the American public as the quintessence of American masculinity- rugged and heroic, not to mention violent and heterosexual (p. 17)."

For the purpose of this dissertation, all references to fantasy sports (FS) are limited to fantasy football and primarily that which is played on the Internet.

Oates (2009) found that FS presents athletes as commodities to be used for the betterment of an individual's manhood. Regrettably, the players in the National Football League (NFL) are

predominantly black males[1]. In 2008, black males represented 67 percent of the players in the NFL (Lapchick, Kamke, & McMechan, 2009). Based on the marketing profile provided by Worldfantasygames.com (2009) the following is the profile of the average FS consumer:

- 37 year old male, married with kids
- Bachelor or graduate degree
- Own their home
- Average HH Income $94,000
- Spend 3 to 4 hours per week online
- 86% will be playing in 10 years
- Manage 6 teams in various sports
- Spenders with high disposable income

  Drink beer, wireless, buy prescription drugs, logo hats, running shoes, liquor, magazines, laptops, flowers, and more.
- More than 40% operate in two-screen environment (Laptop and TV) on Sundays.

However, it is important to note that FS participants are predominantly white (Davis & Duncan, 2006). I contend that it is essential to examine the motives and circumstances mitigating the consumptive relationship of the predominantly black male athletes and the predominantly white male participants of FS: "After all, the theme of race is situated where meaning meets social

[1] Throughout this dissertation the racial signifiers "black" and "white" are presented in lowercase form. This is a deliberate move I am making to recognize the social construction of race as well as to consider the intersections of race, gender, and sexuality. I am arguing that race is both central to the player-participant interaction but that it is inextricably linked to gender and sexuality as individual identities are personally and socially constructed. In addition, my use of black rather than "Black" does allow for the term to represent solidarity (Hylton, 2009). The use of African American, Black, and White will only appear within quotations.

structure, where identity frames inequality" (Winant, 2000, p. 171). To be clear, it is not the black male in his entirety who is consumed by white males, but it is black masculinity and the body that has become the primary focus of consumers. As a critical race theorist, I argue race is central to the acquisition, maintenance, and exposition of power that is paramount in sport, and evidenced within FS. Plymire (2009) found black athleticism has become mythological through naturalized and eroticized fantasies. Crawford (2008) contends that race has become fetishized because the Other has been inextricably linked to the body. Both racial fetish and sexual fetish can be discussed as parallel psychological elements (Crawford, 2008). Racial and sexual fetish can specifically be linked to the phallus, which functions as the symbolic representations of manhood. Theories from Crawford (2008), hooks (1992), Layton (1998), McClintock (1982), Oates (2009), and Voigt (1982) provide the impetus for my connection of fetish and the phallus to this body of work.

Fetish has surfaced within the sport domain. Voigt (1982) provides an assessment of sport and how it can be linked to both player and fan fetish behavior. He describes the obsessive following of player stats through mediated sources as a fetish: "Inevitably fetish ferrets must focus on American sports because the pressure to identify with sports is a major American obsession. Seen through daily language and behavior is the ubiquitous cultural imperative to get with sports" (p. 117). Voigt (1982) presents sport fetish as an almost mundane natural occurrence. Meanwhile, Oates (2007) describes sport fetish in more grave terms: "The commodification of bodies and the desire that it mobilizes satisfies more than deeply submerged erotic wants. The process of transforming human beings into something that can be bought, sold,

and possessed can increase the desire for more conventional types of commodity accumulation (p. 85)."

My "reading"[2] of FS is complex due to the constraints of Western research methodologies and methods. Kincheloe and McLaren (2005) argued that "the task of the bricoleur is to attack this complexity, uncovering the invisible artifacts of power and culture, and documenting the nature of their influence on not only their own works but on scholarship in general (p. 319)." Denzin and Lincoln (2005) found some forms of research "serve as a metaphor for colonial knowledge, for power, and for truth (p. 1)." Ultimately, this dissertation is a bricolage, and FS serves as my point of entry. A bricoleur uses whichever tools are available to complete a task (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004). I am striving for an "epistemological innovation" (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005, p. 316):

> Approaching research as a power-driven act, the researcher as bricoleur abandons the quest for some naïve concept of realism, focusing instead on the clarification of his/her position in the web of reality and the social location of other researchers and the ways they shape the production and interpretation of knowledge (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004, pp. 2).

Critical race theory (CRT) allows for a full consideration of the grisly racial past and present of the United States as I complete a socio-cultural examination of FS by engaging in bricolage. Lomax (2008) argues that scholars must raise political, economic, and social perspectives to reassess socio-cultural issues and he questioned the use of "sports equality" as a metaphor for "American equality" (p. xvi).

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[2] Birrell & McDonald (2000) through their edited work *Reading Sport: Critical Essays on Power and Representation* provide examples of how sport can be "read" using a critical lens.

Power, social roles, patriarchy, and domination are fundamental to CRT as a methodological approach to research. In the 1970s CRT was introduced by Derrick Bell, Charles Lawrence, Alan Freeman, Richard Delgado, Mari Mastuda, Patricia Williams, and Kimberle Crenshaw (Taylor, 1999; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). It was originally framed around the United States legal system. The aforementioned scholars used race, racism and power as a foundation for the exploration of liberal order, including equality theory, legal reasoning, Enlightenment rationalism, and neutral principles of constitutional law (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). My alliance with CRT seems to have predated my endeavors as a fantasy sport researcher. This is a departure from the scientific method, which is endorsed by most positivist academicians, because prior to researchers deciding which tools to use, they usually identify a problem to study.

Jackson, Drummond, & Camara (2007) suggested that in the positivist tradition the identification of a problem is often informed by the philosophical stance of the researcher. Next, the researcher must determine whether he/she believes that individuals act upon the world or whether the world acts upon individuals. The answers to these two questions lead to the selection of a research methodology.

> Methodologies suggest how inquires should proceed by indicating what problems are worth investigating, how to frame a problem so it can be explored, how to develop appropriate data generation, and how to make the logical link between the problem, data generated, analysis, and conclusions/inferences drawn (Jackson, Drummond, & Camara, 2007, p. 23)

It is imperative that academicians apply both traditional and nontraditional frameworks to sport because historically only limited perspectives have been represented through research. Thus, I have determined based on my academic encounters that CRT is an ideal methodological approach as I examine race and racism in FS through bricolage. According to Kincheloe and Berry (2004) the bricoleur views the research method as the process of gaining knowledge and defending knowledge. Bricoleurs challenge monological research by constructing and reconstructing approaches to examining a phenomenon.

> Discourse cannot be removed from power relations and the struggle to create particular meanings and legitimate specific voices. Dominant discourses shape the research process emerging as technologies of power that regulate which knowledges are validated and which ones are relegated to the junk heap of history (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004, p. 7).

This dissertation challenges dominant discourses about sport and FS as well as the process by which knowledge can be generated about the two. I argue that a glaring deficiency of sport, specifically FS is the commodification of athletes, expressly black males, which I presume is moderated by both conscious and unconscious racism. Johnson & Roediger (2000) have dubbed this "commodity racism" and they argue whites have historically associated blacks with race, pleasure, and service. Additionally, they suggest that, "There is little consensus about the extent and frequency of discrimination and how it relates to continuing disadvantages along racial and ethnic lines" (p. 17).

In consideration of this, it is feasible to reason that some white Americans who claim to have positive feelings toward people of color may be deceiving everyone, including themselves. Researchers have termed such behavior *aversive racism* (Dovido & Gaertner, 1986). Gaertner &

Dovidio (2005) found that a white individual can participate in interracial activities, profess his/her belief in equality, and simultaneously maintain unconscious feelings of contempt for blacks. For example, during an interracial interaction a white male may be unwilling to request help from a black male in an effort not to appear subordinate, but will straightforwardly request help from a white male. However, if a black male offers the white male help, the offer will be accepted. This example is in line with the findings of a study conducted by Dovido and Gaertner (1986). I discuss their findings in detail in chapter 2. During male interracial interactions, there is a symbolic struggle to control the phallus. According to Layton (1998), "Normative masculinity looks like phallic narcissism, where only the Other not the self is perceived as a subject" (p. 42). Furthermore, examining identity literature provides support to the premise that black masculinity is positioned as binary to white masculinity. By examining the personal and social construction of white masculinity and black masculinity, which are subsumed in the identities of the athletes and participants in FS, I present a supposition that considers the intersections of race, gender, and sexuality.

Statement of the Problem

Within this dissertation sport will be presented as a microcosm of society which provides a glimpse into the racially and sexually charged landscape that both whites and nonwhites traverse daily. The disparity between the percentages of black participants in the "real" game and white participants in the fantasy game leads to an intricate and significant paradox. The paradox is that this disparity allows the masses of white sport consumers to exercise virtual control over black bodies via FS. Moreover, it reveals socio-cultural dogma of racialized masculinity with

psychosocial links to fetish.[3] "A more sinister aspect of this repurposing is that the interactive medium gives the user both an unrealistic sense of control-over black bodies in particular- and a sense that RL [real life] racial embodiment does not really matter" (Plymire, 2009, p.21). FS is a site where black men are both situated in the body and simultaneously stripped of their masculine humanity. The presumed acceptance of black male athletes as the primary competitors within the virtual world of FS requires critical examination. Birrell & McDonald (2000) determined that the behavior of some white sports consumers is flanked with adoration and disgust for black men. This ambivalence toward black male athletes may be linked to the commodification and fetishization of these men. Through this dissertation I explore race as a moderator of FS participation. During my examination of the literature I have determined that the academy has nearly ignored the emergence of FS as a site to study the intersections of race, gender, and sexuality.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

Oates (2009) found that racialized manhood is preeminent in sport. Black males represent a vast majority of the athletes in the National Football League, and are often "bought", "sold", and "traded" by white participants who represent a critical mass of sport fans as well as fantasy sport participants. The purpose of this dissertation is to explore FS participation, passing through CRT, and investigating whether consciously or unconsciously black masculinity is commodified, fetishized, and used for cultural transmission and phallic control. The permanence of racism can be framed in sociological, psychological, cultural, historical, and political discourse. Hochschild

[3] Participants give themselves dominion over the players they select for their virtual team. In addition, athletes allow their likeness to be used within the fantasy sport medium. It is important to think of the relationship in these terms because CRT provides for potential liberation from oppression. This relationship between participants and players can be disallowed.

(1995) found that it is possible to use one subject to illuminate another. I use bricolage to unearth the socio-cultural underpinnings of FS.[4] "Understanding the specifics of this construction process helps multi perspectival researchers choose and develop the methodological, theoretical, and interpretive tools they need to address the depictions of the world that emerge from it" (p. 9). This dissertation is constructed by using six transparencies which are layered to rigorously and pragmatically read the phenomenon of fantasy sport, specifically fantasy football. The six transparencies examine: (a) FS as a cultural transmitter of hegemonic ideologies; (b) the binary relationship between black /white masculine identity; (c) FS as a virtual utopia/dystopia; (d) the significance of racism as aversive on the World Wide Web; (e) acquiescent popular culture and media references to FS; and (f) the pragmatic use of CRT in FS research. The chief research question for this dissertation is: How can CRT be pragmatically used to read the fervent consumption of fantasy football by white males who are allowed to imagine control over black men? The research questions that frame each of the transparencies are as follows:

R1: How can FS function as a cultural transmitter of hegemonic ideologies?

R2: How is the racial and gender identity binary vital to FS participation?

R3: How is aversive racism present on the World Wide Web?

R4a: How is fantasy sport a site for freedom or oppression for the participants?

R4b: How is fantasy sport a site for freedom or oppression for the athletes that are consumed?

R5: How is FS referenced in popular culture and by the media?

R6: How is CRT pragmatically used to frame FS?

[4] This dissertation cannot be classified as a meta-analysis because of the heterogeneous materials that have been compiled to examine the phenomenon.

Significance of the Study

According to the National Research Council (2004) there is no "right" way to measure racism, discrimination, and/or prejudice. Researchers have employed experiments, observational studies, and survey research in their attempts to explain how race moderates human behavior (Apfelbaum, Sommers, & Norton, 2008; Dovido & Gaertner, 1986; Gaertner & Dovido, 2005; Goff, Steele, & Davies, 2008). There is significant evidence to support the premise that many whites, who believe their behavior toward non-whites is unaffected by race, still maintain some negative feelings toward non-whites whether these feelings are conscious or unconscious (Dovido & Gaertner, 1986; Gaertner & Dovido, 2005). This differential treatment of non-whites, by whites has been evidenced in both non-sport and sport domains. However, there is an extensive gap in the literature on how race functions on the World Wide Web, which is the primary site for FS participation.

Psychoanalysis provides an inroad for examining race as personally and socially constructed by the mostly white FS participants and the mostly black FS athletes. I contend individual identity provides insight into the role of race within FS. However, it is difficult to accurately examine black masculinity and white masculinity by using psychoanalytic models. Many psychoanalytic models were created without a full consideration of race, gender, and sexuality. Each of the aforementioned characteristics functions as separate signifiers. It is insufficient to use a white male/white female binary model to compare black masculinity and white masculinity. In Layton's (1998) text the female Other and black Other were presented as similar signifiers. In addition to examining the socio-cultural function of aversive racism, this dissertation presents a challenge to the use of classic psychoanalytic models as the intersections

of the identities of FS athletes and participants are explored. Additionally, I extend the discourse on the phallus and phallic control to the virtual world of FS.

Although, the role black men have assumed in the sporting world is principal, it can hardly be considered a challenge to dominant hegemony. According to Hargreaves (1982a):

> The concept of hegemony directs us to examine empirically the ways in which sport is related to other features of the totality such as the mode of production, the state, education, the media, the family, ethnic groups, sexual patterns and other cultural practices. It directs us also to consider the extent to which and in what ways, sport is involved in the mediation of ideas and beliefs, some of which become linked to interest of classes and dominant groups, and others of which are concealed (p. 15).

Culture is as important as economics and politics in the construction of hegemony. "It [culture] is a lived practice formed by conscious human beings from their lived experience, and constituting for them a whole way of life (Hargreaves, 1982b, p. 41). Culture can be defined as the "habits, customs, pastimes, rituals, style of life, and the achieved state of knowledge and learning" (Hargreaves, 1982b, p. 49). There is compelling evidence that white males, in their attempt to possess the phallus, and black males, who by default have become the phallus, have converged to form a sport culture based on fetish, fantasy, commodification, and exploitation. Examining historical evidence which supports the premise that black masculinity has been demonized in the United States provides a viable space to use CRT to articulate the power of aversive racism within sporting culture (Majors & Billson, 1992). By using CRT this dissertation enhances the discourse surrounding the intersectionalties of race, gender, sexuality, and fantasy sport.

Organization of the Study

In Chapter 1, I introduced the phenomenon of fantasy sport and explained why and how this dissertation is framed using CRT. I explained my use of race as a central tenant and patriarchal masculinity as vital to my assessment of FS. In Chapter 2, I position myself in the already constituted field of CRT. I also explain bricolage and how it is operationalized as my method of analysis. In Chapter 3 the following literature is presented: (a) the culture of American sport and the commodification of black athletes; (b) studies which categorize race, prejudice, and discrimination as aversive; (c) psychoanalytical models of gender identity which are linked to the socio-cultural function of race; (d) fantasy sport participation and its consumptive practices; and (e) racial and sexual manhood in sport culture. With a firm foundation for my exploration into the conscious and unconscious moderators of FS participation, I embark on a critical analysis of the phenomenon in Chapter 4. Chapter 4 is segmented into six transparencies: (a) FS as a cultural transmitter of hegemonic ideologies; (b) the significance of aversive racism on the World Wide Web; (c) the importance of the binary relationship between black /white masculine identity; (d) FS as a virtual utopia and dystopia; (e) acquiescent popular culture and media references to FS; and (f) the pragmatic position of CRT in FS research. I employ the work of a multitude of scholars throughout my analysis; In Chapter 5, I use the analysis presented in Chapter 4 to discuss conclusions and make suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I outline my positionality as a researcher as well as my methodological approach to exploring fantasy sport (FS) employing critical race theory (CRT) and bricolage. Before I proceed, I must plainly state my critical perspective on sport, which remains steeped in racialized, gendered, and sexualized practices. During my "furious passage as a black graduate student"[5] in a sport studies program, at a predominantly white institution, I often found myself being one of only two African Americans in any given class (Davidson, 1998). It seemed that whenever issues of race were raised people waited to hear my response, assuming that I could speak for all black people. I have made sure that due to this careless assumption, I represented myself and *all* black people well. However, I learned to preface all statements with; "I can only speak for myself". I have found great success in academia and I feel like my Other *otherness* directly contributed. The intersections of my black, female, heterosexual, and able-bodied identity inform my philosophical position as a pragmatist. Furthermore, my experiences as a women's professional football player have shaped my perspective as a researcher. I eventually realized that stereotypes are the lazy person's rationale and they are produced and reproduced by the privileged and the oppressed. Throughout my tenure as a doctoral student, I have felt compelled not only to speak about issues of race, but to take up the position of several marginalized groups. It seems that many of my privileged white classmates were unaware that there was no proverbial "we" when it came to the American experience, minority experience,

[5] *The Death of White Sociology* edited by Joyce A. Ladner the chapter titled "The Furious Passage of the Black Graduate Student" by Douglass Davidson articulates the struggle many black graduate students experience as they matriculate through predominantly white institutions. Davidson describes the systemic racism experienced by black students at institutions that use propaganda to extend "white liberal ideology" (p. 23-51).

female experience, heterosexual experience, or athletic experience. Additionally, I firmly believe that sport is a site where race, gender, class, and sexuality coalesce to moderate consumer participation. In the throes of discussion, some of my peers sat transfixed, wide-eyed, and seemingly afraid of my willingness to look them in the eye and call them oblivious. It was in those moments of academic activism that I, unbeknownst to anyone including myself, was casting an anchor in critical race theory.

Sport should not be assumed to have a positive effect on participants and it should be treated seriously as an aspect of culture (Hargreaves, 1982). Hargreaves (1982b) presents a compelling argument that sport is consciously valued and used to benefit our lives, and simultaneously used by ruling groups to exercise control: "Players and now often whole teams, are properties to be bought and sold and written off against tax; sports and the big sporting event are increasingly integrated into the structure of capitalist enterprise"(p. 41). Based on Hargreaves (1982b) assessment of sport and the control exemplified by ruling groups CRT and bricolage are fitting tools for analyzing FS. “To contribute to social transformation, bricoluers seek to better understand both the forces of domination that affect the lives of individuals from race, class, gender, sexual, ethnic, and religious backgrounds outside dominant culture(s) and the world views of such diverse peoples” (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004, p. 15). CRT scholars argue the American culture of domination is inherent to the subordination of colored people (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Kincheloe & McLaren (2005) found that “no one is ever completely emancipated from the sociopolitical context that has produced him or her” (p. 308). My position in the already constituted field of CRT is hinged on my belief in the permanence of racism.

Inherent to my argument is the assertion that the current position held by black men in sport in general, and fantasy sport in particular, is not a position of equality.

Bell (1992) argued that racial oppression in the United States is permanent:

> Black people will never gain full equality in this country. Even those herculean efforts we hail as successful will produce no more than temporary 'peaks of progress,' short lived victories that slide into irrelevance as racial patterns adapt in ways that maintain white dominance. This is a hard-to-accept fact that all history verifies. We must acknowledge it, not as a sign of submission, but as an act of ultimate defiance (p. 12).

As the above passage articulates, the permanence of racism does not mean that efforts for liberation should be abandoned. Bell (1992) insists that acceptance of the permanence of racism will provide the basis for realistic goals. Delgado and Stefancic (2001) ask whether CRT can be labeled as pessimistic or optimistic. My use of CRT is wholly optimistic-that through research, empowerment can be achieved. This dissertation is an investigation of race and racism as inherent to men's participation in FS.

Hargreaves (1982b) suggested evaluating sport in dialectical terms where the reciprocal interaction between groups and the tension between groups and therein is acknowledged. This will more accurately reflect the power and influence of dominant groups and the ability of subordinate groups to resist. CRT can be seamlessly applied to the field of sport because it positions racism as inextricably linked to power and privilege. I use CRT to ascertain how racism moderates fantasy sport participation. Since its inception in the 1970s, CRT has been underexplored in sport due to the quantitative/qualitative binary that exists in the research world, which is similar to the black/white and male/female binary systems. All binaries create narrow

understandings of the world. The research world is no exception. Traditionally, the goal of quantitative researchers has been to eliminate bias, remain emotionally detached, test their hypotheses, and ensure reliability and validity. Qualitative research is conducted as a means to understand human action, intent, characteristics of social objects, or human experience (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Quantitative research is bound by the assumption that data are hard and reliable, and that research will lead to control and/or predictions. Quantitative researchers are striving for generalizable results. Once research questions have been established the research paradigms begin to take divergent paths:

> In designing a study, all social science researchers begin with a set of questions about a social problem. Subsequently, they simultaneously consider constructs and theories that can adequately facilitate how the problem is conceptually understood while also thinking about the practical dimensions of collecting data (Jackson, Drummond, & Camara, 2007, p. 22).

There are distinctions between method and methodology which must be framed in an understanding of the two often contradictory paradigms of research. According to Jackson, Drummond, and Camara (2007), method refers to tools and techniques used for data collection and methodology is the theoretical or practical approach to the problem. Quantitative, Qualitative, and Critical Studies, which gave way to feminist, critical legal studies, and later CRT, can all function as methodologies that have distinct methods.

Identifying an Approach to Research

Generalizability is a primary goal of quantitative research, which puts it squarely at odds with qualitative research. The dichotomy between the two methods has been used to underscore

the “paradigm wars” and incompatibility thesis. The “paradigm wars” exemplify the overemphasis researchers have placed on the differences between qualitative and quantitative methods (e.g., Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). These differences are often offered as criticisms. Quantitative researchers use a positivist/empiricist approach, believing they remain objective during the data collection and analysis (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). According to Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), “Science involves confirmation and falsification, and that these methods and procedures are to be carried out objectively” (p.15). Qualitative research is set apart from quantitative research by epistemological differences, as well as several core assumptions. Qualitative researchers take the interpretivist approach. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) found that qualitative research is interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and counterdisciplinary. Qualitative methods are both humanistic and interpretive: “In qualitative research everyone is allowed to be a theorist; it would not be uncommon to find that in some situations context and structure are powerful determinants of behavior and in other situations to find that individual will and volition are more important” (Morrison, Haley, Sheehan, & Taylor, 2002, p. 17). The researcher’s subjectivity is expected and embraced by the research community. However, a researcher may be met with questions if his/her philosophical position leads him/her to a methodology which is neither quantitative nor qualitative, but rather from a third paradigm, critical studies. According to Kincheloe & McLaren (2005), “Mainstream research practices are generally, although most often unwittingly, implicated in the reproduction of systems of class, race, and gender oppression” (p. 303). Critical theorists often maintain that the interests of some, not all, are met by the current social structures, which dictate the acquisition of power.

Critical theorists attempt to explain how culture is produced and reproduced, how individuals struggle with meanings which shape their socialization, and how power, or a lack of power, affects this production and reproduction of culture (Coakley, 2004). Nationalism, racism, and capitalism were at the core of critical theory when it was conceptualized in 1922 at the Institute for Social Research (IFSR), also known as the Frankfurt School. Members of the school were neo-Marxists and emphasized the need for research that assessed cultural and ideological superstructures: "The scientific approach to critical theory can be described as an attempt to integrate Marxist and Freudian methodology" (Rigauer, 2000, p.41). Freudian methodology (e.g. psychoanalysis) was employed by members of the Frankfurt school because they believed it provided concepts which revealed essential information about socio-psychoanalysis of the individual. According to Marx theory (Rigauer, 2000), a power imbalance exists within society. Power can be used to subordinate Others, it enables any form of social action, and invades every level of social relationship (Barker, 2004). This imbalance can be linked to the relationship between the means of production and the process, which Marx identified as the base and superstructure. The "base" is comprised of individuals acting as the direct producers, while the superstructure is limited to the "masters of production". According Creswell (2007), critical theorists attempt to empower human beings to transcend the constraints placed on them by race, class, and gender.

Critical theory is always evolving and a key component of that evolution is our understanding of how individuals view themselves and the world in relation to social and historical forces (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005):

> Operating in this way, an evolving criticality is always vulnerable to exclusion from the domain of approved modes of research. The forms of social change it supports always positions it in some places as an outsider, an awkward detective always interested in uncovering social structures, discourses ideologies, and epistemologies that prop up both the status quo and a variety of forms of privilege (p. 306).

According to Kincheloe & McLaren (2005), there are four emergent schools within critical research: Neo-Marxist, genealogical, poststructuralist, and critical ethnography. One gray area is the relationship between critical studies and qualitative research. For example, critical ethnography presents a challenge to the assumptions of qualitative methodology. Kincheloe and McLaren (2005) suggested that critical ethnography does consider history, liberation, and social/cultural conditioning, but they argue that these considerations are only a beginning. Critical ethnography is just one example of shared assumptions between the qualitative and critical approach.

Critical and Qualitative Approach as Parallel Paradigms

There are some similarities between a qualitative methodology and the critical studies paradigm, specifically CRT. It is important to acknowledge that there are multiple approaches to both qualitative and critical research. Within each paradigm there is a debate over the form and function of the methodology. However, it is necessary to conduct a comparison of three assumptions of qualitative research that are integrated into critical studies: (a) the importance of context; (b) the social construction of meanings; and (c) the intentional/unintentional liberation of participants. It is appropriate to position this portion of the paper as my understanding of the two paradigms and as a deconstruction of the dissimilarities between the two. First, it is integral

to acknowledge that qualitative research and CRT both function with the assumption that context is very important. Qualitative research is naturalistic and the setting in which the research is conducted is considered to be integral to the data: "In qualitative research, the context not only affects the data collection process but also adds to the understanding of the research question" (Dixon & Rousseau, 2006, p.213). Similarly, in critical research it is important to connect data to context (Kersten, 1986). One example used by Dixon (2006) is the examination of the way "urban" students experience middle school. Qualitative researchers would acknowledge that the location of the school would inform the experiences of the students. Critical theorists would deem it irresponsible not to consider how "urbanness" is defined and by who.

The second common thread between qualitative research and critical studies is the belief that meanings are socially constructed (Morrison et al., 2002). The research participant is highly important to both qualitative researchers as well as critical race theorists. During a qualitative study reality is being co-constructed between the research participant and the researcher. CRT uses both storytelling and counter-storytelling as a data collection method and a core methodological assumption. Delgado & Stefancic (2001) determined that "critical race theorists have built on everyday experiences with perspective, viewpoint, and the power of stories and persuasion to come to a better understanding of how Americans see race" (p. 38). They also found that "stories also serve as a powerful psychic function for minority communities. Many victims of racial discrimination suffer in silence, or blame themselves for their predicament. Stories can give them voice and reveal that others have similar experiences" (p.43).

The use of narratives in CRT is not simply for the sake of keeping the research world sustained, while alienating the masses, as can sometimes be the case with qualitative research. Denzin

(2005) contended that the qualitative paradigm has experienced eight phases: Traditional; modernist; golden age; blurred genres; the crisis of representation; postmodern; experimental and new ethnographies; postexperimental inquiry; methodologically contested present; and the fractured future. During the postmodern and postexperimental phase, narratives and storytelling served to contradict previously privileged methods and theories. It is in the "fractured future" that the qualitative and critical paradigm most closely overlap. According to Denzin (2005), qualitative research has struggled with the, "Hopes, needs, goals, and promises of a free democratic society" (p. 3). Narrative has become one data collection tool of qualitative researchers as they attempt to make sense of a phenomenon. CRT is championed by methodological activists who use narratives not only to interpret a phenomenon but, ultimately, to fuel liberation.

The potential liberation of the participant is a third assumption of the critical paradigm which is sometimes the unintended result of qualitative research. One can only assume that for a qualitative researcher to expect his/her study to result in liberation, there must be some acknowledgement of an oppressor, be it an institution, individual, or unconscious force, which can be identified by both the researcher and participant. Kincheloe and McLaren (2005) found that most qualitative researchers focus on increasing knowledge through description, interpretation, or reexamination. According to Kersten (1986), the socially constructed world is systematically distorted and each social construct exists for a particular purpose. The purpose is only to be found in the underlying mechanisms that caused its development. Critical studies are used to provide a social or cultural criticism and individual empowerment. I present this to

provide a foundation for my preference to investigate FS using a critical approach, one which has shared and recognizable characteristics to a qualitative analysis.

Kersten (1986) argued that there has been a fundamental misunderstanding of the critical position due to the use of the "paradigmatic criteria" of other approaches in the evaluation of the critical approach. Ironically, at the core of the discussion is a rethinking of knowledge construction. Kersten (1986) framed this as a paradigm problem: "Paradigm connotes a particular way of perceiving and studying a phenomenon that excludes other ways of perception and study" (p. 757). Qualitative researchers, despite positioning themselves as insight-seekers, are guilty of using simple dichotomies to organize their understanding of the research world. "Critical research, however, does not fit neatly into either the objectivist/subjectivist or the quantitative/qualitative categories. As a result, the critical approach has frequently been categorized as 'ontologically and otherwise confused" (Kersten, 1986, p.758). Critical research can be quantitative, qualitative, or theoretical, which is to be determined by the problem and how it is understood, analyzed, acted on, and resolved or transformed (Kersten, 1986).

"Doing Bricolage"

Critical race theory, which is grounded in critical theory, functions as an analysis of social, political, and cultural systems of power which makes "bricolage" a good choice in framing the issues across both critical and critical race work. Bricolage is influenced by cultural studies and the belief that to study culture a multitude of disciplines can or should be engaged or employed.

Scholars of cultural studies argue that by adopting cultural studies overtly multidisciplinary approaches researchers can study larger social issues, such as race,

> class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, immigration, pedagogy from unique perspectives and theoretical positions" (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004, p. 18).

It is important to be absolutely clear that bricolage does not have a set of procedural guidelines. "With grounding in social theory bricoleurs can make informed decisions about the nature of the knowledge produced in the field and how researchers discern the worth of the knowledge they themselves produce" (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004, p. 81). Kincheloe and Berry (2004) acknowledged that by: "Rejecting positivistic notions of internal and external validity bricoleurs seek new ways of justifying their interpretive choices" (p. 100). As previously stated, who can create knowledge and how that knowledge can be created has served to reinforce domination, particularly in consideration of the voices that are often subjugated. Fantasy sport is my point of entry text (POET) as I engage in bricolage to illuminate the intersections of race, gender, and sexuality within the phenomena. One technique described by Kincheloe and Berry (2004) to start "doing the bricolage" is over head transparency. This is a layering technique: "Another and then another transparency from the bricolage map is overlaid, each one with different discourses, knowledge and so forth that exposes the hegemonic forces at play in the creation of the original text" (p. 109). The six transparencies I present include: (a) FS as a cultural transmitter of hegemonic ideologies; (b) the binary relationship between black /white masculine identity; (c) the permanence of racism and its emergence as aversive on the World Wide Web; (d) FS as a virtual dystopia; (e) Pop cultural/media references to FS; and (f) the position of CRT in FS research. As I layer these transparencies I continually consider the tenants, themes, and assumptions of CRT. I argue that racism is permanent, but we can affect change in how race functions within society. Bricoleurs do not speak of "T" truth, so my position on the permanence

of racism could be perceived as a contradiction. Fortunately, bricolage does not require a researcher to resolve such contradictions (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004). Thus, my position in regards to the permanence of racism can stand. "An important dimension of the bricolage involves learning to deal with conflict and ambiguity" (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004, p. 47).

Bricoleurs use hermeneutics: "A form of philosophical inquiry that focuses on the culture, social, political and historical nature of research" (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004, p. 82). Kincheloe and Berry (2004) described the five ways bricolage is informed by hermeneutics:

- Connecting the object of inquiry to the many contexts in which it is embedded;
- Appreciating the relationship between researcher and that being researched;
- Connecting the making of meaning to human experience;
- Making use of textual forms of analysis while not forgetting that living and breathing human beings are the entities around which and with which meaning is being made.
- Building a bridge between these forms of understanding and informed action (p. 83).

I use critical hermeneutics to analyze the intersections of race, gender, and sexuality in FS. According to Kincheloe and Berry (2004)

> Critical hermeneutics takes the concept of historicity to a new conceptual level, as it specifies the nature of historicity that helps produce cultural meaning, the consciousness of the researcher, the construction of the research process, and the formation of human subjectivity and transformative action" (p. 83).

My moves between critical hermeneutics and CRT can be made explicitly while maintaining bricolage as my method.

Tenants of CRT and the Internal Debate

According to Delgado & Stefancic (2001), the basis for critical legal studies was "The idea that not every legal case has one correct outcome" (p. 5). CRT is also anti-essentialism, because the intersections of identity provided the opportunity for overlapping and conflicting identities. There are three main tenants of CRT: (a) racism exists as an ordinary part of our daily lives; (b) racism advances the interests of white elites and the working-class; and (c) race and races are socially constructed (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). These tenants have resulted in four operational themes: (a) interest convergence or material determinism; (b) revisionist interpretations of history; (c) the critique of liberalism; and (d) structural determinism (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Despite some congruence about the centrality of race in CRT, there is a philosophical debate within CRT based on the aforementioned tenants and themes.

The third tenant of CRT that race and races are socially constructed is the first point of departure that I discuss. The CRT movement contains idealists who believe race as a social construct can be deconstructed through a restructuring of the system through attitudes, words, and scripts. The opposing position is held by realists who believe "Racism is a means by which society allocates privilege and status. Racial hierarchies determine who gets tangible benefits, including the best jobs, the best schools, and invitations to parties in people's homes" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 17). Realists believe it will take more than attitude adjustments and varied language to deter racism. Depending on whether a CRT scholar is a realist or idealist will inform

the method used to strive for liberation. Another position held within CRT is that of the materialists. The materialist link racism, exploitation, and rationalizing to the mistreatment of colored people: “Circumstances change so that one group finds it possible to seize advantage, or to exploit another. They do so then form appropriate collective attitudes to rationalize what was done” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 18). The position of the materialists is in line with the second tenant of CRT, that racism advances the interests of white elites and the working-class, which is a result of interest convergence or material determinism. According to Delgado & Stefancic (2001), during the Cold war, the United States was clamoring for the loyalties of Third World-colored people globally. The United States needed to end the overt displays of racism that weakened international relations. The convergence of white and black interests resulted in improved race relations between blacks and whites. One method employed by materialists is revisionism. They attempt to revise historical accounts that neglect to account for the perspectives of minorities. They focus their attention on “profit, labor supply, international relations, and the interests of whites” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 20). The use of revisionism is ideal as a method of employing CRT, but identifying as a materialist would require me to adopt tenants of the larger capitalist structure, which by and large encourages assimilation. Historically, critical theory has addressed systemic oppression through social, political, and cultural relationships.

Delgado & Stefancic (2001) presented another debate which exists within CRT between assimilationists and nationalists. Assimilationists ascribe to the aforementioned position of the materialist. Meanwhile, nationalists can be best described as separatists who desire communities that function as “a nation within a nation” and serve the needs of members of a particular group

(i.e., African American, Latino/Latina, Native American, or Asian American citizens) (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). A central point between the assimilationists and nationalist ideology is one that acknowledges that the system is unjust and that, "Minorities of color should not try to fit into a flawed economic and political system, but to transform it" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 62). I would also assume the middle ground between the idealist and realist scholars of CRT. This position may not already exist in the already constituted field of CRT, but is congruent with my philosophical position as a pragmatist.

Bringing pragmatism into CRT allows me to partially embrace many of the tenants and themes described within the on-going debate, as I embark on my analysis of fantasy sport. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) argued that pragmatism is used to find a middle ground between "dogmatism" and "skepticism". My pragmatism is informed by the qualitative/quantitative paradigm wars discussed earlier. Pragmatists assert that a researcher can have an epistemological orientation that is both objective and subjective (Tashakkori, 1998). Winant (2000) credited W.E.B. Dubois and the Chicago School of Sociology as pioneers whom used pragmatism as they engaged racial theory. It is necessary to be inclusive rather than exclusive as I embrace traditional research paradigms, while exploring contemporary methodological approaches to studying racism in sport. The social and behavioral sciences have both benefitted from this change, which now allows researchers to use the method that is the most appropriate for their study. Kincheloe and Berry (2004) noted that graduate advisors sometimes chain their students to a monodisciplinary approach to phenomena. I answer the call placed by Kincheloe and Berry (2004) to challenge the ways in which rigorous research is

defined: “Any discipline that refuses to move outside its borders privileges its own narratives and regimes of truth” (p. 41). They encourage academicians to embrace the fluidity of bricolage.

CHAPTER III

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In Chapter 1, I introduced the phenomenon of fantasy sport. I explained the relationship between the athletes and FS participants. I also discussed race in sport and how racism remains permanent within the United States. I provided definitions for hegemony and culture and connected them to sport. Last, I introduced the premise that race, gender, and sexuality contribute to identity construction and the meaning given to the phallus in the United States. In Chapter 2, I will provide a brief overview of: (a) the history and culture of American sport and the commodification of black athletes; (b) studies which categorize race, prejudice, and discrimination as aversive; (c) psychoanalytical models of gender identity which are linked to the socio-cultural function of race; (d) fantasy sport participation and its consumptive practices; and (e) racialized and sexualized manhood in sport culture.

According to Harry Edwards (1973), it is vital to engage sociology and psychology in the study of sport. Psychology provides a way of understanding the motives of those who consume sport directly and indirectly. Meanwhile, sociology can be used to gain an understanding of how sport functions within our society. In addition, Edwards raised questions about the status quo of the sports world. The role of sport in society is dictated and/or encoded by ideology. Hargreaves (1982b) describes ideology as being embedded in specific social relations, social processes, and as shielding the interests of specific groups and classes. “Ideology provides a context for understanding the relationship among the races and between class, and those relationships in turn largely determine the meaning of the ideology” (Hochschild, 1995, p.4). Put simply, ideology is understood as all ideas, meanings, and practices (Coakley, 2004). Edwards (1973) found that

there are four features of ideology: selectivity; simplicity; symbolism; and public acceptability. Ideology is fundamental to understanding the external validity and internal consistency of social action and attitudes (Edwards, 1973). With this understanding, I will discuss how sport shapes and is shaped by ideologies. In the 1970s Harry Edwards wrote about the "American sports creed" as the primary ideology of sport consumers (p. 63). According to the creed, loyalty, hard work, discipline, and rules were desired outcomes of sport participation. Edwards (1973) links adherence with the sports creed to the self interest of some. He used for example coaches who have a vested interest in the sports creed. Edwards (1973) argued that despite the existence of a dominant creed alternative perspectives should be considered. Edwards (1973) presented an alternative ideology, the equalitarian perspective, which he developed in response to a disparate experience for black athletes who were historically limited in their sport participation. The expression of white supremacy through a dominant ideology can be contextualized via American history.

In the 18th century, the American ideology of white supremacy was far reaching and sport was no exception. After the American Revolution, efforts to stratify society intensified and race was a simple means of creating separation:

> The Naturalization Act of 1790 was designed to consolidate an American national identity, as European immigrants were transformed (through national legislation) into free white persons. We also begin to see the effort to define the African American slave as a 'living tool, property with a soul' (Rhoden, 2006, p. 47).

During slavery blacks were pitted against one another in competition, typically a boxing match or horse race, and the slave owners bet on the outcome of the event (Loy, McPherson, &

Kenyon, 1978). Rhoden (2006) found that historically athletic games were used to relieve slaves of their anger, aggression, and hostility. These events were tightly controlled by white slave owners. In addition, wrestling matches, foot races, and other sporting events between slaves from opposing plantations were organized for the slave owners' entertainment. Remarkably, sport became both a site for oppression and freedom for plantation athletes. "Sports, for many of the enslaved men in particular, became a ritual of reclaiming one's manhood" (p. 49). The slave who was victorious in competition sometimes received preferential treatment, elevated social status, and uncommonly their freedom (Loy et al.,1978):

> The slave athlete-the fighter, the jockey, the horse trainer-often enjoyed exalted status among fellow slaves and was regarded as a role model for slave children, to whom he passed along his various skills. The most talented enslaved athletes not only earned respect among fellow slaves, but also garnered favor among owners, who saw their prowess as an outward extension of the owner's own strength (Rhoden, 2006, p. 55).

Rhoden (2006) provides me with an important connection to the historical precedent of blacks being used by white owners for entertainment, financial gain, social and phallic control. Surely, these occurrences should not be hastily labeled as examples of social mobility for blacks as the rewards reaped from participation were given by the slave owners. When slavery ended in the 18th century white control of sport participation did not cease.

In the United States sport was developed into an organized spectator event after the Civil War. The popularity of baseball was the primary catalyst (Edwards, 1973). By 1876 the National League was formed. In 1894, Jane Addams founded Hull House in Chicago which was designed to meet the recreational needs of Americans in urban areas (Edwards, 1973). Throughout the 19th

century blacks were prohibited from participating in most sport competitions with whites. Black men literally fought their way into sport by boxing white competitors, but only when overt racism was not used to disallow such a fight. During the “Great Migration” many blacks moved from the south, away from the harsh realities of sharecropping to the north where greater employment opportunities existed. The industrial conditions of the north provided the occasion for some blacks to participate in segregated sports activities (Edwards, 1973). According to Edwards (1973), some whites believed that “Blacks were simply too spontaneous and impulsive in nature to participate within the structure of sports rules with the same degree of sophistication as whites” (p. 38). These exclusionary practices continued well into the beginning of the 20th century.

Harry Edwards (1973) documented that the emergence of recreation centers, sports clubs, and professional leagues, during the 1900s, is a pivotal moment in sport for some white Americans. Yet, again blacks are granted limited access to sport (Edwards, 1973). Despite the signing of Jackie Robinson by the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947, chief attempts at integration were not made until decades later when sport became big business (Edwards, 1973). During the1968 Mexico City Olympic Games, “blacks demonstrate against racism in America before the eyes of television cameras and the entire world” (p. 42). The ideology of white supremacy from centuries earlier was simply adapted to the changing times but ultimately it continued to be steadfastly protected both politically and economically. Hargreaves (1982b) suggested that "Sport has traditionally provided an avenue of social mobility for ethnic minorities" (p. 54). I contend that because black participation in sport has always been allowed or disallowed by the white majority, and that dubbing blacks participation *social mobility* would be a gross

oversimplification. According to Hawkins (2008), changes to the racial landscape of sports have merely been cosmetic. Edwards (1973) argued that sport is an exploiter of black labor. Opportunities for black athletes were always embedded in the necessity to produce a better product (Lomax, 2008). I intend to contribute to the critical discourse of sport through my examination of how black athletes have gone from marginal participation to majority representation in the most profitable contemporary sports.

Contemporary Black Athleticism and "Commodity Racism"

Consumption has played a pivotal role in sport (Horne, 2006). In *Race, Sport and the American Dream*, Earl Smith (2007) asserted that "modern sport suffers from all forms of bureacratization, commercialization, greed, exploitation, racism, sexism, homophobia, ethnocentrism, and a silly form of misdirected patriotism" (p.3). Horne (2006) discussed celebrity endorsement culture and he used Michael Jordan as his illustration. He identified three factors which contributed to Jordan's success: his supreme athleticism; his entry into basketball at a time when the NBA had gone global as a commodity; and Jordan's emergence as black American culture became increasingly commodified. Smith (2007) argued that as a part of the permanent underclass African Americans are subject to the "class paradigm" that relegates them to positions of servitude. He found that this is exemplified in contemporary institutions of collegiate sport which are driven by profit and global expansion. He refers to this as the Athletic Industrial Complex (AIC). This concept was adapted from the Military Industrial [Congressional] Complex, which Smith attributes to C. Wright Mills and former President Dwight Eisenhower. The AIC can be characterized as being both the beneficiary and benefactor of a multitude of non-sports industries including the hotel, entertainment, construction, clothing,

and transportation industry. The athletes who are drawn into the AIC are exploited to help bolster the success of these institutions. Smith (2007) stated that, “Individual athletic departments function as colonizers: Taking the resources of the university and exploiting the labor of the students” (p.127). The students being exploited are disproportionately African American males, because basketball and football function as the primary revenue streams at the collegiate level of sport (Smith, 2007).

Furthermore, the exploitation that exists at the collegiate level is magnified at the professional level (Smith, 2007). All parties involved understand that sport is a business, but disturbing power differentials exist. In 1973, Edwards observed that the most skilled black athletes are recruited for starting positions meanwhile good or mediocre white players are allowed to hold secondary positions on the team. According to Birrell & McDonald (2000), only recently have sport scholars begun to critically examine “raced bodies” and white privilege within sport. In the previous sections, I presented literature which provides preliminary connections between American sports culture, the commodification of black athletes, and the ideology of white supremacy. Next, I present the methods used to study race, racism, discrimination, and prejudice. It is important to narrow my discussion of racism through existing research, in order to build a foundation for my investigation of FS.

Establishing Racism as Permanent

As discussed earlier, blacks were considered inferior sports competitors and prohibited from participating with and against whites for decades. In contemporary sport, black athleticism is accepted as the norm, but is still tempered with racist rationales. Race has been reported on the U.S. Census since 1790 and has been used to determine a person’s race, ancestry, physical

characteristics, culture, and language. Race is both observed and ascribed (National Research Council, 2004). The National Research Council (2004) presents five domains that are affected by race: (a) labor markets and employment, (b) education, c) housing and mortgage lending, d) health care, and e) criminal justice. These five domains are not an exhaustive list of arenas where racism exists, but rather they provide a lens into some of the social and economic consequences suffered by disadvantaged groups. Sport can most certainly be identified as a labor market which is affected by race.

Displaying aversive racism during interracial interactions. Researchers have been trying for decades to determine the causes and consequences of racism, specifically aversive racism. Dovidio and Gaertner (1986) have explored aversive racism for more than 30 years.

> The aversive racism perspective assumes that given the historically racist American culture and human cognitive mechanisms for processing categorical information, racist feelings and beliefs among white Americans are generally the rule rather than the exception (p. 61).

They have determined that there are several factors that contribute to aversive racism. These include differences in appearance, fear of difference, ingroup verses outgroup categorization, limited interracial contact, and an overall assumption that white is “good” and black is “bad”. They also found an explanation of motivational factors: “At the individual level, needs for self-esteem and superior status are frequently hypothesized to be among the major causes and perpetuators of prejudice and racial discrimination of whites against blacks” (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1986, p. 64). The key component in studying aversive racism have been creating

situations where normative structures can be manipulated to sometimes appear ambiguous, and to be salient at others:

> We hypothesize that because most whites want to see themselves as fair, just, and egalitarian, they will not directly express their prejudice against blacks. Expressing negative attitudes or endorsing overtly prejudiced statements would obviously challenge a person's egalitarian self-image (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1986, p. 80)

The first study Dovidio and Gaertner (1986) conducted analyzing aversive racism took place in 1973 and they investigated the likelihood a Liberal versus a Conservative Party member would help a stranded motorist:

> Liberal and Conservative households received apparent wrong-number telephone calls that quickly developed into requests for assistance. The callers, who were clearly identifiable from their dialects as being black or white, explained that their car was disabled and that they were attempting to reach a service garage from a public phone along the parkway. The callers further claimed that they had no more change to make another phone call and asked the subject to help by calling the garage (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1986, p. 68).

The researchers determined whether a subject hung up prematurely, which took place before hearing the motorist had no more change, or whether they were "unhelpful", which meant they hung up after hearing the subject had no more change. Conservative subjects that were deemed "unhelpful" were significantly less helpful to blacks than to whites. Liberals did not discriminate in their willingness to help, but they hung up prematurely on blacks more often than on whites. Dovidio and Gaertner simultaneously interviewed other Liberal and Conservative party members

about their likelihood to help a black or white stranded-motorist who had dialed the wrong number: “In virtually every case, participants indicated that they would help and that they would do so without regard to the person’s race” (p. 69). This initial study provides a foundation for my speculation about the unconscious negative feelings some may harbor toward blacks. This study became the catalyst for numerous additional studies.

Apfelmaum, Sommers, and Norton (2008) determined that during social interactions whites feigned an inability to categorize others based on race and instead adopted strategic colorblindness to appear unbiased. The researchers defined strategic colorblindness as avoidance of talking about race or acknowledging racial difference. Additionally, they described colorblindness as a set of ideological beliefs that have become a norm for some whites. A clear motivation for adopting this colorblind stance is, “Whites’ regulatory efforts to appear unbiased are rewarded in the form of out-group perceptions of warmth and social desirability” (p. 919). The researchers examined (a) the antecedents of strategic colorblindness; (b) the mechanisms negatively affected by efforts to be colorblind because of nonverbal behavior; and (c) whether the consequences of avoiding race during social interactions are always negative. Apfelmaum et al. (2008) measured participant’s internal and external motivations to avoid prejudice. Based on previous research they predicted that participants with high external motivations to avoid prejudice (EMS) would use strategic colorblindness. They conducted four studies which examined the antecedents and consequences of white participants’ avoidance of race during social interactions.

During the first study, the participants acted as questioner or answerer in a paired picture recognition task. One partner sat in front of 30 pictures that varied by gender, race, and

background color, and they asked questions of the other participant who held a picture and answered “yes” or “no” until the picture was identified. When white participants were paired with a black partner, the acknowledgement of race was almost nonexistent. The second study used the same-partnered photo recognition, but afterward the participant was taken to a room and was alone asked to take an anxiety measurement. Again, race was acknowledged less during interracial interactions. However, there was no significant difference in interaction anxiety during interracial interactions. In Study 3 and 4 videos of the paired interracial picture tasks were shown to black and white participants to determine whether there were negative consequences of colorblindness. The results varied by the race of the participant and the relevance of race. When race was perceived as being relevant to the interaction and colorblindness was employed, whites with high EMS scores viewed the interaction as positive. Conversely, blacks viewed the interaction as negative and viewed the approach as being indicative of greater racial prejudice. Only when race was not relevant to the interaction was colorblindness perceived as favorable by both blacks and whites (Apfelmaum et al., 2008). Why would a participant in a picture matching exercise avoid describing people in terms of their race primarily when their partner in the task was black? Put simply, to avoid appearing prejudice. As the aforementioned study confirmed, this convenient colorblindness only serves to raise suspicion. Researchers have further confirmed that the efforts made by some whites to conceal prejudice are not always well received.

Shelton, Richeson, Salvatore, and Trawalter (2005) explored interracial interactions and brain activity associated with self-regulation. The participants in the study completed the Implicit Association Test (IAT) which measures racial bias through automatic association. The researchers evaluated how high and low-bias whites were perceived by blacks during interracial

interactions. When high-bias whites were paired with black partners they engaged in more self-regulation to appear unbiased then did low-bias whites. Blacks perceived high-bias whites who attempted to appear unbiased more favorably than they perceived low-bias whites who did not attempt to appear unbiased. One limitation of the study was the difficulty participants had in detecting prejudice during brief interracial interactions. Additionally, the researchers suspected that high-bias whites can only self-regulate for short periods of time. Regardless of being high-biased or low-biased race was a factor that could not be ignored. It is a profound revelation that white individuals always register race whether they admit it or not.

Aversive racism as a moderator of male interactions in sport and non-sport activities.

In 1983, Dovidio and Gaertner (1986) studied the willingness of white males to seek help from a black or white partner. Two conditions were examined: in the first condition, assistance was offered, and in the other, the subject had to request assistance. The researchers assumed refusing assistance would be regarded as "normatively inappropriate". When assistance was offered, white males accepted assistance more often from a black partner then from a white partner. When assistance had to be requested, "Subjects asked for help less frequently from black than from white partners" (p. 73). Dovidio and Gaertner (1986) believed this discriminatory behavior could be attributed to, "The traditional role relationship in which black males have been subordinate to and dependent on whites" (p. 72). This study provides a seminal look at aversive racism being specifically enacted between male participants. Researchers have continued to uncover the keys to contemporary racism and its associative behaviors.

Goff, Steele, and Davies (2008) examined whether individuals who held egalitarian values exhibited racial distancing when they were concerned that they might be viewed as

prejudiced. They countered the argument presented by Dovidio and Gaertner (1986) that racial distancing is an illustration of racial prejudice. Four studies were conducted to determine whether stereotype threat would affect racial distancing. Stereotype threat is the belief that one may be treated negatively because of a negative stereotype about one's group (Goff et al., 2008; Stone, Lynch, Sjomeling, & Darley, 1999). The studies were conducted using white and black male participants. The researchers anticipated that black males would produce the strongest effects. In the four studies the researcher observed where participants sat in a room when they anticipated having a conversation about race with two other participants: "When White participants expected to discuss a racially contentious topic with Black partners, the threat of appearing racist caused them to physically distance themselves from those partners in each of the four studies" (Goff et al., 2008, p. 104). The researchers used these findings to argue that the term racism may need reexamining and that it is possible for "racial harms" to occur without racist actors. He asserts that it is the threat of being labeled "racist" that causes some whites to distance themselves from blacks. It seems trite to argue the semantics of whether racism can exist without the presence of racist intentions. The act of distancing oneself during interracial interactions based on the race of the other participants is a blatant display of prejudice even if that prejudice is steeped in the fear of being labeled racist. Goff et al. (2008) are not alone in their attempt to make the case that whites may be the co-victims of contemporary racism.

Stone et al. (1999) examined how stereotype threat affects black and white athletic performance. The researchers assumed that "People hold racial stereotypes that are specific to athletes" (p. 1213). The abilities of black and white athletes have been measured against one another since the 1800s. The initial exploration into black and white athletic performance was

sparked by some black athletes, consistent ability to beat their white opponents (Stone et al., 1999). Although research over the past two centuries has discounted the notion that there are differences in the physiology and temperament of black athletes which account for their success, there remains a consistent belief that racial differences do, in fact, exist and influence athletic performance:

> Black athletes are perceived to have natural athletic ability (which is a positive sports attribute) but are thought to be less intelligent, even in a sports context (a negative sports attribute). In contrast, White athletes are perceived to have less natural athletic ability (a negative sports attribute) but are thought to be intelligent and perhaps harder working (positive sports attributes) (Stone et al., 2009, pp. 1215).

The researchers conducted two experiments using a golf test. They examined whether the performance of black and white athletes would be affected by being told an athletic test was about ability versus intelligence. When the test was presented as a measure of sports intelligence black athletes did not perform as well as when the test measured ability. The results for whites were unclear after Experiment 1. The researchers conducted a second experiment to test the reliability of stereotype threat as an effect on white participants. In the second experiment the researchers controlled for anxiety because they determined that stereotype threat was most likely to affect individuals who associated their self-worth with athletic performance. They confirmed the reliability of the results from Experiment 1 which indicated that the performance of white athletes was negatively affected when their golf test was framed in natural athletic ability. The researcher's reason, "stereotype threat is a general psychological phenomenon that could have a negative impact on the performance and self-evaluation of any group member, including

traditionally nonstigmatized individuals such as White college students" (Stone et al., p. 1224). The researchers pointed out a key element of stereotype threat which is the link to individual self-worth. However, Goffe et al. (2008) attempted to link stereotype threat to racial distancing but there was no clear indication that the participants connected their self-worth to appearing non-prejudice. Goff et al. (2008) explicitly stated that "Distancing was unrelated to racial prejudiced, either implicitly or explicitly" (p. 104). It is of note that one key component of the study by Stone et al. (1999) is their reliance on a discriminatory stereotype about "natural black athletic ability" to frame their argument that whites were adversely affected by such a stereotype. By using these stereotypes the participants must operationalize racist beliefs to participate in the study.

In 2010, Bonilla-Silva contributed to the discussion on racism, colorblindness, and whether the two are contingent upon racist actors. He found that one reason there is disagreement about racism is because individuals have varying understandings of racism. Bonilla-Silva noted that many whites attempted to lean on the ideology of colorblindness in order to be absolved from racism. He described color-blind racism as the insistence, by some whites, that the inequalities experienced by people of color are the result of "market dynamics, naturally occurring phenomena, and blacks imputed cultural limitations" (p. 2). He reasoned that racial ideology can be examined through communicative interactions: "Hence, although surveys are useful instruments for gathering general information on actors' views, they are severely limited tools for examining how people explain, justify, rationalize, and articulate racial viewpoints" (p.11). Bonilla-Silva (2010) found this to be most prevalent among college students. Some whites use projection in racial discourse, use diminutives to temper race talk, and lastly become

incoherent when asked to discuss “forbidden issues” (p. 54). He determined that the “style of color blindness” individual’s exhibit may lead researchers to inaccurate conclusions. To maintain the colorblind facade some whites tend to avoid overtly racist speech, but instead use covert language coupled with semantic moves. Semantic moves include; “I am not prejudice, but…, “Some of my best friends are black,” “I am not black so I don’t know,” (p. 57)

Racism has become subtle and covert, which makes it challenging to study. The methods used to conceptualize and explore race, racism, discrimination, and prejudice are varied yet many produce similar findings: “In terms of interracial behavior, the presence or absence of norms governing appropriate behavior is a critical factor mediating the expression of prejudice” (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1986, p. 85). In contemporary America, it is socially unacceptable to be overtly racist and many have adopted the façade of liberalism and colorblindness. Despite the best efforts of many whites to appear colorblind race continues to be used as a daily frame of reference. Bonilla-Silva (2010) noted that “the intentions of individual actors are largely irrelevant to the explanation of social outcomes” (p. 54). The literature also supports the premise that race moderates interracial interactions and sport provides a site where race moderates participation. To further explore how race governs normalized behavior I will discuss psychoanalytic models of identity development, and how race and gender intersect.

Identity Development and the Intersections of Masculinity and Race

Horne (2006) discusses the multiplicity of identity. Horne (2006) found that "identity refers to how we see ourselves in relation to others" (p. 126). Identity can be constructed on both the personal and social level. According to Layton (1998), “Identities are multiple, contradictory, fluid, constructed in relation to other identities, and constantly changing” (p. 3). The

development of male and female identity happens on divergent paths because masculinity is developed in opposition to femininity (Connell, 2005; Layton, 1998). I will explore the distinctions between the social construction and the personal construction of identity specifically white male identity and black male identity.

Constructing identity. Identity can be linked to multiple factors (e.g. gender ideology, sexual orientation, age, class, religion, race, and ethnicity). Identity is used to determine our sameness and differences, which are paramount in Western culture (Hall & du Gay, 1996). Barker (2003) determined identity can take two forms: Self-identity (personally constructed) and social identity (socially constructed). Self-identity is the verbal conceptions of our self and our emotional identification. Social identity is the expectations and opinions that others have for us. Social identity and subjectivity are the primary factors acting as agents of identification. Subjectivity can be defined as the condition of being a person, the process by which we become a person, and how we experience ourselves (Barker, 2003). An exploration of these concepts through an examination of essentialism and anti-essentialism will provide a starting point for my discussion of identity.

Essentialism. The essentialist position of a unified agent with a fixed identity has been contested by sociologists, psychologists, and cultural theorists alike (Barker, 2003; Coakley, 2004; Hall & du Gay, 1996). Essentialism is the contention that identification is derived from a universal history, ancestry, and set of symbolic resources (Barker, 2003). This becomes problematic when two contradictory identities are juxtaposed. For example, being a male ice skater might cause identity conflict because, very often, males who engage in traditionally feminine sports recognize that discrepancies exist between societal expectations and their own

personal values. These men have the opportunity to develop stereotypically feminine character traits (i.e. poise and style), but it would be flawed to assume they lack stereotypically masculine traits (i.e. assertiveness, competitiveness, independence). “Identities are both unstable and temporarily stabilized by social practice and regular, predictable [sic] behaviour” (Barker, 2003, p. 229). This belief that there is a fixed essence of masculinity that can be defined is continually challenged by those who believe that identity is cultural in character rather than essential (Barker, 2003).

Hall and du Gay’s (1996) anti-essentialist position was that persons consist of several sometimes contradictory identities. “The resources we are able to bring to an identity project are historically distinct. They depend on the situational power from which we derive our cultural competencies within specific cultural contexts” (Barker, 2003, p. 222). Hall & du Gay (1996) assert that cultural identity is not only organized around points of similarities, but also by points of difference. A primary example is that of sex and gender, which are social constructs and are erroneously ascribed to biology. Masculinity and femininity are commonly characterized using a binary classification system. Normalization is achieved through the use of this type of classification system. According to Linda Gordon (1988), language had a “phallogocentric” beginning which denied women the possibility of accurate representation. She argues that women have always been deemed the Other. I contend that people of color, gays and lesbians, people with disabilities, and the elderly are also usually framed as the Other. Language becomes very important when using a cultural studies lens to discover the inner workings of identity.

Identity refers to a controlled way of speaking about persons. Signifiers generate meaning not in relation to fixed objects but in relation to other signifiers. Culture is integral to the

construction of the subject. Subjectivity is transformative depending on how we exist in relation to the culturally constructed ideologies that surround us: “The anti-essentialist conception of identities that understands them in terms of discursive constructions is the dominant strain of thinking in contemporary cultural studies” (Barker, 2003, p. 242). Clarifying whether identity is both a personal construction exemplified through action and a social construct, which is ascribed to us, is not uncomplicated. Using essentialism and anti-essentialism to examine cultural identification may only partially help us draw closer to understanding identity. To further examine identity it is necessary to venture into psychoanalytic theory where gender identity becomes the centerpiece of discussion.

Psychoanalytic theory. Layton (1998) determined that the oedipal and preoedipal relationship between mother and child has been linked to the development of both male and female gender identity. Significant emphasis has been placed on the phallic cultural order, which dictates how girls can relate to their mother. The traditional interpretation is that when a girl realizes she does not have a penis she begins to hate her mother because of what she lacks. The concept of *lack* is based on Freudian theory: “In a masculine symbolic, woman is figured not as different from man, but simply as not male, as a lacking male, as a different version of the same; the phallic little girl is a little man, the woman is a deficient man” (Layton, 1998, p. 48). Using phallic masculinity as the signifier of what all humanity should be measured against creates the foundation for patriarchy, where male is the subject and female is the object. According to Hall and du Gay (1996):

> Identities are, as it were, the positions which the subject is obliged to take up while always ‘knowing’ (the language of consciousness here betrays us) that they are

> representations, that representation is always constructed across a 'lack,' across a division from the place of the Other, and thus can never be adequate- identical- to the subject process which are invested in them (p.6).

According to Lacanian theory, "to become a subject one must take up a position of either having or not having the phallus" (Layton, 1998, p. 213). According to Layton (1998), the lack is equivalent to castration. The phallus is only symbolic and neither the male nor the female has the phallus. She describes masculinity as the fantasy of having the phallus, and femininity is the fantasy of being the phallus. Layton describes these Lacanian laws as reinforcing the gender binary.

The display of certain kinds of emotions and body practices seem to have a connection to the way individuals feel they ought to behave in daily life (Thing, 2001). Two distinct emotions discussed in psychoanalytic theory are relatedness (feminine) and autonomy (masculine), which have been gendered and then used to rationalize the gender binary (Layton, 1998). Layton contributes to the discourse on the gender binary by using psychoanalytic models. First, I discuss Layton's assessment of the developmental model presented by Sterns. Layton discusses these models because she argues they allow for the multiplicity of identity that can be recognized by the self and Other. According to the model there is an ongoing interaction between the substance and performance:

> It is a version that claims for the subject a history of contradictory but repeated and internalized relational patterns, the repetition of which provides a sense of continuity over time and allows one to read one's history as a coherent narrative, even as each new act might subtly change what was there before (Layton, 1998, p. 216)

The repetition that is mistaken for a coherent narrative contributes to the performative nature of identity, which is the next paradigm of identity I examine. The performance of identity is supported by norms that generate and are generated by individual performance. This discussion moves me once again to theories within cultural studies. Layton (1998) described three positions, articulated by Hall, that individuals are able to "take" within the culture:

> The dominant-hegemonic position, which reads the message approximately as it was intended (and thus presumably, shores up a capitalist status quo); the negotiated position, which accepts the dominant-hegemonic but with exceptions to the rule based on situational conditions; and the oppositional position, which refuses the dominant-hegemonic and reads the message according to alternative interests and strategies (p. 223).

I read Layton's use of the word "take" as individuals exercising agency in the process of assuming a position. This raises the question of whether all individuals share the same knowledge as it relates to cultural text. Also, Layton seems to presume that an individual has knowledge that opposition is possible. According to Birrell and McDonald (2000), critical cultural studies engages power which can be enacted through gender as being central to understanding social life. Here is where I will transition from the personal construction of identity to the social construction of identity. However, it is only appropriate on paper to bring light to this transition. Our lived experiences of personally and socially constructed identity are fluid. Ultimately, the position an individual "takes" in relation to hegemonic ideals maintains the gender binary, power differentials, and may create narcissistic injury (Layton, 1998).

As Layton (1998) points out, narcissism is a "Disturbance in the capacity to experience both self and other as separate centers of awareness, as subjects" (p.32):

> Narcissistic gender disturbance, then, is a matter of degree; no one escapes it, but not everyone is incapacitated by it. Gender identity, agency, and relationship involve ongoing processes of negotiation between outcomes of narcissistic relating and outcomes of non-narcissistic relating, between products of gender inequality and possibilities that counter gender inequality" (p. 55).

Layton (1998) then presents a model that uses cultural studies to outline the influence cultural messages have on the individual:

> (1)Language is polysemous, that is the nature of language is such that it generates multiple meaning possibilities; and (2) people are made of multiple and conflicting identity positions, which means that different subcultures or individuals interpret messages in ways different from how those who produce the messages may have wished them to be interpreted. In this view, culture is always a site of struggle over meaning, where dominant and non-dominant interpretations compete for hegemony (p.55).

Layton (1998), therefore, positions the cultural studies model alongside two psychoanalytic models to demonstrate the subjectivity, agency, and relatedness experienced by some individuals as they negotiate their gender identity.

Layton (1998) describes a male model of agency and a female model of relationship that develop alongside one another, yet in contrast to one another: "Masculinity is constructed in relation to femininity- but as a repudiation of it…"To become men, boys must suppress primary

relatedness and everything else the culture codes as feminine" (p. 38). This assertion supports the notion that personally and socially constructed identities are at play causing the individual to experience conflict. It is important to emphasize that Layton (1998) describes normative masculinity as synonymous with hegemonic masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity can be described as idealized or normative white, heterosexual elite males (Layton, 1998). Normative femininity is synonymous with hegemonic femininity and can be defined as idealized white, elite, heterosexual, and feminine females (Lance, 2004). Individuals receive varying messages about what is possible in their life based on their gender, race, class, sexuality, and ability. All of the aforementioned signifiers can be placed into their own binaries. According to Layton (1998), these messages are internalized and individuals choose to ascribe to them, rework them, or refuse them. Developing an identity can be a complicated process for some individuals due to unquestioned norms and assumptions that are a part of our daily lives (Young, 2004). By expanding the discussion beyond hegemonic masculinity, where would black men fall on the gender binary? Do they replace white women as being without the phallus? I continue my discussion of identity by examining white masculinity as it relates to black masculinity.

Developing a racialized masculinity. Hylton (2009) connects race, identity, and privilege. Whiteness has multiple meanings which are bound by context (Birrell & McDonald, 2000). White masculinity like all identities is both stable and destabilized during identity development, which means it can be manifested in many ways. Dominant masculinity in the United States has been shaped by patriarchal ideals. Hegemonic masculinity dominates the literature on masculinity. Birrell and McDonald (2000) found that hegemonic masculinity is characterized by the following features: "(1) physical force and control, (2) occupational

achievement, (3) familial patriarchy, (4) frontiersmanhip, and (5) heterosexuality" (p.15). Economics become an integral component of hegemonic masculinity in an industrial capitalist society. Birrell and McDonald (2000) link whiteness to hegemonic masculinity through frontiersmanship, which they identify as the white cowboy mystique. As a result, white masculinity is normalized and black masculinity is deemed oppositional. Race must be examined as a moderator of the personal and social construction of masculinity. According to Layton (1998), "each race, class, ethnicity, age cohort, religion, and so forth has its own assumptions about masculinity and femininity" (p. 172).

Majors and Billson (1992) argued that many black males experience agony as they develop a masculine identity that is constantly undermined or threatened in the United States. Black men have responded to subjugation through the development of an alternative masculinity dubbed the "cool pose": "Cool pose is a ritualized form of masculinity that entails behaviors, scripts, physical posturing, impression management, and carefully crafted performances that deliver a single, critical message: Pride, strength, and control" (Majors & Billson, 1992, p. 4). This cool form of masculinity is predicated on style, demeanor, walk, speech, sexual prowess, and in recent decades has been tied to athletic ability: "Coolness means poise under pressure and the ability to maintain detachment, even during tense encounters" (Majors & Billson, 1992, p.2). The cool pose helps locate black masculinity as a bodily experience. White men once misconstrued cool behavior as irresponsible, unmotivated, and attitudinal, and black men were labeled as unfit for sport participation. Now, cool is dunking, jump shots, hard tackles, acrobatic catches, and end zone dances. Edwards (1979) presents a comparison of black male athletes and white male athletes. According to Edwards (1979), athletes accept the conflicting roles that make

up their identity. However, these cannot be compartmentalized and acted upon individually. For example, being black, male, and an athlete requires an individual to be conscious of their intersecting identities at all times. According to Edwards (1973), athletes experience conflict:

> Strains in the athlete role emerge from two basic sources: (1) conflicting demands made upon the athlete by general societal values on the one hand and values associated with his sports role on the other; and (2) inconsistencies between role expectations and responsibilities of the athlete and those generally associated with being young in America (p. 234).

As a remedy some black men use sport to gain access to power through patriarchal manhood and creating physical fear. The commodification of black male athletes is predicated on rewarding aggressive behavior under the guise of athletic dominance. This is further problematized because some black men now embrace this dehumanizing stereotype. Sport and subsequently fantasy sport become vehicles for the mutual exposition of power. Fantasy sport literature is sparse and typically is focused on the marketability and profitability of participation in this new sports medium.

What is Fantasy Sport?

In 1962 fantasy football began as a paper-based competition between friends and community members in Oakland, California. It involved an annual draft and weekly meetings to calculate scores. In 1980 Rotisserie Baseball was created by two journalists, Glen Waggoner and Daniel Okrent. The first season included a few writers, a lawyer, a college professor, a university administrator, and a couple of people in the advertising business. Everyone kept track of statistics of players they drafted at the start of the fantasy season (Eisenberg & Waggoner, 1984).

According to Eisenberg & Waggoner (1984), in *Rotisserie League Baseball*, the sentiment among participants was that, "it wasn't enough to watch baseball, or to study it in the box scores and leader lists: we all wished, in some way to possess it, to control it" (p.4). Over the past two decades the fantasy sports industry has experienced growth at astonishing rates, which has been bolstered by the advent of the World Wide Web. The industry has seen rapid growth among American participants which are now estimated at 27.1 million. It has become wildly profitable with total earnings of $800 million and a market impact of $4.48 billion (World Fantasy Games, 2009). The fantasy sport industry has introduced a third paradigm of sport participation. The once intangible product of sport, which individuals could consume both directly and indirectly, has morphed into a tangible product.

Fantasy sport participants are both directly and indirectly consuming sport. Indirect participation includes viewing, reading, discussing with others, and purchasing products. Direct participation includes physical participation in the activity (Green, 2001). The FS participant creates a team through which s/he will experience the successes and failures of sport competition. Through FS, the likenesses of individual athletes are consumed and used for social and monetary gains. Fantasy sport as the third paradigm of participation has elevated sport spectatorship to a new level, where interactivity has allowed individual consumers to participate directly in sport competition. While FS participants are not physically playing the sport, they are participating in an alternate reality where they are playing a game of their own.

In a 2007 study, Farquhar and Meeds examined types of online fantasy sports users and their motivations. Players were analyzed using the following factors: High regard, low regard, high involvement, low involvement, entertainment, escape, arousal, social interaction, and

surveillance. Farquhar and Meeds defined fantasy sports users as: “Individuals who had participated online in a fantasy sport within one year prior to participation in the study (p. 1211).” The researchers did not use a hypothesis because research specifically focusing on fantasy sports is nominal. The study involved 42 participants, 38 males and 4 females. According to the researchers, these demographics are similar to male-female participation rates reported by the Fantasy Sports Trade Association. Participants ranked 60 statements and sorted them into three piles as well as answered open-ended questions about their personal thoughts on fantasy sports. The study concluded that players that were more skilled exhibited high involvement. They sought high levels of interactivity and were willing to pay additional fees for increased feedback and control. This study serves to advance the literature on the motivations of sport and fantasy sport consumers for the purpose of growing the industry. I contend that it is premature to embrace this third paradigm of sport participation without first examining the dynamics of who is consuming and whom is being consumed.

In a 2006 study, Davis and Duncan examined FS through personal observations, textual analysis of the Yahoo Fantasy Sports website, and a focus group. The researchers raised the following questions: (a) what are its [fantasy sports] appeals?; (b) how are fantasy sports experienced?; and (c) to whom are fantasy sport directed? The study was conducted using a small sample of college-educated white males, which is representative of the demographics of a typical FS player. The researchers identified two themes. First, the behavior of participants reflected that they were “doing gender” through the use of sexist language. The second theme was that FS was used as a site for maintaining and reinforcing gender roles. The researchers also acknowledged that participants made specific references to enjoying the control they felt through

participating in FS. Davis and Duncan (2006) concluded that this control was not mundane but was in fact racialized: "As coaches, managers, and owners, White male participants exercise hegemonic ideologies by wheeling, dealing, exploiting, and victimizing their predominantly Black players (i.e. running backs, receivers, guards) for their own financial betterment and sense of masculinity" (Davis & Duncan, 2006, p.262). Davis and Duncan (2006) concluded that FS is used to reinforce hegemonic masculinity. Thus, race must be considered as a moderator of fantasy sport participation due to the racialized past and present of American sport, which has given way to a contemporary black = labor and white = owner dichotomy.

Oates (2009) positioned fantasy football as a site where economic models and cultural anxieties intersect to create the experience of vicarious management. Vicarious management is defined as, "The presentation of athletes as commodities to be consumed selectively and self-consciously by sports fans" (p.31). His observations are focused on the market and larger social forces rather than individual participants as the driving force behind the commodification of black male athletes. I agree with Oates' (2009) assessment of the market as a site where economic gains are realized due to the cultural commodification of athletes. However, I intend to emphasize the individuals who create, manipulate, and dominate normative cultural practices which ultimately shape the market and larger social forces. According to Horne (2006), sport as a business entity is fueled by ego, vanity, and self-aggrandizement. Oates (2009) contended that white males, especially in the arena of sport, are now claiming to be victimized by their own racial identity. This has stimulated a growth in cultural anxieties felt by white males who are ignorant to the continued privilege to which they are the benefactors. Oates (2009) theorized that vicarious management addresses white male anxieties. Here again we are in agreement, but our

theoretical understandings of FS only run parallel for a fleeting moment. I disagree with his argument that white male anxieties are played out in fantasy sport comparatively toward Black and white athletes:

> While the properties under consideration in vicarious management narratives are mostly Black athletes, they are not *only* Black athletes. There are many White bodies on display, and they are subject to the same mechanisms that act on their Black peers (Oates, 2009, p.38)

It is necessary to examine the use of white male athletes in FS, but not as an exact comparison with the commodification of black male athletes. Oates' (2009) primary argument was based on racial androcentrism. He found that the market drives a racialized commodification of athletes because of the existing hegemonic system of white supremacy (Oates, 2009). Literature supports the argument that contemporary manifestations of aversive racism, which are subtle and deceptive, exist in our daily human interactions. White supremacy does influence systems, but as C. Wright Mills (1997) articulated in *The Racial Contract* individuals are the chief archetypes of white supremacy. I contend that an examination of the market while necessary must be coupled with an examination of the individuals who consume and are consumed through fantasy sport. With this, I move the discussion back to the larger topic of sport culture and the literature that addresses racialized manhood demonstrated by athletes and consumers.

Can an Athlete Transcend Being Black?

As stated earlier, hegemonic masculinity, which can be described as idealized white, upper and middle-class, heterosexual masculinities, dictates how sport functions in society. Johnson and Roediger (2000) present the rise and fall of O.J. Simpson as a cautionary tale to

athletes who believe they can transcend race through sport. This is a perfect example of how aversive racism undermines white liberal ideals of a colorblind society. Simpson exemplified the "American dream" and he articulated his belief in the meritocracy that was and is often championed by white liberals. Simpson initially won the adulation of white fans and sport writers by denouncing the 1968 "revolt of the black athlete" which was lead by Harry Edwards. Simpson subsequently won the Heisman Trophy in 1969. At the apex of his career he believed monetary gains would earn him universal respect and acceptance. In addition, the media argued sport could "level the playing field." Simpson achieved great success in the NFL, and upon retirement was welcomed in the announcing booth as "one of the boys" (Johnson & Roediger, 2000). His usefulness as an athlete and a product pitchman were contingent upon his marketability as a commodity, which was contingent upon him distancing himself from the Black power movement and aligning himself with hegemonic masculinity. It was not until 1994 when he stood trial for the murder of his white ex-wife and her white companion, that he realized he had never transcended race. Simpson was astounded that those decades of goodwill with the media were so easily demolished (Johnson & Roediger, 2000). According to Johnson & Roediger (2000), the acceptance of Simpson and other black male athletes is not a colorblind acceptance. They contend that it is inspired by a stereotypical belief that black athletes are primitive and retain natural athletic ability: "Sport has functioned as a spectacle in which white men feel especially empowered to judge, to bet on, and vicariously identify with African Americans" (Johnson & Roediger, 2000, p. 66). Some whites can at the same time consume black masculinity and distance themselves from the primitive Other.

Racial Fetish, Sexual Fetish, Sport Fetish

Since white male athletes are the minority in professional football, their hegemonic influence manifests itself through the positions of coach, general manager, owner, CEO/presidents, and consumer. They account for 81% of head coaches, 84% of general managers, 97% of majority owners, and 100% of CEO/Presidents (Lapchick, Kamke & McMechan, 2009). According to Scarborough Research data from 2006, males account for 63% of "loyal" NFL fans and 83% of loyal fans are white (Sport Business Daily, 2009). Lafrance and Rail (2000) discussed Dennis Rodman as one athlete who has engaged white male fantasies about black masculinity through spectacles of bisexuality and androgyny. Rodman embraced his label as the "bad boy" of the NBA. He even titled his 1997 biography *Bad As I Wanna To Be.* Despite heterosexuality being rigidly enforced as the only acceptable option for male athletes, Rodman attained superstardom by affectively personifying the myth of the physically dominant, sexually erotic, and deviant Other; "Rodman, even in the midst of his alleged transgressions, maintains and reinscribes dominant modalities of masculinity, phallocentrism, heteronormativity, white supremacy, and consumer capitalism" (Lafrance & Rail, 2000, p. 102). Using existing sexuality and fetish literature a seamless connection can be made with racial fetish.

Sexuality, eroticism, and fetish are not often discussed in the context of heteronormative sporting behavior. McClintock defines sexuality as the "relation to one's body and to the bodies of others" (p. 80). According to McClintock (1992), "In 1887, Freud transferred fetishism to the realm of sexuality and to the domain of erotic perversions" (p. 70). Prior to this move by Freud, commodity fetish was a term used by Marx. "By reducing fetishism, however, to single male poetics of the flesh and a privileged Western narrative of origins, the traditional psychoanalytic

theory of fetishism does not admit either race or class as formative categories crucial to the etiology of fetishism" (McClintock, 1992, p. 71). McClintock (1992) links the fusion of erotic and sexual deviance to European social dominance, specific to that of colonized peoples:

> By the latter half of the nineteenth century, the analogy between erotic deviance and racial deviance emerged as a necessary element in the formation of the modern European imagination. The invention of racial fetishism became central to the regime of sexual surveillance, while the policing of 'degenerate sexuality' became central to the policing of 'dangerous classes" (p. 71).

Hence race, class, and sexuality can and often do maintain a cyclical relationship.

> The relation between the 'normal' male control of reproduction and sexual pleasure in marriage, and the 'normal' bourgeois control of capital was legitimized and made natural by reference to a third term: the 'abnormal' zone of racial 'degeneration.' Illicit money and illicit sexuality were seen to relate to each other by negative analogy to race" (p. 80).

Within the literature there is evidence that black physicality is bond to black sexuality. (Birrell and McDonald, 2000; Hoberman, 1997; Johnson & Roediger, 2000; Lafrance & Rail, 2000; McClintock, 1982)

A thorough investigation of the "real" sport world and the athletes within it provides cultural context to the virtual experience of participants who co-construct the FS industry. Minimal research details the fantasized relationship some white male sport consumers have with black male athletes. I challenge that aversive racism makes it possible for this contradiction to exist. I am prepared to present a meaningful reading of FS and the identities, social norms, and ideologies of its participants via the methodology discussed in the next chapter. In Chapter 4, I

provide an analysis of FS by discussing the intersections of race, gender, and sexuality that reflect a multidisciplinary reading of the phenomenon.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS

The fantasy sports industry has gained wide acceptance from both the sport and non-sport community. The multi-million dollar industry has experienced significant growth over the past two decades. It is imperative to take a critical look at the phenomenon and how it fits into our socio-cultural landscape. In Chapter 1, I provided an introduction to the sport and fantasy sport industry. In Chapter 2, existing literature related to sport and FS was presented. Based on the literature, there is a need for the critical engagement of the fantasy sport industry and culture as well as a pragmatic approach to race as a central consideration. In Chapter 3, I described my methodological approach to examining FS and engaging in bricolage. In this chapter, I put forth my assessment of fantasy sport as a site where black masculinity is commodified, fetishized, and used for cultural transmission. According to Kincheloe and Berry (2004) bricolage allows the researcher to examine "dissimilar parts" (p. 98). My work as a bricoluer will be aptly displayed by using interdisciplinary discourse in the layering of six transparencies: (a) the function of FS as a cultural transmitter of hegemonic ideologies; (b) the significance of the binary relationship between black masculine identity and white masculine identity as it relates to FS; (c) the significance of racism as aversive on the World Wide Web; (d) the function of FS as a virtual utopia and dystopia; (e) the acquiescent media and popular culture representation of FS; and (f) the pragmatic use of CRT within FS research. The aforementioned transparencies are layered to present my understanding of how some white males, who consume fantasy football, reconcile their fervent consumption of a virtual activity which allows them to primarily imagine control over black men.

Fantasy Sport as a Cultural Transmitter

I, like many sport theorists before me, challenge the myth that sport is an equalizer (Birrell & McDonald, 2000; Coakley, 2004; Dyson, 2003; Edwards, 1978; Hargreaves, 1982a; Hawkins, 2008; Hoberman, 1997; Johnson & Roediger, 200; Leonard, 2003; Lomax, 2008; Long, 2000; Long & Hylton, 2008; 2000; Loy, McPherson, & Kenton, 1978; Oates, 2007; Rhoden, 2006; Smith, 2007). Here is an ideal place to reintroduce the three tenants of CRT discussed in Chapter 3: Racism as ordinary; racism advances the interest of whites; and race and races are socially constructed. Connections to these three tenants will be made throughout Chapter 4. I agree with Hylton (2009) that centralizing race will also permit me to consider other forms of oppression as I analyze FS.

Hoberman (1997) uses the term "virtual integration" to describe the contemporary landscape of sport which he argued could not survive without black athletes, but maintains "traditional white hierarchies" (p. 32). Virtual integration can also be used to describe FS. The mostly black players are consumed by mostly white FS participants. Meanwhile, the industry of FS has progressed nearly unchallenged since its inception:

> It is argued that the social institution of sport derives its legitimacy in large measure from its ideological interdependence with the major institutional sectors of society. These reflect in the clearest and most instrumental sense the 'ruling' ideas of the ruling class (Loy, McPherson, & Kenyon, 1978, p. 381).

White supremacy has provided the impetus for the "ruling class" to be considered synonymous with whiteness, and specifically white patriarchal ideals. According to Hoberman (1997) the maintenance of hegemony is a perpetual process that may at times be conscious and at others be

unconscious. Loy, McPherson, and Kenyon (1978) contend that subjugated groups conform to the "American success ideology" because they fear being ostracized by ruling groups (p. 391). Similar to the American success ideology, the American sports creed is built upon tenants of loyalty, hard work, discipline, and rules. Society is stratified using an inequitable system of judgments as well as adherence to dominant ideologies. Loy, McPherson, and Kenyon (1978) define social stratification as:

> The process of differential allocation [which] derives from the fact that throughout history social systems have been characterized by the presence of individuals who can be identified on the basis of biological or social characteristics such as race, ethnic background, age, sex (gender), prestige, power, wealth, education, income, occupation. These distinguishing attributes, which may be either ascribed (inherited) or achieved (acquired), often serve as the basis where-by individuals aspire to or are allocated to different but interrelated roles within a given social system (p. 332).

According to Loy, McPherson, and Kenyon (1978) there are three dimensions of social stratification:

a) objective status represents the degree of power or control one has over the means of production, the amount of influence one has over the life-chances of others, or the amount of freedom one has in his or her place of employment; b) accorded status is that given to an individual by others, depending on the position he or she occupies or the ascribed characteristics he or she brings to the position;… c) subjective status refers to the position at which individuals place themselves on some scale. This process is greatly influenced by the reference groups with which people identify and

> often results in identifying with a class, usually higher, to which an individual aspires (p. 339).

The result of stratification is a hierarchal structure. Social stratification is cyclical and is perpetually renewed through moral stratification, which places value on race, gender, age, religion, education, class, occupation, lineage, country of origin, and ethnicity (Loy, McPherson, & Kenyon, 1978). There are implicit links between stratification and the aforementioned tenants of CRT. Racial and ethnic stratification is the result of social worth being attributed to physical characteristics as well as cultural characteristics (Loy, McPherson, & Kenyon, 1978). The realist position within CRT denotes racism as a means to allocate status and privilege. I argue that whiteness has been normalized as the (objective status) reference point from which status is given to non-whites (accorded status). Thus, the position that non-white individuals "aspire to" (subjective status), is based on the erroneous scale of whiteness. Next, I will discuss the ways in which sport, specifically FS maintains stratification through the cultural transmission of hegemonic ideologies.

I begin my analysis by presenting an article titled "The Draft: Strategies for Domination" by Jay Clemons, which was published in the 2009 Fantasy Football special edition of *Sports Illustrated*. Clemons (2009a) offers the reader both pre-draft and draft strategies to becoming a "champion." The pre-draft strategies are as follows:

> 1) DO YOUR HOMEWORK. FANTASY CHAMPIONSHIPS seldom fall into the laps of absentee or indifferent owners. In fact, a title earned in Week 16 is usually the culmination of hard work, discipline and excellent preparation way back in August. Here are three components of that process.

2) Study at least four preseason fantasy publications (in addition to this fine page-turner). Get a sense of what the experts are saying-along with what they're not saying-about certain players. Find common ground among the predraft rankings and drafting trends.
3) Continually monitor the average draft position rankings on various websites. Average draft positions afford you the chance to get the player you want at the value you want without the embarrassment of reaching for his services.
4) Mock, mock, mock draft your way to building draft-day confidence. There's no disputing your childhood piano instructor's creed: Practice makes perfect. For example, let's say you have your heart set on taking New Orleans's Marques Colston as a WR1 in a standard league, and after five to 10 mock drafts, you're stunned to learn that he's typically going in round 4 (and not a moment sooner). With that inside knowledge you can now focus your energies on getting a stud running back in round 3, knowing Colston will most likely be waiting for you on the flip side.
5) GET TO KNOW YOUR FELLOW owners. This process is incredibly simple to follow. If you're in a league with friends, just stick to a methodical predraft plan of talking trash (like psyching out the competition for players slotted in rounds 2 through 5). And in the interest of investigative journalism, find out which players will be taken in round 1, pick by pick, just in case you're looking to trade down in the draft (p. 33).

The aforementioned pre-draft strategies described by Clemson (2009a) subtly point to a pre-established owner/player hierarchal system. Players, as laborers, will be drafted to play for their

FS owner. Clemson also articulated the importance of adhering to the "hard work" and "discipline" tenants of the American sports creed. He encouraged FS participants to foster inter-group associations. Lastly, Clemson assumed that a potential participant has significant leisure time, access to the internet, and disposable income. Middle-class men dominate sport participation because they have the time and money to consume it. According to Hoberman (1997), "they [middle class men] are especially susceptible to the need to prove their masculinity" (p. 63). According to the Pew Internet & American Life Project (2008) individuals with the greatest access to the internet are white, male, suburban, 18-49, college educated, and earn $75, 000. See Appendix B. These demographics are comparable to the demographics of FS participants. These demographics also support the notion that society is stratified using race, gender, education, location, and class. In addition, Clemons (2009a) provided detailed draft strategies that normalize the process of acquiring athletes for one's FS team:

1) NEVER TAKE A QUARTERBACK IN THE first three rounds of a standard, PPR [points per reception] or touchdown-only draft. The lone exception to this rule is if Tom Brady personally guarantees to you in writing that he'll throw for 50 TDs in 2009. Otherwise, keep building a viable stable of running backs and receivers. The lesson here: Fantasyland quarterback depth should never be a concern.
2) NEVER BE AT THE TAIL END OF A same-position draft run. Rather than grabbing the No. 12 running back in round 2 just because everyone else is rushing to fill that position, how about snagging the No. 1 receiver instead (Andre Johnson in PPR leagues; Larry Fitzgerald in standard ones)? Good drafting is always about great value.

3) NEVER DRAFT A KICKER UNTIL THE SECOND-TO-last or last round of a draft. There are 16 fantasy-friendly kickers this season, if not more. So unless you're playing in a league with 18 teams or more, wait, wait, wait to grab someone off the scrap heap.
4) NEVER TAKE A DEFENSE UNTIL THE LAST THREE rounds of a draft. In an 18-round PPR draft last year, I landed running backs DeAngelo Williams and Chris Johnson in rounds 14 and 15, respectively, simply because I wasn't stupid enough to take a defensive team early in the game. C'mon, people, think!
5) DON'T BE AFRAID TO DO THE OPPOSITE. THIS OFF-the-wall principle was established by fantasy forefather Paul Charchian. It encourages forward-thinking owners to follow their gut instinct on draft day, even it goes against every bit of common sense and sound judgment they've ever had (p. 34).

This process of drafting athletes for the imagined team of a fantasy sport participant again reveals how FS functions as a third paradigm of sport participation. It conveniently joins real world athleticism with fantasy game playing. Additionally, Clemson displayed the dehumanizing relationship that has developed between some athletes and some fans. Athletes are commodifed by Clemons as he links them to their FS value. NFL players are described in terms of their rank, draft position, and potential to earn points. This relationship of commodification is exacerbated by the black male athlete-white male participant binary that exists within FS culture. This is made more evident through the suggestion to draft running backs and receivers first and quarterbacks and kickers last. Clemons' (2009a) reference to "building a viable stable of running backs and receivers" or getting a "stud running back" can be read as bestial references to the FS value of black males through their physicality. Black males represent 85% and 89% of running

backs and receivers in the NFL respectively. *Sport Illustrated* in their fantasy football special edition, took the liberty of ranking 85 running backs and 105 receivers. Black represented 98% of running backs ranked (i.e. 2 out of 85 were non-black) and 90% of receivers ranked (i.e. 10 of 105 were non-black) (see Table 1).

Hoch (2004) articulated that black men in the United States have historically been laborers and deemed the sex-crazed "super-stud."The virtual integration of American sport has intensified harmful assumptions about black male physicality. hooks (1992) pointed out that consumer culture cannibalizes the Other, displaces the Other, and decontexualizes the history of the Other. All of this is not to say that white athletes are not drafted to FS teams. On the contrary, white FS athletes are primarily represented as the aforementioned quarterbacks and kickers. The position of quarterback has often been deemed a cerebral leadership position reserved primarily for white males. White male athletes are even referred to as "studs" in rare instances, but this should not be used to make a one-to-one comparison. The history of white male athletic participation is vastly different from that of black male athletes. Levi-Strauss (1966) argued that bricoleurs use signs which are bound by history and their language of origin. He describes signs as differing from concepts, which are limitless. "One way indeed in which signs can be opposed to concepts in that whereas concepts aim to be wholly transparent with respect to reality, signs allow and even require the interposing and incorporation of a certain amount of human culture in reality" (p. 20). With this understanding, I argue that my reading of the culture of FS is pragmatic. Throughout history, race has affected the daily lives of individuals, restricted black sport participation, and ultimately has become a coloring for our ambivalent present.

The unquestioned acceptance of FS as simply another capitalist venture for the sporting industry allows individual consumers to ignore the racial implications of the activity. Long and Hylton (2002) identify sports administration as the site where whiteness is most readily normalized. Critical race theorists refer to this unconscious adherence to racialized societal practices as structural determinism. More concisely, it is "the idea that our system by reason of its structure and vocabulary cannot redress certain types of wrong" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 26). As a result the structure reifies racism as normal. FS culture is undoubtedly informed by the larger sporting culture. Oates (2007) analyzed the pervasive televised coverage of the NFL draft and theorized that the draft was being used to position the audience as potential owners. This is no longer simply speculation due to the popularity of FS where imagined ownership is standard practice. Weeks and Caldwell (2007) characterize draft day as the single most important day in nearly every FS league. This is the day that FS participants will pick NFL players who will represent their team for the season. Oates (2007) described the NFL draft as a "black male pageant." The mostly black NFL-hopefuls are paraded in front of the mostly white male, coaches, general managers, owners, and spectators for assessment. I would liken this to what hooks (1992) described as the "colonizing gaze" (p. 2). Black male athletes being judged and evaluated by white males has been reproduced via FS. This can be linked to Edward's (1973) notion of fan identification.

Edwards (1973) argued that maintenance of leadership roles within sport as nearly all white domains has functioned to maintain fan identification with these leadership roles. "The covert effect of fan influence upon equal access to sports positions by both black and white athletes is to exclude blacks from leadership and control positions, the overt effect apparently to

keep whites in these positions" (p. 255). Edwards (1973) explored fan identification at a time when black athletes did not dominate football. He noted that there was a vicarious experience that white fans had when observing white athletes achieve triumph. A paradigm shift has occurred and now white fans find themselves cheering predominantly black athletes; as a result, the vicarious experience of triumph has been shifted to the role of "real world" leadership and FS owner. Thus, sport and FS remain predominantly white domains.

Virtual ownership of NFL players, via FS, has clandestinely normalized white male leadership. The first step in this process was societal stratification which enabled a player/owner hierarchy to be established. Clemons (2009) presented FS using rhetoric that portrayed the mostly male leadership as ordinary with no consideration of race or racism. Even the artwork which accompanied Clemon's article depicted an oversized white hand manipulating a miniature white quarterback who is surrounded by miniature black players (see Figure 1).

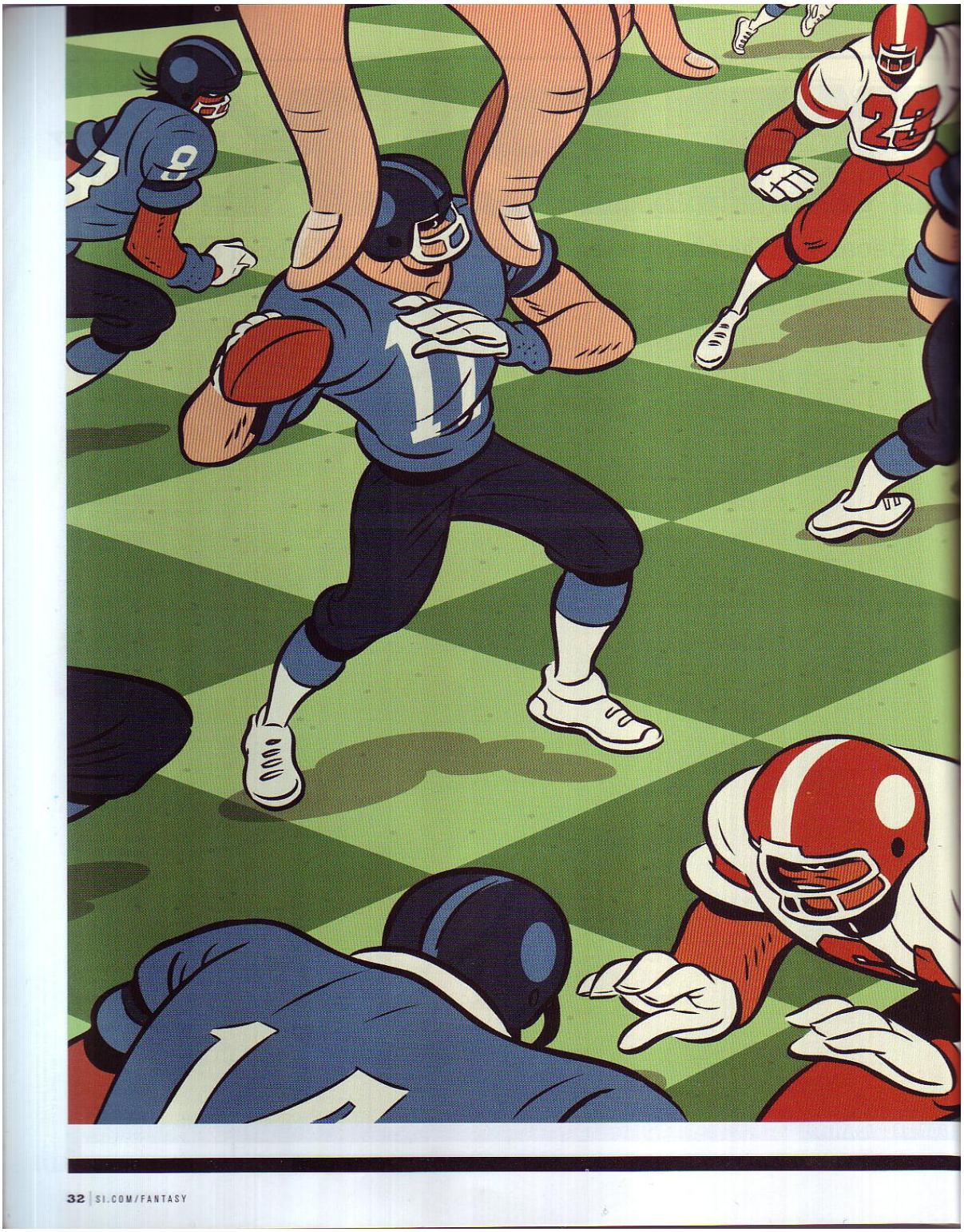

Figure 1. Reflects the control of NFL players being normalized as a white domain.

These are a few examples of how FS is a site where hegemonic ideologies are reinforced. The continuation of hegemony is systemic, but individuals act as the brokers of the process. I contend that the virtual hierarchy between real world athletes and FS participants can be linked to the personally and socially constructed identities of black males and white males.

Fantasized Masculinity, Sport, and Phallic Control

Identity becomes an imperative place holder in the maintenance of hegemony and stratification. It is not enough to discuss racism as systemic. Individuals construct institutions and drive racism, capitalism, sexism, homophobia, and all other isms. Carrington (1998) concluded that,

> Sports contests are more than just significant events, in and of themselves important, but rather that they act as a key signifier for wider questions about identity within racially demarcated societies in which racial narratives about the self and society are read both into and from sport contests that are imbued with racial meanings (p. 280).

Please be advised that this discussion of identity is not a departure from the previous discussion; rather it should be considered a transparency that can be laid over top of the previous argument. As a disclaimer, there is no one representation of race or gender that can speak to the infinite possibilities of identity. However, I add another contextual layer in my reading of FS sport by exploring gender and racial identity as well as sexuality. According to Carrington (1998):

> Sport, in effect, symbolized and reinforced a patriarchal structure of domination over women. However, such accounts have consistently failed to acknowledge that this view can only be sustained if the inherently racialized nature of social relationships and the

> position of Blacks, and in particular Black males, within Western societies, generally, and within sport, in particular is ignored (p. 277).

Just as gender is a hierarchal binary so is race. First, I will expose critical links between race, gender, sexuality, and identity. Long and Hylton (2002) contend that the construction of identity often happens in difference; the other is labeled and the self remains invisible. This is consistent with the psychoanalytic understanding of identity discussed in Chapter 2. Blackness is visible and whiteness remains invisible[6]. "Intersectionality" means the examination of race, sex, class, national origin, and sexual orientation, and how their combination plays out in various settings" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 51). I operationalize the term *intersectionality* as I discuss black masculine identity and white masculine identity because I intend to consider raced identity, gendered identity, and sexuality. There are multiple masculinities. Black masculinity is regularly subjugated because idealized masculinity is that of white, heterosexual, elite males. Black men are constantly identified through the body, which must be explored to determine how this affects the development of white and black masculine identity.

The body. According to hooks (2004) "The history of the black male body begins in the United States with projections, with the imposition onto that body of white racist sexist pornographic sexual fantasies" (p. 67). Historical accounts of lynching exemplify hooks' assertion about these racist fantasies about the black body. Some lynching's involved incidences where the penis and testicles were cut from the body of the black victims and taken as souvenirs by white men, women, and children (Messerschmidt, 2005):

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[6] Blackness being visible should not be confused with the notion of the humanity of black people being made visible. Ralph Ellison in his classical work *Invisible Man* accurately articulates the social invisibility of black men.

> During Reconstruction (1865-1877) and its immediate aftermath in the United States, lynching was a response to the perceived erosion of white male domination that developed under slavery and was an attempt to recreate what white supremacist men imagined to be a lost status of unchallenged white masculine supremacy (p. 77).

hooks (2004) connects lynching to an obsession with the black body, naked flesh, sexuality, and domination. hooks (1992) described the importance of the phallus in feminist terms, that in American culture a shift occurred from patriarchal domination alone to a phallocentric model of patriarchal capitalism: "The penis becomes a greater and certainly a more accessible way to assert masculine status" (p. 94). According to Crawford (2008), "In the psychoanalytic understanding of fetishism, the fetishized subject is reduced to a body part, or the entire body becomes a fetishized part" (p. 7). Black men where reduced to their penis alone. Symbolic masculine control was exhibited in the behavior of those who lynched black men and cut off their penis. By removing the penis a man is believed to be emasculated and thus, for a black man, his phallus (masculinity) is controlled.

Other researchers have made similar links between control and the sexual exploitation of the black body.

> Rather than viewing African Americans as the victims of sexual exploitation, Whites came to see them as bestial and sexually out of control. African American men were considered uniformly 'hungry' for sex and therefore dangerous to White women, justifying violence toward them (Green, 2000, p. 241).

Fanon (1952/2008) also made a connection between the raced body and sexuality;

> If we want to understand the racial situation psychoanalytically, not from a universal viewpoint, but as it is experienced by individual consciousness, considerable importance must be given to sexual phenomena (p. 138).

According to Fanon (1952/2008), "the black man is fixated at the genital level…the black man represents the biological danger" (p. 143). He supported his claims by presenting research conducted using about 500 white participants in France, Germany, England, Italy. They reported "Negro = biological, sex, strong, athletic, powerful, boxer, Joe Louis, Jesse Owens, Senegalese infantry, savage, animal, devil, sin" (p. 144). Additionally, Fanon (1952/2008) correlated economics and the social structure with violence and sexuality. Black masculine identity has become inextricably linked to physicality and sexuality. Sport is a provocative means to unite raced bodies, masculinity, sexuality, economics, and social structure.

Hoch (2004) described a man with superior sexual prowess as being labeled "stud, stallion, bull, beef, cock, sword, blade, stickman, a walking phallus" (p. 102). He argued that these terms are decidedly animalist or mechanistic. The raced bodies of black males are explicitly and insatiably consumed through sport. I remind the reader that Clemons' in his *Draft Strategies for Domination* advised FS participants to concentrate on getting a "stud running back" and "building a viable stable of running backs". Here again, I contend the use of the term *stud* is appropriately contextualized by considering the racial and sexual assertions presented above. Guttman (1996) proclaimed that the erotic nature of sport requires consideration. The historical obsession some whites had with black physicality and controlling black masculinity can be matched up to the fetish and fantasy that are commonplace in contemporary sport, specifically FS.

Sport, particularly basketball and football, represent a contemporary example of white fascination with black physicality. The assumption is that black domination of football and basketball is not a result of limited career paths, but rather the result of "natural" ability. The dominant presence of black men in professional football has caused many to question whether black athletes have a genetic advantage in sport. Thus, black athletes need to be analyzed as raced bodies. The need to prove that blacks benefit from a genetic advantage in sport can primarily be linked to racist motives. Hoberman (1997) presents racial biology as an unstable blend of cultural, anatomy, and physiology. Hoberman links the motives of this racialized science to the pervasive belief that black physical dominance supports black intellectual inferiority. Black males and white males alike have grasped onto sport as a space to magnify racialized differences. Black males flock to sport because it appears to provide a path to dominant masculinity and economic success which they otherwise cannot access. Black male athleticism as genetic or "natural" has given way to exploitation, primarily by whites, who reap intrinsic and extrinsic rewards.

Early (2005) describes the "white double-consciousness" which occurs when whites both revere black skills, but fear dominance which is an example of aversive racism:

> Whiteness and blackness in this respect cease to be identities and become the personification not of stereotypes alone but of, taboos of prohibition. Sports, like all of popular culture, become the theater where the taboos are simultaneously smashed and reinforced, where one is liberated from them while conforming to them (p. 434)

In addition, Early's (2005) assessment speaks to the concurrent development of black male and white male identity. It appears that not only are black male and white male identities developed

simultaneously, but they are developed in opposition of one another. Paul Hoch's (2004) chapter titled *White Hero Black Beast: Racism, Sexism and the Mask of Masculinity*, details "heroic masculinity" which was linked to interracial conquest in the late nineteenth century:

> The achievement of manhood by the conquest of hero over beast became the allegory for the struggle of civillisation [sic] against barbarism, white Europe against the dark continent of Africa, West against East-and of its civilized consciousness over the dark, bestial sexual forces in its unconscious" (p. 100).

The oppositional relationship between black males and white males has been a historical global reality. Further explanation of the relationship between black masculine identity and white masculine identity can be provided by exploring white male backlash.

White male backlash. According to Kitwana (2005), young white males have been disenfranchised by "mainstream" society which no longer listens to the youth nor places emphasis on education. "Our public schools and quality of life for a significant number of our young are in serious decline. Additionally, in our lifetime jobs for our youth have diminished in quality and quantity" (p. 9). Kitwana (2005) discusses the escalation in imprisonment rates, as well as the increase in depression diagnosis as universal challenges to "our youth." This is very misleading because these statistics are disproportionally higher for black youth then for whites. Kitwana contends that these factors combined have left young whites experiencing an identity crisis.

Kusz (2001) found that painting a picture of young white males as victims can be linked to "White male backlash politics." He described white male backlash politics as having developed from conservative backlash politics. In the 1980s and 1990s some white males

realized they were losing ground to women and minorities in maintaining control of institutional power. People of color were unfairly targeted in the 1980s by architects of backlash politics who criticized affirmative action, immigration, and multiculturalism (Kusz, 2001). Kusz (2001) determined that it was necessary to:

> Recognize that the internal contradictions and conflicts of representations of Whiteness often mask the insidious and not so obvious ways in which the normative position of Whiteness in American culture is reproduced. Thus, one must be particularly attentive to the ways in which constructions of Whiteness as unprivileged, victimized, or otherwise disadvantaged-images that seem to contradict the ideology of Whiteness as privileged-can work in particular contexts as a mechanism to resecure the privilege normativity of Whiteness in American culture (p. 394).

These absurd cries of white male victimization can appropriately be met with indignation. The basis for these complaints is that the inequities that people of color, women, and homosexuals have experienced for centuries are now being rectified through policies and legislation that promote equal opportunities. Kusz (2001) pointed out that white men have adopted the identity politics once employed by marginalized groups. Some white males are convinced that people of color, women, and gays are enjoying the privilege that they used to exclusively enjoy. Sport is a site where the myth of white physical superiority has ended, but white males still retain nearly all leadership positions.

In 1973, Harry Edwards fittingly identified the paradigm shift from white athletic dominance to black athletic dominance. Edwards was uncertain about why fans were motivated to consume sports dominated by blacks, but he concluded that this change was far from an

"omen of positive change in the area of interracial relations, the very fact of black athlete's superior performance is itself-as we have seen-evidence of continued if not heightened black oppression" (p. 264). Edwards (1973) drew two conclusions from his seminal work *Sociology of Sport*:

> (1) That the patterned behavior and expressed beliefs of persons fulfilling various roles within the institution of sport are importantly determined by and can be generally understood within the contest of enduring values indigenous to American society; and (2) that conflicts and incongruities between societal values and between discrepant role demands generate adaptational problems for incumbents in sports roles, resulting in their placing a heightened emphasis upon some values while covertly minimizing or only perfunctorily recognizing the significance of others (p. 348).

Edward's summation of sport remains accurate more than thirty years later. He predicted that roles would be adapted and ultimately would adhere to values indigenous to American society.

Early (2005) is of the same mind as Hawkins and Hoberman as they provide a "sophisticated slavery analogy". The key points are: "The way audiences are lured to sports as a false spectacle, and the way players are controlled mentally and physically by white male authority, their lack of access to the free market worth of their labor" (p. 433). Hoberman (1997) evenly assigns blame for this tragedy to both blacks and whites. Michael Eric Dyson (2005) determined that there exists a "black cultural fetishization of sport as a means of expressing black cultural style, as a means of valorizing craft as a marker of racial and self-expression, and as a means of pursuing social and economic mobility" (p. 403). True, the responsibility is that of

all involved, but an equal assignment of blame is not suitable. Dyson's articulation exemplified that the fetishization of sport for black males can be linked to limited life choices. Thus, the raced body is shaped by identity and shapes identity. I argue that adopting the capitalist patriarchal ideologies of phallic power has proved problematic for some black men: "To the extent that black men accept a white supremacist sexist representation of themselves as castrated, without phallic power, and therefore pseudo-females, they will need to overtly assert a phallic misogynist masculinity, one rooted in contempt for the female" (hooks, 1992, p. 147). By engaging the personal and social construction of identity, it is possible to involve individual accountability as I name the actors within FS.

The discussion of raced bodies emerged as central as I intently presented black masculinity in the foreground during my analysis of masculine identity development. To be clear, white males, who once dominated sport and refused to allow black males to participate, now clamor at the chance to have black men on their real world and FS teams. hooks (1992) described this consumption of Others as the spice that livens up the dull white mainstream culture. It is fallacious to assume that as white males engage in FS participation that both whiteness and blackness are made invisible. As presented earlier, a multitude of scholars have argued that black masculinity and white masculinity often function in opposition of one another. The interracial nature of FS cannot be overlooked and presumed harmless. Culture is steeped in hegemonic ideologies that shape sport and FS. White privilege is the next vestige of racism that can be connected to FS.

White Privilege, the World Wide Web, and Aversive Racism

The raced bodies of black males have become synonymous with "natural" athleticism and hypersexuality. This provides the foundation for my argument that FS is moderated by these factors. Sports, and specifically FS, have replaced the historical fetishization of black masculinity:

> Europeans felt a profound ambivalence toward the physically vital African, which expressed itself as a conflict between the Caucasian observer's racial narcissism and the simultaneous need to find in the 'primitive' an idealized male type, an athleticized 'noble savage' who possessed all of the masculine virtues except the aura of command (Hoberman, 1997, p. 101).

The historical contempt that fueled racism has not gone away, it has simply been met with economic gains, rhetoric, and policy that make it socially unacceptable to express overt racism. Thus, alternative means to control the black male and his phallus (masculinity) have emerged.

Next, I will discuss white privilege and the World Wide Web and how both undergird aversive racism. This section will serve as the third transparency which can be layered over top of my discussion of hegemony in FS culture and racialized masculine identity. It is compulsory to name white males as the privileged benefactors of fantasy sports[7]. White privilege and racism provide an explicit link to the second tenant of CRT that racism advances the interest of whites. Hylton (2009) encourages researchers to examine the ways in which blackness is made visible and whiteness remains invisible. Crosset (2007) argued that when exploring whiteness as a sport sociologist, "good research makes whiteness visible" (p. 174). Long and Hylton (2002) indicate

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[7] It is noteworthy to mention that women now represent 20-25% of fantasy sport participants. However, men outspend women at a ratio of 4:1 in some categories and 10:1 in others, which means women account for only 10% of the market (World Fantasy Games, 2009).

that white privilege is difficult to name: "There is generally nothing out of place, illegal or radical about most of the associated behavior, which is what makes these actions and privileges the norm and therefore difficult for most to stand back and identify" (p. 97). I maintain that the acknowledgement of white privilege requires an admission of responsibility. Peggy McIntosh (2004) exemplified in her text, *White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences Through Work in Women's Studies*, that white privilege and male privilege are an "invisible knapsack" of unearned privileges (p. 318). She asserts that many individuals acknowledge that some in society are disadvantaged, but it is also essential for white males to recognize that they receive daily benefits from being white and from being male. This privilege can be as straightforward as the unquestioned acceptance of FS, where according to Jay Clemons (2009b), "Your mission early on should be to build a team full of interchangeable parts and tradeable assets" (p. 39). Often, individuals do not recognize white privilege because it is in line with hegemonic ideologies. Additionally, they may believe in a meritocracy or colorblindness: they believe they have earned benefits due to their own hard work and treat everyone equally. According to McIntosh, "such privilege simply confers dominance, gives permission to control, because of one's race and sex" (p. 324). White male privilege is particularly powerful in a patriarchal capitalist society.

The 2007 documentary film *10 yards: Fantasy Football* typifies white privilege in FS. The filmmakers follow the "Intergalactic Championship League" through a 16-game NFL season. The film's producers Hunter Weeks and Josh Caldwell are two of the three main fantasy sport participants in the film. J. Fred is the other FS participant depicted and he is the commissioner of the Intergalactic Championship League (ICL). The three participants, Weeks,

Caldwell, and J. Fred- named their teams Shaky Legs, Aphids, and Phantom 309, respectively. Weeks and Caldwell credit fantasy football (FS) with helping them maintain friendships with their college buddies. They decided to produce the documentary because of the pervasiveness of FS. They theorized that there was a "bigger reason than betting on games and loving football" for the tremendous participation FS has experienced. The ICL had 12 participants and the winner of the league received a box of Twinkies. They noted that receiving Twinkies rather than cash made their league atypical. However, Twinkies are far from the only reward the participants received. Throughout the film they referenced the male-on-male bonding and trash talking as their primary reasons for participating. White privilege is unnamed as a benefit but is evidenced in the film. The film clearly depicts FS as a primarily white male domain as the film makers travel around the United States. For example, they interview FS participants from a lawyer's league, couples' league, and white house saloon (paper-based) league. With the exception of the DC Metropolitan Police league, the Alabama Renegades (Women's Tackle Football team), and one woman in the couples' league, all league members depicted were white and male. There is no discussion in the film about race. However, the three main characters discuss at length the performance of the black players on each of their teams. White male ownership, real or imagined, of black male athletes goes completely unquestioned. However, race is palpable despite the film's raceless discourse. The Internet was considered vital for participation because it served to unite players from all over the United States. The Internet can also camouflage race in FS because again the athletes are made visible yet participants are often invisible.

White privilege and the World Wide Web. In the United States the Internet is more accessible for upper/middleclass white males than it is for any other group. Bailey (2001) argues

that race may function in cyberspace the same way it functions in the "real" world, and explores two factors that may affect the function of race in cyberspace: economics and cyber culture. Spatially, the Internet functions as a mostly white domain and has a culture to match. Internet culture is demonstrated through Net jargon and "netetiquette". Net jargon includes technical language as well as acronyms. The use of this Net jargon to coalesce a community creates and maintains barriers. There are very few scholars who would argue that language is raceless, classless, or sexless (Bailey, 2001).

Cyberspace provides a place where the individual participant is the archetype of his/her image. Bailey (2001) found that white male adolescents have aggressively used cyberspace to articulate the "despair, anger, restlessness, and pain of coming to adulthood. In doing so, they have shaped the character of online community to reflect secrecy, game structures, and hostility to authority" (Bailey, 2001, p. 341). This is mitigated by a few Asian youths who have joined the ranks as coders, hackers, surfers, and gamers (Bailey, 2001). The age demographics of FS reflect that using the Internet to coalesce a community reaches far beyond just adolescent males. It seems reasonable to assume if access to the Internet and Net jargon is moderated by race, that the shared knowledge and language of the Internet shape FS. Coupling Bailey's findings with my investigation of FS provides an exciting opportunity to determine how real and virtual worlds collide, and ultimately begin a discussion of how racism, via white privilege, functions in the FS Internet domain.

Fantasy sports hold a unique place in the American sports repertoire because of its "real world" and "virtual world" duality. Several websites have created pages that cater to the fantasy sports enthusiast. The most popular sites include NFL.com, ESPN.com, Yahoo Fantasy Sports,

and CBSSports.com. CBSSports.com offers fans the opportunity to join the "community," which is described as the "exclusive reputation system for the ultimate sports fan!" According to CBSSports.com (2009) "There are five levels within the CBSSports.com community which indicate members' overall reputation in the community." The levels include amateur, rookie, pro, all-star, and superstar. The community member's status is determined based on the following: read posts, talk back, select avatar, add friends, join group, post messages, report abuse, subscribe to RSS feeds for message boards and blogs, create message board posts, create message board polls, add smiles, post glogs/game tracker comments, post player analysis, post team analysis, upload your own avatar, post blogs, and own group. Put simply, the more time an he/she spends online and interacting in the CBSSports.com community, the higher the status they attain. A clear hierarchal system exists within the CBSSports.com community. An individual interacts with the site by sharing opinions and reading the opinions of others via messages, boards, and blogs. Internet knowledge is visibly associated with community status. In other words, Bailey's (2001) assessment of a clear cyber culture being privileged holds true in the CBSSports.com community. Next, I contend that in conjunction with hierarchal cyber culture privileged rhetoric is used within FS communities. I use this opportunity to present anecdotal document analysis from a FS writer, participant, and "Champion."

Fantasy sport rhetoric. CBSSports.com employs writers whose opinions are to be read by community members. A contribution by Scott White (2007), a writer for CBSSports.com, illustrates common FS rhetoric: "Add Brian Westbrook to the list of Fantasy studs who ruined their owners' seasons this week. He couldn't do against the lowly Browns what he had trouble doing against the mighty Giants last week, gaining only 67 total yards without a touchdown." A

preliminary investigation of FS language indicates that when athletes are not advancing the interests of their FS owners they can and should be met with resentment, anger, and harsh criticism. Westbrook is both commodified and racialized by his disappointed "owner." White's reference to Westbrook as a stud running back reflects that it is typical to speak of athletes in these terms and again reflects ignorance about the historical references to blacks as animals and chattel. Hylton (2009) argues that athletes are both associated with or disassociated from a group based on race logic. The race of an athlete does not have to be explicitly stated for the reader, but can often be inferred. It would be futile to assert that White's comment is mundane, especially in consideration of the evidence to the contrary presented earlier.

This next passage was posted on the Thelandryhat.com (2007), by an unknown FS participant, in response to a savvy play by Brian Westbrook which ensured his team won a close game between the Philadelphia Eagles and Dallas Cowboys:

> As much as it pained me to draft him, Philadelphia Eagles running back Brian Westbrook is on my NFL Fantasy Football team. I made the playoffs this season. I was the third seed of eight teams. I lost last night by six points. How did I lose? Westbrook, who had an easy touchdown with about 1:30 left in the game against the Dallas Cowboys last night decided to kneel on the one -yard-line instead of running it in for the score. Westbrook also screwed up my co-worker's playoff chances. In fact, I think Westbrook might have caused havoc on a lot of fantasy football owners because of his cute kneel play. Thanks, Westbrook. Not only did my team lose the game, you effed up my fantasy football chances. Money down the drain. I hate you, Westbrook!

This post has no racial signifiers, but Brian Westbrook is presented as a commodity for use by this individual FS participant. Brian Westbrook, who is black, can be both used and hated by his FS "owner". FS ownership has little to no regard for what may benefit an athlete and his team in the real-word, but rather is focused on benefits to virtual owners. The reality is the real world and the virtual world do not always coincide. Through the virtual integration of sport FS owners both need their black players and can detest them at the same time. It may be more accurate to argue that some white FS sport participants can need and revere black athletes and hold negative beliefs about black people at the same time, which represents aversive racism.

The following conversation titled "Reasons why white people hate black people" was initiated by Krenzel16 [actual usernames reflected] on Bbwforums.net (2009). According to his signature, Krenzel16 is the 2008 Fantasy Baseball Champion, 2008 BBW Fantasy Football Champion, 2008 BBW League 2 Fantasy Football Runner Up, 2009 BBW Fantasy NCAA Tourney Pick Em Champion, and 2009 Fantasy NCAA Tourney Pick Em Champion. This was on Bbwforums.net, a sport discussion website.

> Krenzel16: #1248: Playing loud fucking R&B music early in the morning (8 AM) consistently, waking up civilized members of society.
>
> yankshater213 : #1,038,738,928: They love crossing the street without looking. Stupid ******s.
>
> Krenzel16: So I go outside because I'm enraged....2 motherfuckers just sitting on their porch with a radio booming. I would have definitely said something (and will tomorrow) if it wasn't for reason #3: The fear of getting shot.

Mike ™: I hate black people like that too. It only gets worse as it gets warmer outside. Could of been worse though. They could of been blasting some shitty ass Gucci Mane, Lil Boosie, OJ Da Juiceman and whoever else is extremely shitty but everyone seems to think they're living legends.

Krenzel16: Before this is another Krenzel is racist thread, I hate all kinds of people. Whites, blacks, Arabs, Asians....everyone. I'm just currently upset at the black race because of their stereotypical members who are currently directly effecting my life in the negative way.

DramasBitch: Ah, at least you hate all races equally.

Krenzel16: I really do. Yeah, I hate white people less because I'm one of them so obviously I'll enjoy my own race more and I'm around more black people in an urban setting so obviously I'll have more distaste towards them. But yeah, I do hate different forms of white people as well. Wiggers, emos, goths, trailer trash, hillbillies, hippies....and so on. So it's not like I'm spewing hate in one direction, I'm spewing it everywhere.

Dmoney: krenzel has so much hate inside him.

Joe Jam: #3 - A black guy either fucked their girlfriend, wife, a girl they liked, or a member of their family (sister, cousin, mom, daughter, auntie, grandmother).

Pjcolpitts: This is probably more often than not. Kings of Leon still sucks.

Noballer08: LOL. More than likely she enjoyed it too.

AiRuPtHeRe ™: Well you'd certainly hate me even more. When I get a car, I'm going to be bumping them speakers up 24/7.

Pronk48: Can't believe there were black people awake at 8 AM.

Krenzel16: I don't care about loud music at all because we me and my friends act like fools and do that too. But 8 AM? For real? Anytime before 11 is off limits...

Joe Jam: I'd agree 8 would be too early, but I don't think it has to be after 11 am. I say after 9 am, free game with the exceptions that it's Sunday or that your neighbor works the night shift and you know about it. Otherwise, if they're not up, tough. They're just lazy.

DTP: Ugh, I hate this too. My brother and cousin always have their shit blastin but my cousin does it respectfully. He knows when and where to turn it down, my brother doesn't....he just doesn't care. I remember when I was in elementary he use to blast the shit in the house when he first woke up, waking me up too. I was in elementary, he was in high school so he got up way before me. I use to hate that shit...

Champ 2009 AT: One thing I need to ask. I've been wondering this for a while.

Is Dmoney black?

IWORSHIPBENDER: They hadn't gone to sleep yet

Dmoney: Nope. I'm Italian aka white.

This conversation indicates that Krenzel16, who self-identified as white, and several other members of the site harbor negative feelings toward blacks. Krenzel16 attempts to preempt being labeled “racist” by claiming to hate everyone including some whites. This rationale does not negate his racist rhetoric. Yankshater213 indicates there are billions of reasons to hate black people by labeling his reason #1,038,738,928. Joe Jam theorized that the hate offered by Krenzel16 was linked to a black male having intercourse with a girlfriend, wife, or family member. This is another example of black masculinity being linked to physicality and sexuality.

The only unknown is whether Joe Jam is a black male reifying stereotypes or a white male articulating a racist assumption. Paradoxically, Krenzel16's profile indicates that he is an avid FS participant. His other posts reveal that in 2007 he had "An absolute man-crush" on Aaron Curry, Aaron Maybe, Donald Brown, LeSean McCoy, Conor Barwon, and Rey Maualuga after the draft. Krenzel16 gave precise information about why he revered these players:

> ...outside of players from your college or favorite NFL team. Who do you think should absolutely tear it up in the NFL as they are in a good system or prospects you just became infatuated with?
>
> - Aaron Curry should be a dominant NFL player, as he was the best player in the draft as well as the safest pick in the draft. I see him as making as big of an impact as another NFC West linebacker has made for their team in Patrick Willis
> - Aaron Maybin; despite disliking Penn State, something about Maybin just sticks out at me. I think he's going to be sick in the pros and I legitimately wanted him for the Browns
> - Donald Brown just screams polished. A lot of people don't know him but they will soon. Even with Addai in Indy, Brown will get his touches and this will be another late 1st RB steal for the Colts
> - To a lesser extent, I'd also keep an eye on LeSean McCoy, Connor Barwin, and Rey Maualuga. All fell into the second round but all should become steady NFL players; I still see too much Ray Ray in Rey and think the teams that passed up on him (see: Cleveland) will pay for it. Then again, he does play for the Bengals so who knows.

The mostly black athletes that were identified indicate that Krenzel16 can both revere black athleticism and hold negative feelings toward blacks at large. He describes his adulation as

infatuation which I argue is synonymous with sport fetish. Lastly, his man-crush is a reference homoerotic reference to the eroticism of sport and its actors. The rhetoric used by Krenzel16 and others on bbwforum.com provides explicit connections between race, gender, sexuality, and FS.

Aversive racism in sport, particularly FS can be attributed to interest convergence: "[A] thesis pioneered by Derrick Bell that the majority group tolerates advances for racial justice only when it suits its interest to do so" (p. 149). Additionally, interest convergence results in benefits for white elites materially, and working-class whites psychically. The interests of some whites are advanced through participation in sport via internet communities as well as FS drafting and owning of players. In this section, I have presented an argument for the connection between white privilege, the World Wide Web, FS and aversive racism. Together these provide implicit and explicit links to the second tenant of CRT; that the interests of some are advanced at the expense of others, which infers that FS must function as a site for freedom and oppression.

The Fantasy Sport Internet Utopia or Dystopia

In this dissertation, I provide a preliminary argument for the conscious and unconscious commodification and fetishization of black male athletes by some white FS participants. Investigating racism on the Internet proves challenging because of the subtleties of racism in society at large. Through bricolage I have layered transparencies and presented evidence through a multitude of discourses. Thus far, I have explained the ways in which hegemonic ideologies influence FS culture and maintain FS as a site of white privilege. Systemic racism is cultivated as individuals construct their identities using racialized, gendered, and sexual references. Next, I will discuss the freedom and oppression accepted by white male FS participants and black male athletes respectively.

Long and Hylton (2002) determined that race and cultural differences are seldom explored in the sporting domain: "Teamwork, rules, codes of behavior and supporting your team might be expected to mitigate the worst excesses of racism, but competition, aggression, rivalry and physicality might exacerbate the situation" (p. 87). Here again, I return to a discussion of the body. Horne (2006) described the body as central to sport consumer culture. Sport is a site where the body is consumed and is constantly on display. Black male athletes can be both firmly linked to their body and simultaneously stripped of their humanity. As previously mentioned, Oates (2007) drew attention to the NFL draft as an annual homoerotic event: "Players are assessed according to strict criteria for proper bodily, intellectual, and attitudinal qualities, assigned numerical 'grades' that rank them against one another, and become topics for endless debate about their relative value" (p. 75). Oates' (2007) analysis can be laid next to the happenings of nearly any fantasy football draft. The most obvious difference is the FS participants primarily use mediated sources (i.e. Internet, television, radio, magazines, newspapers, etc.) for gathering their data, rather than gaining information through physical interactions with players. Regardless of the source: "These measurements will be used to calculate the 'prospects' bodily potential in order to convert the bodies of prospects into commodities" (Oates, 2007, p. 75). As Oates continued:

> This openness not only satisfies desires that are in most other arenas strictly policed by taboos, but serve to affirm inter-male dominance based on a hierarchy of race by referencing a gender hierarchy. Draftees are positioned as the objects of the erotic gaze, which allows for the pursuit of long-sublimated desires while offering the prospects a disempowered role traditionally occupied by women (p. 75).

Oates' (2007) assessment placed black males again in the binary with white males. I assert that Oates "real world" observations of the NFL draft can speak to the processes of the FS draft and ultimately to the racialized battle for phallic control. *Sport Illustrated* (SI) in its 2009 special edition about fantasy football provides readers with the data required to determine the value of players. The publication includes 439 player rankings, assessments from NFL assistant coaches, mock drafts conducted by SI writers, draft strategies, roster maintenance tips, etc. It even includes a chart where running backs are plotted in "the matrix" based on workload and productivity. Black men as fantasized masculine commodities assume the position of being the phallus and white men through their participation in FS leagues, as owner, can imagine control of the phallus. Oates (2007) diffusely couples sport fetish, sexual fetish, and racial fetish: "The erotic gaze of the NFL draft not only sustains the erotic nature of the NFL but also reinforces power structures related to white male dominance rooted in various historical and social practices" (p. 82). FS is not a raceless leisure activity and clearly has emerged as a site where rationality and technology have been exalted as the line between real and virtual are blurred.

Weeks and Caldwell (2007) interviewed a handful of NFL players (Bernard Berrian, Shannon Sharp, Chester Taylor, Desmond Clark, Boomer Esiason, Ryan Longwell, and Steve Beuerlein) most of which were oblivious about what FS entailed and at best, a few were ambivalent. Boomer Esiason, one of few white players interviewed, was nearly alone in his enthusiasm about FS. Shannon Sharp raised a provoking question that even he laughed at: "You help me win the pool. You help me win the league. My response is, so where is my cut? Since I helped you win the league and I helped you win." It is evident that Shannon Sharp realized that there is an imbalance in FS where the main benefactors are the participants although the labor of

athletes is the underpinning of every FS team. Only recently have athletes received any financial gain from FS and these gains have been limited. For example, athletes are sometimes employed in commercial endorsements for ESPN.com and NFL.com to promote fantasy football. The reason athletes have been denied compensation is because corporate entities like Yahoo, Inc. have argued that the statistical information used in FS leagues is public record. There is a failure to connect the statistical data used in FS participation to the real-life human beings who generate the statistics. While some are privileged (i.e. FS participants) others are exploited (i.e. athletes). The acceptance of FS sport is inextricably linked to the media, and the Internet. According to hooks (1992) control of images is central to racial domination. Both the media and the Internet strongly influence popular culture.

Media, Popular Culture, and Fantasy Sport

Popular culture is another window into the values, beliefs, and daily practices of a society. Hylton (2009) argued for the exploration of the relationship between race, the media, and athletes. hooks (1992) found that television and the internet are powerful mediums that allow individuals to gaze presumably without the interpretation of others. Therefore, I offer an examination of FS within popular culture and the media. Television remains as a dominant element of the media. The norms of FS are now evidenced in a Fox Entertainment Group (FX) network television series called *The League* which is Executive Produced by Jeff Schaffer and Jackie Shaffer. The show is a comedic social commentary about five high school friends who play fantasy football. Each character seems to normalize some version of white masculinity. Pete Eckhart, played by Mark Duplass, is a dominant FS player, but winds up divorced during the FS season due to his commitment to the league. Taco, played by Jon Lajoie, is a single,

unemployed, moronic womanizer and has lucked into one FS league championship. Taco is consistently oblivious about participation. “Ruxin”, played by Knick Kroll, is a married father of one and a lawyer who schemes and complains all season about never having won a championship. Ruxin is obsessed with winning himself or vicariously through another player. Kevin, played by Stephen Rannazzisi, is also a lawyer and the commissioner of the league. Kevin is portrayed as a stable family man with a relatable sense of humor. The running joke in the series is that Kevin’s wife actually runs his FS team. Andre, played by Paul Scheer, is a plastic surgeon and the whipping boy of the group. He is portrayed as needy, uncool, and terrible at fantasy football. The other members take pride in constantly emasculating Andre.

The first episode of the series opened with a commentary from Pete who indicated they were beginning the 5th season of their FS league. He provided a recap of how each guy functioned in the league in years past. He concluded his commentary by saying, “God bless fantasy football. There are many things a man can do with his time and this is better than those things.” This first episode depicted the FS draft. In one scene, Ruxin told Kevin he intended to draft Adrienne Peterson who had “hammies [sic] that could literally pull a car, he’s got these shoebox calves, and that beautiful chestnut black skin. I know that sounds weird, but I will tell you what does not sound weird. The help I will receive from my little friend the Oracle.” The audience is left with no doubt that Ruxin links Peterson to his physicality and blackness. hooks (1992) found that:

> When race and ethnicity become commodified as resources for pleasure the culture of specific groups, as well as the bodies of individuals, can be seen as constituting an

> alternative playground when members of dominating races, genders, sexual practices affirm their power-over in intimate relations with the Other (p. 23).

In Episode 4, Ruxin laments that Antonio Gates, a tight end for the San Diego Chargers, who is not on his FS team, had a stellar performance the previous weekend. He blamed Gates for his loss and proclaimed, "I hope that guy gets mouth cancer." Coincidentally, during the by-week, Gates showed up at the spa where the league guys were vacationing. Ruxin used the opportunity to tell Gates that he ruined his fantasy football team the previous week. Gates told Ruxin he was just doing his job which was to go play football. Ruxin responded saying, "When you catch balls it has a negative effect on my team. You ravaged my fantasy football team." Gates told Ruxin that after meeting him, he was glad that his success negatively affected Ruxin's FS team. Ruxin and Gates continued to argue. In the next scene, the five league guys were being escorted from the hotel. Ruxin had a visible black-eye. Pete commended Ruxin from taking a punch from Gates. Ruxin corrected Pete and revealed that he slapped Gates and had fallen while running away. The episode showed the blurred line between the real world and virtual world that exists for the FS participant. Ruxin deemed his need for FS sport success more important than Gates own real world football career. This again exemplifies the commodification of athletes and as per usual the athlete was black. There is no reason to assume that the blackness of Gates is of no consequence to Ruxin, who previously demonstrated in the first episode that he took considerable notice of blackness. Additionally, Ruxin's commentary in the first episode on Peterson's beautiful black skin set the tone for the show to connect eroticism and sport.

Each series is saturated with sexual references that are often homoerotic. In the opening commentary of the first episode, Ruxin was leaning over his newborn son's crib and said,

"daddy's friends think they are going to go balls deep in him, but he is going to go balls deep in them." Here FS is operationalized a means to exert inter-male dominance. In that same episode, Pete was depicted as being emasculated by his wife because she put her finger in his rectum during intercourse. During a birthday party for Kevin's daughter Pete and his wife argued about having a baby. She accused him of "having slow swimmers." He said maybe his swimmers were slow because she put her finger in his rectum during intercourse. Throughout the episode his emasculation is juxtaposed against his hyper-masculine FS domination. Sexuality was again raised in the episode when Pete asked Andre, "Have you ever had sex with a trophy before?" Andre responded that he hadn't but that he would enjoy having sex with the league trophy when it was at his house this year: "I am going to get all your sloppy seconds. I am going to suck it. I am going to dry hump it. I am going to blow it." The championship trophy was named Shiva, after a girl, who was the guys' high school valedictorian. The naming was inspired by Shiva's intelligence and unattractiveness in high school. The guys made fun of Shiva in high school and they had not let go of their sophomoric behavior as adults. In Episode 4, at the start of the playoffs Pete uploads a video of himself talking trash and simulating sex with the trophy.

Meanwhile, Andre was most often the target of homoerotic comments. Partway through the fantasy season the others find out that Andre is in two leagues. In the second league, "the fantasy league of extraordinary gentlemen", Andre is "king." The members think Andre is cool and he is a dominant player. When Kevin and Pete find out they make references to the members of the fantasy league of extraordinary gentlemen performing sexual acts on Andre. Andre succumbs to their pressuring and drops out of his second league. In Episode 4, Andre accused Pete of "trade raping" him which is both homoerotic, emasculating, and violent. The league guys

used the term to indicate that Andre was naively convinced to make an unreasonable trade. It is telling that the rhetoric used in *The League* is decidedly sexual, specifically male-on-male, patriarchal, and at times unwittingly racist. If this televised social commentary provides any insight into heteronormative FS behavior, it can be assumed that FS participants are expected to be sophomoric and obsessive white males, who are unconsciously racist, and often participate in homoeroticism.

Youtub.com. Next, I return to the Internet for popular culture references to FS. Since 2005 Youtube.com has been a widely used site where individuals can upload and share videos. The sites byline reads *Broadcast Yourself*. Youtube.com videos seem to provide social commentary about our daily lives. Videos range from corporate sponsored messages, to movie/TV clips, to amateur video blogs, to silly moments caught on film. In 2007, a series of videos titled, "Fantasy Football: You're off My Team," were posted by DrunkGirlsLoveUs (actual username) on Youtube.com. The videos depict two white males, Mike and Brad, who gave weekly updates about players who had performed poorly the previous week. The tone of the males was indignant as they kicked players off of their virtual team. They often yelled and ranted about performances that did not meet their expectation. In Week 1, Mike said, "Steven Jackson I spent my first pick on you. What did you get me 53 yards or some crap like that? What is that two points? You're off my team." Throughout the series they criticize black and white players, but the players are disproportionately black. In week 4, Brad runs down his lineup: Steven Jackson, Amon Green, Carnell Williams, Alex Smith, J.P. Losman, Hines Ward, Andre Johnson, D.J. Hackett, Vernon Davis, and the Chicago Bears Defense. Brad asserted that all of the aforementioned players were injured so he had to start Jerious Norwood and Najeh Davenport.

Privilege is evidenced in Mike's and Brad's irate rants. I sight this as an example of white male privilege. Even during incidences where they critiqued white players their authority to provide judgments were represented as normal. The often made references to what players were expected to do for them and that they could put players "on their bench." This Youtube.com video series unlike the television series, *The League*, showcases a real world social commentary on normative FS rhetoric and behavior. Mike and Brad demonstrate that when players are not serving their interest they can be met with anger, disgust, resentment, and harsh criticism.

Lastly, commercial references to FS are significant. Consider the following Budweiser commercial which was posted in Youtube.com by DarkGalleryFilms (2009):

> Bud light Presents Real Men of Genius. Today we salute you Mr. Fantasy Football Manager Guy. Every year you assemble your closest friends to prepare for another season in the knock down drag out world of make-believe football. You were born with the one skill every manager needs to play fantasy football. Absolutely no skill playing real football. Imaginary catches, imaginary touch downs. Next up, an imaginary score with an imaginary woman. So crack open an ice cold Bud light O Swami of the sidelines.
>
> You may come in dead last but you're always first with us.

The commercial uses sarcasm to make light of the form of masculinity which is exerted though FS participation. While it is presented as tongue-in-cheek it still rationalizes FS participation. By employing Hyton's (2009) race logic, it is possible to deduce that Mr. Fantasy Football manager guy is white. The commercial is presented as a song in what can be surmised as the genre of easy rock which is generally understood to be consumed by white individuals. The Budweiser "Real Man of Genius" commercial, the "Fantasy Football: You're off My Team" Youtube.com series,

and the television series *The League* all represent a cohesive popular culture narrative of FS. FS is maintained through these representations as a privileged site for white males to demonstrate unquestioned virtual control over the predominantly black players of the NFL.

In each of the previous five sections, I have used a layering technique to provide my reading of FS. Through each transparency, the intersections of race, gender, and sexuality were centralized as I consider the three tenants of CRT. To conclude my analysis, I will discuss my use of CRT to provide a pragmatic reading of FS.

A Pragmatic Use of CRT

The final transparency to be layered over top of all the previous assertions is that CRT can be employed to pragmatically examine FS. Engaging CRT as my methodological approach to examining FS as a cultural phenomenon has been seamless. Throughout this dissertation, I have provided implicit and explicit links to the three tenants of CRT: racism is ordinary, racism advances the interest of whites, and racism is socially constructed. Critical race theorists support color-conscious efforts to challenge oppression (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Once again, I explicitly acknowledge that my position as a black, female, heterosexual, able-bodied, ex-football player coalesce as I position myself as a sport scholar. In addition, my sport participation and consumption are important considerations.

> Critical race theory recognizes the experiential knowledge of people of color as legitimate, appropriate, and critical to understanding, analyzing, and teaching about racial subordination. In fact, critical race theorists view this knowledge as a strength and draw explicitly on the lived experiences of people of color by including such methods as story

> telling, family histories, biographies, scenarios, parables, cuentos testimonios, chronicles, and narratives (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 26).

My use of CRT began with the assumption that racism is permanent. Sport, which is far too often labeled a level playing field, is an ideal site to centralize race and present historical, psychological, political, economic, social-cultural discourse that counter that assertion.

My reading of FS as a critical race theorist incorporates revisionist history. I have attempted to replace the accepted interpretation of the masses with the rarely considered history of the minority experience. Many presume that the inequities within sport and the United States at large have been addressed through integration. Revisionism, similar to interest convergence, links black advancement to the interests of white capitalist motives. Blacks were ushered into sport not because of an awakened moral consciousness, but because they could be exploited as commodities who could be used for capitalist gains. In addition, narcissistic identity development has rationalized a fetishized consumption of the Other. To reiterate, through the subject-object paradigm black males as labors remain as objects. In the 1973 *Sociology of Sport* Harry Edwards was prophetic as he argued that race was central to black exclusion from sport and that the impending shifts toward black inclusion were not an indicator of racial equality.

Long (2000) determined that those who do not act to combat racism in sport may fall into the following categories:

(a) Informed but ill-inclined to act;

(b) Informed but unable to recognize racism;

(c) Uninformed;

(d) Actively opposed to taking such action (p. 121).

He contended that it is not overt racism that some fail to confront; rather it is the subtle forms of racism. For example, FS often goes unrecognized as a site of racism and white privilege. Black players, whom are the majority in the NFL, appear to be revered by whites, and thus FS is assumed to be an acceptable leisure pursuit. However, the inclusion of black males in professional football must be placed into context. Blacks have little to no representation in sports a multitude of American sports (i.e. tennis, golf, skiing, bowling, archery, lacrosse, soccer, rugby, swimming and diving, hockey, and auto racing). Black athletes have a dominant presence in football and basketball and both are major revenue generators. The tremendous lack of minorities in administrative, coaching, managerial, and ownership positions within sports dominated by blacks also exemplifies an obvious imbalance. Racist conjecture is often that blacks do not qualify for leadership positions, blacks do not want leadership positions, or that whites are better suited for leadership positions. To date, all of the aforementioned presumptions have been used to rationalize inaction. As a result, FS as a site for imagined ownership can go unquestioned because white leadership, ownership, and dominance have been pre-established as normal. Furthermore, racism is not solely steeped in the number of players on a team or represented within a given sport. Aversive racism likely moderates sport; whites who have goodwill toward some blacks, especially during interracial interactions, can at the same time maintain racist feelings toward black people. For example, a FS participant may draft a mostly black team and admire black players because of their athletic ability, and at the same time maintain racist beliefs regarding blacks in general.

Hylton (2009) determined that scholars must place emphasis on the drive for emancipation from racism that results from CRT. He also reinforced the notion that the

researcher's reason for engaging in the research should not be implicit. The critical race theory (CRT) movement is "a collection of activists and scholars interested in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001 p. 2). Critical race theorists who ascribe to the idealist position would argue that "by changing the system of images, words, attitudes, unconscious feelings, scripts, and social teaching" racism could be diminished (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001 p. 17). According to Winant (2000) prejudice was thought to be susceptible to defeat via "contact, integration, and assimilation, and that discrimination could be ended by laws and regulation that made jobs, education, housing and so on equally accessible to all" (p. 179). Historically, integration, assimilation, and changes to laws and regulations have not yielded changes to attitudes and unconscious feelings. Fittingly, Winant (2000) concluded that race will never be transcended: "Whiteness as victim still perpetuates white privilege as it reinforces insiderness, outsiderness, national identity and the privilege of being the 'we', the 'us' and the included" (p. 71).

Whites exercise privilege through basic involvement in FS. Some white FS participants use rhetoric that exemplifies their belief in their right to own, judge, and dominate others. By naming the actors in fantasy sport it may seem logical to argue that changing the attitudes and unconscious feelings of those who commodify and fetishize black males could diminish the effects of racism. This is only partially true. This approach alone would render black males powerless in their own liberation. At one time, some black males operationalized sport as a site to combat social injustice. However, the integration of sport and its connection to civil rights legislation has been romanticized (Hoberman, 1997). Hoberman noted that the black press of the early nineteenth century presented victories of black athletes over whites as a symbolic victory

over white treachery and domination. The accomplishments of Jackie Robinson and Joe Louise did provide inroads for contemporary black athletic participation, but when social justice gave way to social mobility a paradigm shift occurred and the influence of the predominantly white capitalist structure reigned supreme. For decades, black athletes have been the predominant image of black American upward mobility (Hoberman, 1997). As a result, some blacks have fetishized athletic participation. Hoberman's assessment was astute in that some black males have sanctioned their own commodification:

> The entrapment of African Americans in the world of athleticism is the result of a long collaboration between blacks seeking respect and expanded opportunity and whites seeking entertainment, profit, and forms of racial reconcilitation that do not challenge fundamental assumptions about racial difference (p. 4).

Hoberman (1997) asserts that the black middle class potentially holds the key to liberation from stereotypes of black physicality. He later expanded his assertion and proclaimed that all black people can force liberation by "encouraging their children to pursue more productive cultural and intellectual interests" (p. xxv). Hobeman's rigid assertion that exalting the black athlete has been "disastrous" for the black community is only partially accurate. Hoberman (1997) offers examples of more exemplary, yet little-known, figures who comply with the "ideology of adventure" (P. 62). He stands firm in his insistence that educational and military pursuits were more important than athleticism. There is a distinct assimilationist tone to his argument that seems to reify white patriarchal norms. It should not be assumed that an emphasis on physicality corresponds with neglect of the intellect. Life choices for black males have historically been stalled by racism. Black males have not had the ability to unreservedly choose avenues for social

mobility. Furthermore, it is irresponsible to issue a blanket condemnation of black athletic participation. Yes, some contemporary black athletes appear to be self-serving capitalist coons, but this is not the entirety of black athletic involvement. Besides, the black community's downfall may rest in the misguided desire for absolute assimilation.

CRT scholars debate whether blacks can achieve liberation through assimilation or whether blacks should become separatist (e.g. nationalists). Simply put, through assimilation blacks can work within the existing system and conform to European standards, or through separatism blacks can create their own institutions that centralize the needs and concerns of blacks alone. Post-Jackie Robinson, many black athletes have consented to assimilate into modern sport.

> Thus when the black athlete puts life, limb, and health on the line in sports, he becomes a key factor in a social sedative process whereby America dulls black consciousness and awareness of the totality of the impact of white racism and oppression (Edwards, 1973, p. 265).

Assimilation did not dismantle hegemonic ideologies, disrupt social stratification, nor did it redress narcissistic development of racialized identities. All told, assimilation has served as consent to the commodification and fetishization of black masculinity. However, my argument against absolute assimilation is not an argument for creating a separate sport and FS industry.

Pragmatic liberation.

My use of pragmatism leads me to the middle ground where idealism, realism, and separatism meet. Here, individuals transform the system while centralizing the needs and concerns of the black community (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Clarke and Clarke (1982)

acknowledged that "sport is not a privileged space into which we can retreat from real life-rather it is systemically and intimately connected with society" (p. 62). Transformation of sport and FS requires black males to be agents of change in their own liberation. Carrington (1998) argued that “black men can lay claim to a masculine identity as a means of restoring a unified sense of racial identity, freed, if only momentarily, from the emasculating discourses imposed by the ideologies and practices of White racism” (p. 291). However, Carrington cautioned that sport resistance can be limiting because it may privilege dominance. With that in mind, liberation of black male athletes will certainly benefit from universal cooperation. hooks (1992) determined that “mutual recognition of racism, its impact both on those who are dominated and those who dominate, is the only standpoint that makes possible an encounter between races that is not based on denial and fantasy” (p. 28). I contend that the process of liberation can begin with collective challenges to the dominant discourse about the intersections of race, gender, sexuality and sport because the dominant narratives about sport have influenced fantasy sport. hooks (1992) offered “critical black female spectatorship as a site of resistance” (p. 128). She noted that there is power in looking. She posited the “oppositional gaze” (p.115):

> Spaces of agency exists for black people, where in we can both interrogate the gaze of the Other but also look back, and at one another, naming what we see. The ‘gaze’ has been and is a site of resistance for colonized black people globally. Subordinates in relations of power learn experientially that there is a critical gaze, one that ‘looks’ to document, one that is oppositional (p. 116).

Using an oppositional gaze to critically read FS is one move in the direction of liberation and empowerment.

The next move toward liberation can be achieved through counter-storytelling. Delgado and Stefancic (2001) reasoned that "society constructs the social world through a series of tacit agreements mediated by images, pictures, tales, and scripts" (p. 42). Bonilla-Silva (2010) identified storytelling as central to communication: "Hence, stories help us make sense of the world but in ways that reinforce the status quo, serving particular interests without appearing to do so" (p. 75). He presented two kinds of stories: story lines, which are "fable-like," and testimonies, which have a rhetorical function. Bonilla-Silva (2010) noted that colorblind racism can often be linked to the story line 'the past is the past' (p. 77). He concluded that stories can be used to justify current racial arrangements. Critical race theorists use counter-stories to challenge dominate narratives. Counter-storytelling can be used to disrupt hegemonic power by vocalizing the often untold story of a phenomenon (Hylton, 2009). "In sport the stereotypes and racial processes that affect the experiences of individuals and social groups rarely surface as the experiences of many and as such are relegated to the status of individual rather than collective issues" (Hylton, 2009, p. 56). Thus, counter-storytelling will help initiate liberation by challenging the dominant story of FS: "Challenges to identity formation in sport and leisure can occur through the use of Outsider stories which subsequently destabilize stereotypes and homogenizing social processes" (Hylton, 2009, p. 56).

Critical race theorists argue that truth itself is a social construct which primarily serves the dominant group. The purpose of this dissertation was not to speak of "T" truth. My reading of FS through the layering of transparencies by means of bricolage serves as a preliminary attempt at dismantling the dominant narrative about FS. Future FS research may yield additional

transformative measures. In Chapter 5, I will recapitulate my reading of FS and provide suggestions for future FS research.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY & DISCUSSION

Race has undoubtedly shaped the cultural landscape of the United States and as a result it has shaped sport, and specifically fantasy sport. FS is neither colorblind nor absent of race and racism. In fact, colorblindness in and of itself is a false notion. Through a presentation of socio-cultural discourse, psychological conclusions, historical references, and explicit examples from the FS industry and participants, I attempted to typify aversive racism within FS. This dissertation has been a consideration of the commodification and fetishization of black masculinity within FS. The following research questions were used to guide this dissertation: How can FS function as a cultural transmitter of hegemonic ideologies; how is the racial and gender identity binary vital to FS participation; how is aversive racism present on the World Wide Web; how is fantasy sport a site for freedom or oppression for the participants; how is fantasy sport a site for freedom or oppression for the athletes that are consumed; how is FS referenced in popular culture and by the media; how is CRT pragmatically used to frame FS?

The first research question: how can FS function as a cultural transmitter of hegemonic ideologies; was exemplified through a consideration of stratification. An analysis of the 2009 special fantasy football edition of *Sports Illustrated* exemplified that the dominant narrative of fantasy sport comes directly from the NFL. Furthermore, Jay Clemons' in his "Draft Strategies for Domination" subtlety articulated that racism is an ordinary reflection of American white supremacy.

Next, I explored how the racial and gender identity binary are vital to FS participation. Significant evidence supports the theory that white masculinity and black masculinity function as

oppositional characteristics. With this in mind, I employed FS to exemplify the binary relationship between black male athletes and white male participants. Moreover, the struggle for control of the phallus, which is understood as symbolic masculinity, can also be linked to this black male-white male binary, and therefore to FS. This dissertation is not an attempt to present black masculinity or white masculinity as homogenous. The roles and identities of black men and white men are informed by their lived experiences and interactions with institutional forces; family, religion, the educational system, the media, the political system, the justice system, and sport.

The third research question: how is aversive racism present on the World Wide Web was a multifaceted undertaking. It was necessary to engage FS using a theoretical approach in order to account for the complexity in exploring the conscious and unconscious racism operationalized by FS participants, particularly in the Internet domain. By analyzing the CBSSport.com "community," FS rhetoric, and postings on bbwforum.com I was able to read online FS participation. Studying racism on the World Wide Web is difficult because both the Internet and racism are ambiguous.

The fourth and fifth research questions were as follows: how is fantasy sport a site for freedom or oppression for the participants; and how is fantasy sport a site for freedom or oppression for the athletes that are consumed. In 2001, Bailey raised the question of whether the internet is a utopia, where freedom is demonstrated, or a dystopia, where oppression takes the form of access and representation. Through the examination of the personal and social dynamics at play in cyberspace, Bailey provided the impetus for a discussion of identity creation on the Internet where the line between real and imagined are blurred. I contend that FS is a site of

freedom for some, primarily white male participants and oppression for others, primarily black male athletes. I found that black males chiefly occupy a subordinate role as athletes in the FS player-owner hierarchy. Black male labor is exploited as FS participants imagine that they are able to buy, sell, and trade these players. hooks (1992) described the plight of the black males as follows:

> It is the young black male body that is seen as epitomizing this promise of wildness, of unlimited physical prowess and unbridled eroticism. It was this black body that was most 'desired' for its labor in slavery, and it is this body that is most represented in contemporary popular culture as the body to be wanted, imitated, desired, possessed (p. 34).

The black male body is not only commodified within FS, it is fetishized as FS participants become infatuated with players and obsess about their value and performance. FS is a contemporary site of white privilege and domination.

Understanding the Bricoluer

Kincheloe & Berry (2004) were correct to assert that "subjugated voices are better understood when studied in relation to numerous social, cultural, political, economic, philosophical, historical, psychological, and pedagogical dynamics" (p. 84). I operationalize bricolage, pragmatism and CRT in order to gain liberties as a scholar. According to Kincheloe and Berry (2004), bricolage can be employed in a number of ways:

- To imagine the things that never were;
- To see the world as it could be;
- To develop alternatives to oppressive existing conditions;

- To discern what is lacking in a way that promotes the will to act;
- To understand that there is far more to the world than what we can see (p. 20).

Throughout this dissertation I have attempted to elucidate the oppression in FS, counter the dominant narrative about participation, encourage honest discourse about FS, and promote liberation for athletes.

Lastly, I constituted a new position in CRT where it could be pragmatically used to frame FS. My pragmatic use of CRT led me to offer two examples of libratory moves that can be made to challenge the exploitation of black males via FS. First, I contend that individuals can employ an oppositional gaze. FS should no longer function devoid of critical observation. Second, liberation can be initiated through counter-storytelling. The dominant narrative of FS as harmless should not remain once individuals recognize that racism is a moderator of participation. Counter-stories can be written by any progressive individual regardless of race.

A limitation of this dissertation is that, by engaging in bricolage and not adhering to positivist research methods, the rubric by which this study can be measured must be adapted to the specification of this dissertation. Additionally, white privilege gives many white FS participants and many white readers of this dissertation the power to dismiss my claims and to cling to colorblind rationales. Through semantic moves some whites will continue to rationalize their FS participation. Furthermore, Crosset (2007) argued that even those whites who engage in racial commentary come away with a false sense of being racially aware. By centralizing race, presuming that racism is permanent, understanding race is socially constructed, and accepting that racism advances the interests of whites in FS honest discourse can be cultivated. Kincheloe and Berry (2004) prescribed that,

> Understanding that research which fails to address the ontology of the human existential situation with all of its pain, suffering joy and desire, is limited in its worth, bricoleurs search for better ways to connect with and illuminate this domain. In this context much is possible (p. 22).

Levi-Strauss (1966) provided the origin and context for the term bricolage:

> In its old sense the verb 'bricoleur' applied to ball games and billiards, to hunting, shooting and riding. It was however always used with reference to some extraneous movement: a ball rebounding, a dog straying or a horse swerving from its direct course to avoid an obstacle (p. 17).

My position as an interdisciplinary scholar coincides with the later translation of a bricoleur as a "Jack of all trades" who takes on "odd jobs" (Levi-Strauss, 1996, p. 17):

> The 'bricoleur' is adept at performing a large number of diverse tasks; but, unlike the engineer, he [or she] does not subordinate each of them to the availability of raw materials and tools conceived and procured for the purpose of the project. His [or her] universe of instruments is closed and the rules of his [or her] game are always to make do with 'whatever is at hand', that is to say with a set of tools and materials which is always finite and is also heterogeneous because what it contains bears no relation to the current project, or indeed to any particular project, but is contingent result of all occasions there have been to renew or enrich the stock or maintain it with the remains of previous constructions or deconstructions (Levi-Strauss, 1966, p. 17).

Winant (2000) astutely described race as a "world-history bricolage" (p. 172). When the complexity of studying race is combined with the challenges of studying gender and sexuality, which I employed to read FS, bricolage emerged as an ideal method for this dissertation.

My reading of FS may cause a rupture in the narration and/or story line of this phenomenon. However, Hoberman (1997) found that "black critiques of sport tend to lack coherence, because they cannot reconcile a deep attachment to athleticism and its charismatic black hero with the inevitable exploitation of black athletes by white image-makers and the white financial interests they serve" (p. 85). Based on Hoberman's assessment, I am not the ideal academician for this "odd job"[8] because I indeed share a sport fixation with my intellectual brethren. Nevertheless, Hoberman did provide an affirming observation about the role black women must play in the critique of sport, although he limits these contributions to black feminists, specifically referencing bell hooks. Despite not identifying as a black feminist sport researcher, I eagerly offer my recommendations for future FS research.

Recommendations

Additional studies of aversive racism and FS should be conducted. Due to the limitations of the online environment in which many FS participants operate, it is still unclear of how a future study of aversive racism within FS could generate a situation where normative structures can be manipulated to appear ambiguous sometimes and remain salient at others. Based on my findings it would be ideal to research the FS draft. It appears that FS participants spend months planning and preparing for the draft. A study which combines an in-depth interview with observation could be revealing in terms of how individuals conceive their participation. The

[8] My reference to this dissertation being an "odd job" is an interferential nod to my position as a bricoleur.

study should provide an opportunity for participants to discuss how or why they view some players as more valuable than others. Future research should examine further the effects of masculine control and the symbolic phallus. Ideally future studies will be conducted to explore participation of women and minorities in FS.

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APPENDECIES

APPENDIX A

NFL.COM 2009 FANTASY RULES

Teams

Overview
Each NFL.com Fantasy 2009 league will consist of 12 teams, which will be randomly divided by the Commissioner into three divisions of 4 teams each. The divisions will be called: East, Central, and West.

Each roster will consist of 14 NFL players. Owners may select a starting lineup each week from these 14 players. The chart below lists the required number of players at each position for the 'starting lineup' and the 'draft'.

- **Note:** Individual defensive players are not drafted; rather, you will draft an NFL team's entire defensive/special teams unit. For the purpose of roster limits, each NFL defensive/special teams unit will count as one "player."

Roster Requirements

Position	Starting Lineup*	Auto Draft**	Live Draft***
Quarterback (QB)	1	2	1 or 2
Running Back (RB)	2	4	2, 3, 4, or 5
Wide Receiver (WR)	3	4	3, 4, or 5
Tight End (TE)	1	2	1 or 2
Kicker (K)	1	1	1 or 2
Defensive Team (DST)	1	1	1 or 2
All Positions ****	**9**	**14**	**14**

* You are allowed as many as 9 players in your starting lineup, according to the positional requirements listed in the table above. However the numbers in the "starting lineup" column represent the **maximum** number of players you may have at each position. You may use fewer players than the number listed at each position without penalty, although it is recommended you use the maximum number of players so that you can accumulate the most points.

** Team owners that elect to participate in a league with an 'Automated Draft' will have their rosters populated according to the criteria listed in the 'Roster Requirements' table. Players will be drafted based upon their order within each team owner's **Rank List** and position within the draft.

*** Team owners participating in a 'Live Draft' league will be required to select a total of 14 players based upon the criteria defined in the 'Roster Requirements' table above. Team owners may draft up to 2 Quarterbacks, 5 Running Backs, 5 Wide Receivers, 2 Tight Ends, 2 Kickers, and/or 2 Defensive Teams; however, the maximum total number of players a team may draft cannot exceed 14.

**** Please note that, throughout the season, your overall roster is not restricted to a specific number of players at each position. Once the draft is over, you can carry, in reserve, as many or as few players at each position as you like, as long as your overall roster does not exceed 14 players.

Scoring

Point Values

Each week your team will compete against another team in your league in a head-to-head matchup. During a matchup, each of the players in your starting lineup ("active" players) for that week will earn points based on their actual statistics from their respective NFL games. The charts below list the statistics and their corresponding point values.

Scoring

Offensive Statistic	QB, WR, RB, TE, K
Passing, Rushing or Receiving Touchdown (PaTD, RuTD,ReTD)	6 points
Passing Yards(PaYD)	1 point for every 25 yards
Rushing Yards(RuYD)	1 point for every 10 yards
Receiving Yards(ReYD)	1 point for every 10 yards
2 point conversion(Pa2P, Ru2P, Re2P)	2 points
Passing Interception(PaInt)	-2 points
Fumble Lost, including ST plays (FL)	-2 points
Field Goal(FG)	0-49 yards = 3 points 50+ yards = 5 points
Extra Point(XP)	1 point
Offensive Fumble Recovery Touchdown(OFRTD)	6 points

Defensive Statistic	Defense
Total Defensive/ Special Teams Touchdown (DTD	6 points
Safety(STY)	2 points
Interception(Int)	2 points
Defensive/ST Fumble Recovered (DFR)	2 points
Sack(SACK)	1 point
Points Against, Total Points Scored (PA)	0-6 = 8 points 7-13 = 6 points 14-20 = 4 points 21-27 = 2 points 28+ = 0 points
Yards Allowed(YDS)	0-49 = 12 points 50-99 = 10 points 100-149 = 8 points 150-199 = 6 points 200-249 = 4 points 250-299 = 2 points 300+ = 0 points

Wins & Losses

For each head-to-head matchup, the team with the greater number of points will earn a **Win** and

the team with the lesser number will earn a **Loss**. During the regular season, if two teams have the same number of points, each team will get a **Tie**.

During the playoffs, there are no ties. The tiebreakers for head-to-head matchups in the playoffs are as follows:
1. Combined Passing, Rushing, and Receiving Yards
2. Defensive Yards Allowed

If this doesn't break the tie, then the team with the higher playoff seed will earn the **Win**.

Lineup Changes

Weekly Lineups

Each week, owners have the opportunity to select their starting lineup for the coming week. If an owner doesn't set a lineup before the weekly lineup deadline (explained in the .Deadline to Change Status. section below), the owner's lineup from the previous week will be used. If an owner has an illegal lineup, their team will score zero points for the scoring period.

Deadline to Change Status

An owner may change the status of the players on his/her team (i.e., "active" or "reserve") up to 5 minutes before a player's NFL team is scheduled to start. While there are benefits to last minute research, please play it safe and make changes well before this 5-minute window arrives. NFL.com will not be responsible if your watch or clock and our system clock are not synchronized. Please note that, if nine (9) of your players were .active. and played on Sunday, you will not be able to change the status of one of your .reserves. to .active. on Monday even though the player didn't play yet.

Adding and Dropping Players

Free Agents

Throughout the season you may want to improve your roster by adding available free agents and dropping players who are not performing up to your expectations. You can submit a free agent request at any time. Any player who is not on Waivers (as described below) is considered a free agent and may be added to a team immediately on a first-come, first-served basis.

Waivers

To provide an equal opportunity for all owners to add players to their roster, a **Waivers** process is used. Requests for players that are on **Waivers** are not executed immediately, but are put in a pending status.

All players will be placed on Waivers at the start of games every Sunday afternoon, at 12:55 PM ET during the course of the NFL season. If there are NFL games scheduled for Thursday or Saturday, only the players from those teams will be placed on Waivers five (5) minutes prior to the start of their respective games.

Any player that is new to the player pool will be placed on Waivers, and subject to the league's Waiver process.

The Waiver process allows multiple teams to request the same players. Most weeknights between midnight and 6:00:00 AM ET, NFL.com will process all of the pending requests. The order in which these requests are processed is based on the **Waiver Rank** of each team. The table below lists when an NFL player is on **Waivers** and for how long.

Trades

Trade Deadline

Throughout the season, owners can trade players with other teams. In an effort to keep the integrity of the league, a deadline for trades will be imposed at 11:59:59 PM ET Tuesday, 11/17/2009. No trades will be allowed after that time. Any trades accepted by two parties before the deadline will be subject to the trade approval process.

Trade Approval Process

In an effort to prevent collusion among owners, and to ensure fair competition, a trade approval process is used. After two owners agree to a trade, it will be in pending status for at least 24 hours. If four (4) owners in your league object to the trade within the pending time period, the trade will not be executed, but will go to the Commissioner for evaluation. Example: a trade made at 5:00 PM Tuesday will not execute before 5:00 PM Wednesday at the earliest, assuming four owners do not object before then.

All trades between owners must be made **at least 24 hours before** the first game day of the week and not be disputed by four owners in order to be effective for the current week. If four (4) owners object to a trade, the Commissioner can overrule the objection. But if such objection is not overruled at least 24 hours before the first game day of the week the trade may not be made effective until the following week.

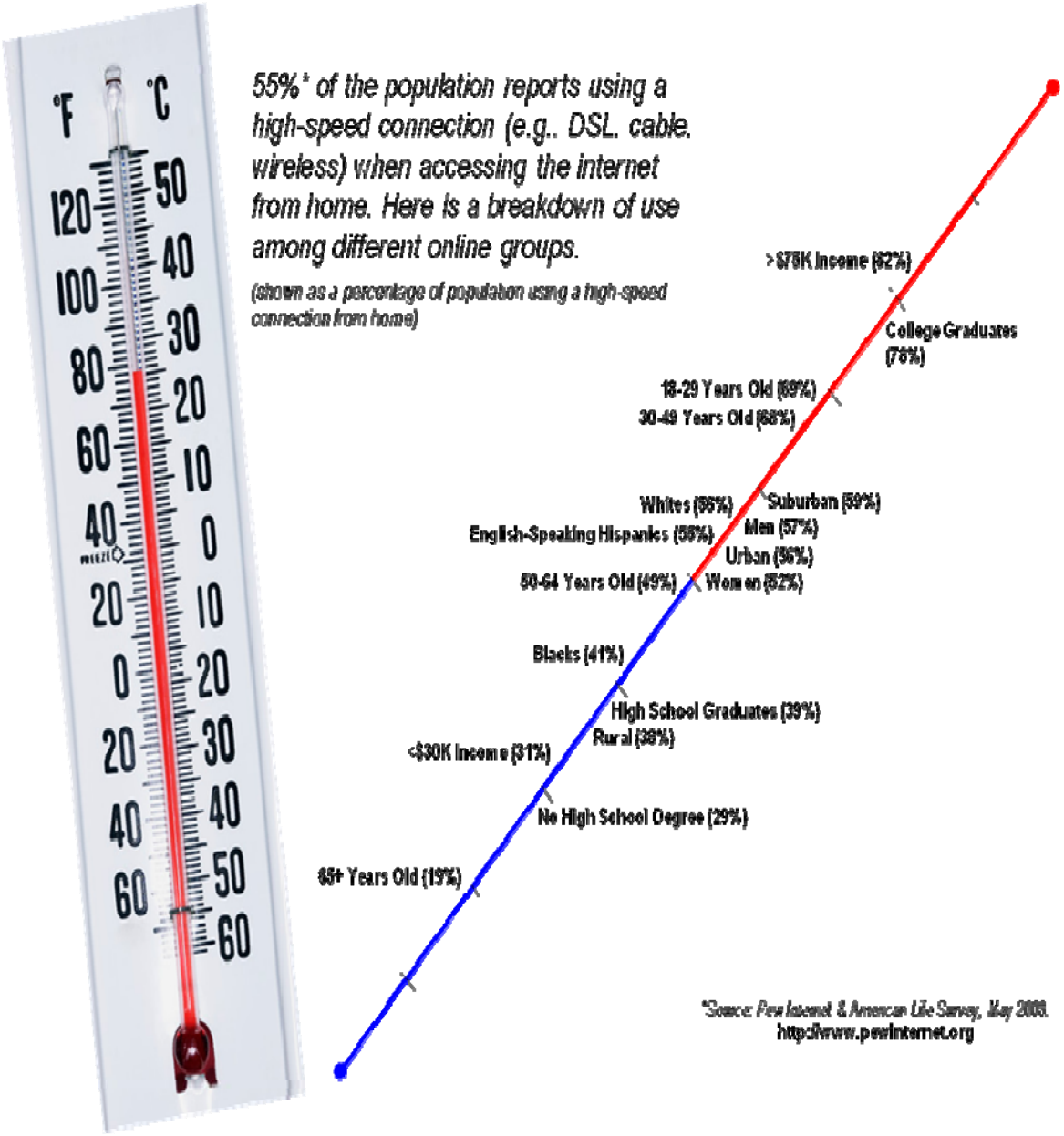
If you make a trade offer, be sure to monitor the status of that offer (on the **My Team, Trade** page) as the weekly lineup deadline approaches, to ensure that acceptance of that trade does not cause your team to have an illegal lineup for the current week's games.

Multi-player Trades

Owners can enter unbalanced multi-player trades such as a 3 player for 1 player trade. A trade that results in an illegal roster will be allowed; however, you will be required to enter the necessary transactions to correct your roster before your lineup is due for the coming week. If your roster is not legal by the weekly deadline, you will receive zero points for that particular week.

APPENDIX B

PEW INTERNET & AMERICAN LIFE SURVEY MAY 2008



APPENDIX C

Sports Illustrated Fantasy Football 2009 Special Edition - Front Cover

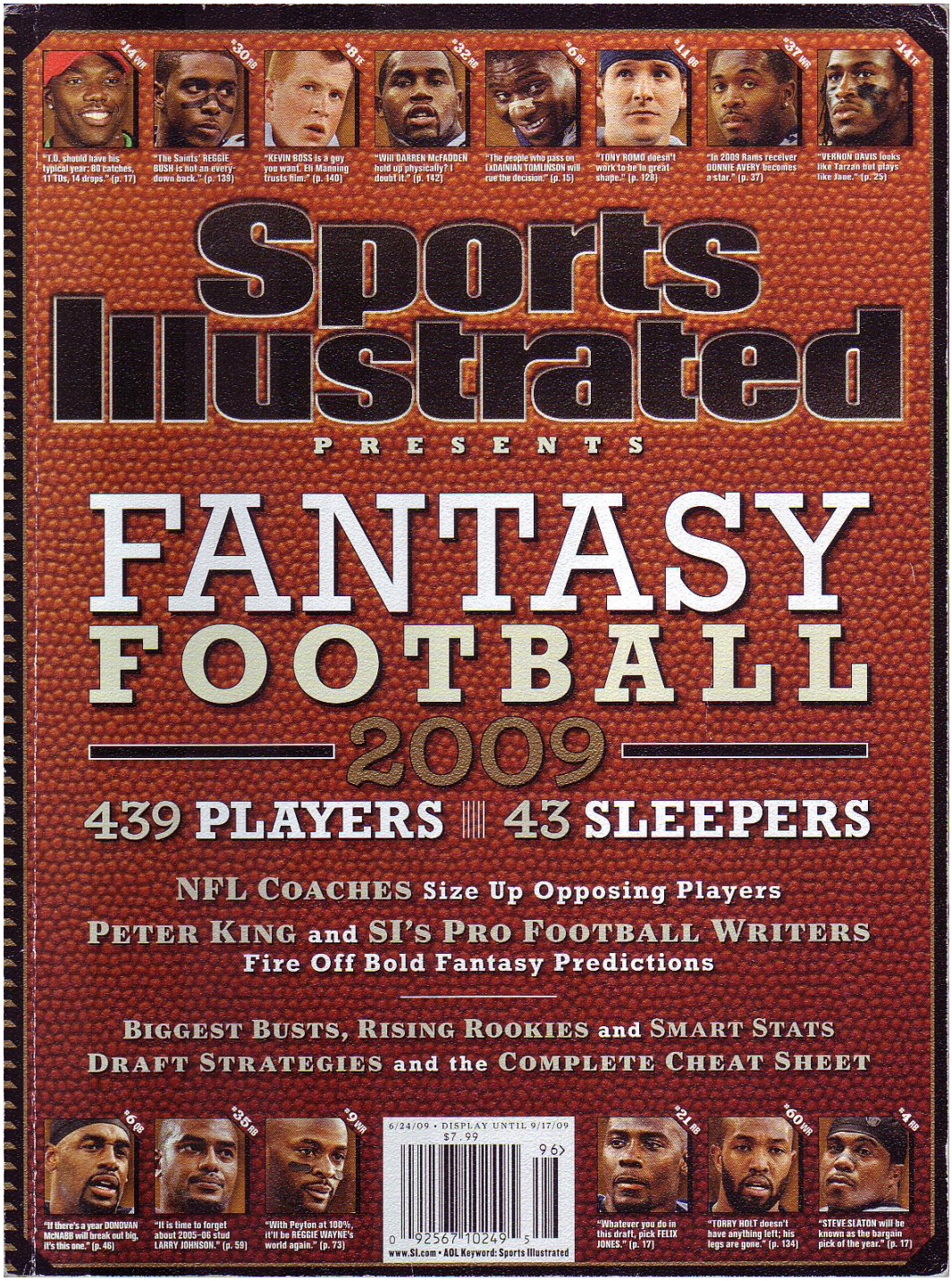


TABLE 1

2009 *SPORTS ILLUSTRATED* FS PLAYERS BY RACE

Position	Non-Black	Black	TOTAL	% Black
Quarterbacks	44 11		55	20%
Running Backs	2 83		85	98%
Wide Receivers	10 95		105	90%
Tight Ends	17 18		35	51%
Kickers	25 0		25	0%

Table1. This table reflects the racial breakdown of the players ranked in the *Sports Illustrated* Fantasy Football 2009 special edition.

VITA

VITA

Stephanie Rene Hill was born on July 11, 1981 in Dover, Delaware. She is the daughter of Christine B. Hill and David W. Hill. After graduating from Caesar Rodney High School in 1999, she attended Howard University and received a Bachelors of Arts degree in communications. In 2005, Stephanie returned to Howard University and later received a Master's of Science in Sports Management.

Stephanie came to University of Tennessee in 2007. Stephanie was awarded the University of Tennessee Diversity Enhancement Fellowship in 2007 and later earned the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) Dissertation Year Fellowship. While in graduate school she was a graduate teaching assistant in the Department of Exercise, Sport and Leisure Studies. Stephanie also held a position in the Office of Minority of Student Affairs and was the administrative coordinator of the UT Project GRAD Summer Institute. She was awarded a doctor of philosophy degree in exercise sport with a concentration in sport sociology in May of 2010.