

3 Militarized Sporting Spectacle

The Post-9/11 Patriarchal Body Politic

As argued in the previous chapter, the sporting spectacles that took place in the immediate aftermath of 9/11 appropriated US corporo-political needs, opining a myopic expression of American jingoism, militarism, and geopolitical domination that provided citizens with the tools through which to make sense of 9/11. Importantly, and even though emotive, affective, and thus highly pedagogic and political texts, these expressions of nation were also part of the commercial production process. That is, embedded within a spectacular society, these texts were commodities that deployed the power to shape national identities and subjectivities (Giroux, 2000b; Hall, 1997). Such a conglomeration of ‘needs’—political, corporate, militarized, economic—points to the ways in which we are seduced and incorporated into discursive systems and materialisms directed both by the state and transnational capital in the interactions between nationalism and popular culture (cf. Giardina, 2005; McCarthy et al., 2005; Prideaux, 2009). In this regard, national symbols, myths, and memories were deployed through the strategies of transnational corporations—elsewhere I have termed these corporate nationalisms (see Silk, Andrews, & Cole, 2005)—which point to the relative power to convey or stage ‘nation’ (no matter how superficial or erroneous). In the staging, or manipulation, of ‘nation’ in the interests of capital, it is possible to point to the role of the (sporting) body that ‘mattered’ in the post-9/11 moment. In an extension and critique of Bryman’s (2004) concept of Disneyization, Andrews (2006) proposed that it is the sporting body that is most important to hypercommercial sporting spectacle. For Andrews (2006), the narrativized sporting spectacle is only as compelling to a viewing audience as the emotive objects—bodies—that provide the focus of highly personalized storylines. As such, Andrews (2006) emphasized the primacy of emotional labor in the sporting spectacle, suggesting that the sporting body exhibits what are perceived to be engaging (commercially desirable) personas—to which could be added engaging neoliberal, neoconservative, militarized, and thus highly political, functional, and productive bodies. As such, sporting organizations have “conjured forth a phantasmagorical world of embodied identities and narratives incorporating tropes routinely associated with the experiential sweep of human

existence (triumph and tragedy, falling and redemption, success and failure, heroism and villainy)” (Andrews, 2006, pp. 99–100). Given the confluence of interests—commercial, state, military, sporting—in the constitution of sporting bodies that could most “successfully interpellate the subjectivities of sufficient swathes of the consuming populace” (Andrews, 2006, p. 99), I turn in this chapter to the ways in which the sporting popular in the post-9/11 era offered a rigid, fixed, and narrow definition of who and what constituted an American after 9/11, compelling political and pedagogic discourses that clearly indicated who did and did not matter to and for America in the immediate aftermath of 9/11. I begin through locating these corporeal representations of America within a rapid neoliberalization of politics / society and militarization of culture prior to turning to a number of examples in the sporting popular that served to ‘validate’ a post-9/11 patriarchal body politic.

THE MILITARIZATION OF EVERYDAY LIFE

Henry Giroux (2008) suggested that through the extension of the domain of economics into politics, the neoliberal market rationality now organizes, regulates, and defines the basic principles and workings of the state. As a nebulous phenomenon, neoliberal ‘logics’ organize the individual subject, education systems, cityspaces, neo-imperial ambitions, and political systems (see also Brown, 2006). For Giroux (2000b, 2001a/b, 2003a/b, 2004a/d), neoliberalism has resulted in the death of the social—the war waged on the domestic front that feeds of the general decay of politics, a virulent contempt of social needs, the destruction of a liberal political order, a growing culture of surveillance, inequality, and cynicism, and a growing dislike for all things public, social, and collective under the power, influence, and spread of neoliberalism. Over the last 20 years, and indeed with far deeper roots, and in the face of crippling post-industrial poverty, the American populace has had to contend with the massive retrenchment of social welfare sensibilities and programs wrought by the emergence of a neoliberal hegemony that has come to frame all aspects of American life (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2001; Giroux, 2005b/c; McMurria, 2008). This is a superficially depoliticized ‘more government’ that masks and contains the deleterious social consequences of neoliberalism (Wacquant, 1999, p. 323) that is being “rolled-out” via new forms of institutional hardware and invasive social policies that are deeply interventionist around ‘social’ issues such as crime, immigration, policing, welfare reform, urban order, surveillance, and community regeneration (Peck & Tickell, 2002). This emergent and active period of “roll-out neoliberalism,” predicated on the technocratic embedding of routines of neoliberal governance, the extension of neoliberal institutions, and the erosion of pockets of political and institutional resistance, has meant that particular attention needs to be directed towards the

“purposeful construction and consolidation of neoliberalized state forms, modes of governance, and regulatory relations” (Peck & Tickell, 2002, p. 384). This is not necessarily less government, but *different* government (Peck, 2003), a contextual embeddedness of neoliberalism that has stressed the recriminalization of poverty, the normalization of contingent work, and its active enforcement through welfare retrenchment, workfare programming, and active employment policies—strategies to reproduce regimes of precarious work and mobilize the poor for work readiness—that discipline, incarcerate, intervene, and increase social surveillance of those outside of market discipline (Peck & Tickell, 2002). Even though the doses vary, the basic prescription for this new “neoliberal” governance is the same: purge the system of obstacles to the functioning of free markets; celebrate the virtues of individualism (recast social problems as individual problems, such as drug use, obesity, inadequate health-insurance) and competitiveness; foster economic self sufficiency; abolish or weaken social programs; include those marginalized (often by this shift in the role of government) or the poor into the labor market, on the market’s terms (such as through the workfare scheme); and criminalize the homeless and the urban poor (subject this population to curfew orders, increased surveillance, or “zero-tolerance” policing) (Giroux, 2005b; Peck, 2003; Rose, 1999a/b, 2000). This has led to a bifurcation of the social formation, characterized by the extension of the penal code, the deinstitutionalization of the prison-industrial complex, and the widespread dissemination of a rhetoric of fear. In this way, those who are different, those who threaten the ‘normative universality’ of market rationalities, are increasingly subject to measures that will secure the extension, maintenance, reproduction, and management of the consequences of market rule (Peck, 2003). In essence, these arrangements speak to the re-invention of government, rather than disappearance of government (see Peck, 2003) which entails a greater reliance on the privatization and personalization of welfare as the state entrusts pastoralism to private entities (including media) and emphasizes that citizens are not only active, but also enterprising in the pursuit of their own empowerment and well-being (Ouellette & Hay, 2008a). For Giroux (2008, p. 58), then, and throughout the globe, the “forces of neoliberalism are on the march, dismantling the historically guaranteed social provisions provided by the welfare state, defining profit-making as the essence of democracy, imposing rapacious free-trade agreements, saturating non-economic spheres with market rationalities and equating freedom with the unrestricted ability of markets.”

Even though both militarism and neoliberalism have a long history in the US, the symbiotic relationship into which they have entered and the way in which this authoritarian ideology has become normalized constitute a distinct historical moment (Giroux, 2008). That is, in the post-9/11 moment, the ‘logics’ of neoliberalism produce a growing culture / spectacle of fear and surveillance at ‘home’ (e.g. through the blurring of the distinctions between the prison and the public school) and, through the imposition of

market values and ‘democracy’ on developing nations, position powerful nations (such as the US) as the legitimate defenders of capitalism (Giroux, 2008). In this regard, and as war became the dominant leitmotif of the new millennium, the post-9/11 world has become characterized by a “weaponized” neoliberalism that promotes high-intensity warfare abroad, one that is replicated in low-intensity warfare at home (Giroux, 2008, p. 58).

Even though there are synergies between neoliberalism and militarization evident in a range of diverse institutions and organizations—increasing surveillance and control mechanisms in most institutions in society, schools with ‘zero-tolerance policies,’ policing strategies that crush dissent, and so on—it is the ‘discursive process’ (Giroux, 2004a) of militarization that is of most interest in this text. For rather than the hard-core military industrial complex—weaponry, increase in army size, military technologies, Halliburton, and so on—what is of interest is how the *values of militarization have become part of the sporting popular*; neoliberalism and militarism produce particular views of the world and mobilize an array of pedagogical practices in a variety of sites in order to legitimate their related modes of governance, subject positions, forms of citizenship, and rationality (Ferguson and Turnbull, 1999). In this sense, even though the ever-expanding militarized neoliberal state, marked by the interdependence of finance capital and authoritarian order, is a vast war machine that stresses military-oriented measures over social programs like health care, it is also a ‘culture of force’ that serves as a powerful pedagogical force that shapes our everyday lives and memories (Giroux, 2004a, 2008; Newfield, 2006). Thus, as a discursive process, militarization is as much about “a shift in general societal beliefs and values in ways necessary to legitimate the use of force, the organization of large standing armies and their leaders, and the higher taxes or tribute used to pay for them. Militarization is intimately connected not only to the obvious increase in the size of armies and resurgence of militant nationalisms and militant fundamentalisms but also to the less visible *deformation* of human potentials into the hierarchies of race, class, gender, and sexuality, and to the shaping of national histories in ways that glorify and legitimate military action. Unlike the old style of militarization in which civil authority is made subordinate to military authority, the new ethos of militarization is organized to engulf the entire social order, legitimizing its values as a central rather than peripheral aspect of American public life” (Giroux, 2004a, p. 211, emphasis added; see also Lutz, 2002). Following Mariscal (2003, in Giroux, 2004a), this is the diffusion of military values to a wide variety of cultural locations, a process that allows such values to permeate the very fabric of everyday life. In this sense, the underlying values of the military, social relations, ideologies, and its hypermasculine aesthetic become normalized and spread to other areas of everyday life: citizens spy on ‘suspicious-looking’ people in their neighborhoods and on public transport systems, flags appear in the windows of domestic and commercial premises, on lapels, cars, and so on, and the

values and aesthetic of militarization become evident in a wide variety of pedagogical sites and cultural venues, including video games, Hollywood films, children's toys, and clothing (cf. Boggs & Pollard, 2006; Giroux, 2004a; Ivie, 2007; Stahl, 2006). In this regard, and following Butterworth and Moskal (2009, p. 412), far from being contained to the actual armed forces, militarism functions discursively: "especially in the years following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, an aggressive foreign policy rhetoric—the 'Bush Doctrine' is grounded on the presumption that preventive military action is justifiable—has been reinforced by popular culture discourses that affirm and celebrate the violence of warfare." Further, as Butterworth (2007) strongly argued, sport was one of the key cultural resources that then-president George W. Bush used to rhetorically justify the military response to 9/11; sport is an especially persuasive vehicle for sustaining and extending the culture of militarism and is "implicated in a structural relationship between government, the military, and entertainment industries to the extent that it has become functionally impossible to live outside the rhetorical production of war" (Butterworth and Moskal, 2009, pp. 412–413).

THE MILITARIZATION OF SPORTING LIFE

Perhaps intensified after the rupture of 9/11, the rhetorical production of war (at least in the US) is increasingly being played out in the sporting popular. That is, sport has been thrust into the contemporary lexicon of consensus within which the taken-for-granted militarization of everyday life as an uncontested terrain—it is a central component of the organic success of the Right, which has insidiously operationalized and mobilized particular agendas with little dissent. Indeed, sport has been internally mobilized within the US as a central symbolic tool in the contemporary totalitarian regime's "Orwellian" theater of misrepresentation and propaganda (Denzin, 2004a). Sport can no longer be relegated as an accident of academic interrogation; within the post-9/11 neoliberal and militarized US, I am arguing that the sporting popular is a particularly 'lustrous' focal point in the politicization and militarization of culture and institutionalization of a tyrannical morality. In the immediate aftermath of 9/11 (and indeed in the years since), and joining other corporatized renditions of military values and ideology, sport became entrenched within the machinations of the Bush administration's rhetorics on declarative truth and the threats posed by 'terrorists' to democracy, freedom and 'the American way of life'. (Denzin, 2004). As such, the sporting popular serves as a highly affective space, one that has clearly been appropriated and mobilized in the US corporo-political-military trajectories of the post-9/11 era. As Butterworth and Moskal (2009) have argued, mediated sport, alongside other elements of popular culture, has been a central rhetorical strategy used to aid in the

construction of a world divided by “us” and “them,” in the production of accusations of torture in Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay, in the discipline of American citizens to accept a perpetual state of fear and surveillance (see also Altheide, 2006), and in the marginalization of any form of political dissent. Further, the discursive functioning of militarism in the years following 9/11 has been central to the Bush Doctrine, popular culture has become a central space in which discourses are produced that “affirm and celebrate the violence of warfare” (Butterworth & Moskal, 2009, p. 412), such that it “normalizes war, rendering it habitual, seemingly rational, and largely immune to challenge” (Ivie, 2007, p. 204, in Butterworth & Moskal, 2009).

The “deep entanglements” (King, 2008) between sport, George W. Bush’s ‘policy’ initiatives and public relations exercises, commercial ventures, and the military have a long-established historical grounding. The emergence of baseball as a ‘national pastime’ during the American Civil War—complete with a supposed pedagogical / political role in spheres as diverse as producing healthy bodies, assimilating immigrants, returning city dwellers back to nature, facilitating the development of a functional labor force—and as a symbol of reunification (see Dyerson, 1999; Radar, 2004; Riess, 1995; Tygiel, 1997) was further established through a militarized rhetoric realized through the execution of military drill by players during World War I, the establishment of the practice of playing the Star Spangled Banner in advance of the opening pitch during World War II (subsequently adopted throughout sport in the US), through to the more contemporary visits by players to service personnel stationed overseas, military appreciation events, and through sponsorship of the Welcome Back Veterans charity (Butterworth & Moskal, 2009). Indeed, as Butterworth (2007) suggested, it is commonplace for popular and political discourses to conflate sport and war, for sports to depend on the language of warfare, or for military personnel to invoke sporting terminology. Indeed, sport in the US, perhaps especially football, deploys an affective militarized language, one in which “quarterback heroes throw bombs under the orders of generals who devise game strategies in war rooms; defensive warriors seek to blitz the offensive line; a series of completed passes constitutes an aerial attack; and tied games result in sudden death overtime” (King, 2008, p. 529; see also Jansen & Sabo, 1994). The rhetorical coupling between sport and the military seem particularly pronounced during wartime; Whitney Houston’s rendition of the national anthem prior to Super Bowl XXV in the context of the 1991 Gulf War serves as a particularly poignant example. Yet, as Butterworth and Moskal (2009) proposed, it is in the wake of 9/11, in a moment of seemingly ‘perpetual war,’ that the blurring of sport and war has found additional strength. Even though there may have been a voluntary moratorium on the conflation of sport / war metaphors by the media in the immediate aftermath of 9/11—replaced by a narrative of ‘lost innocence’ and the ‘healing’ power of sport—it was not long before sport

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in the post-9/11 moment became conflated with the rhetoric of a ‘war-consumed state’ (King, 2008, p. 529). Indeed, building on Burstyn (1999), the post-9/11 military / sport rhetorical coupling serves to further emphasize the celebration of the masculine body politic and identifies war, and thus sport, as male preserves (see also Scherer & Koch, 2010). To substantiate and elaborate on these initial observations, I turn to a number of telling events and initiatives in the post-9/11 period that provide testimony to the militarization of sporting culture and the emergence of a ‘preferred’ *post-9/11 patriarchal body politic*. In so doing, I join the chorus of critical scholars—especially Michael Butterworth, Josh Newman, Michael Giardina, Samantha King, and Kyle Kusz—whose work I draw on heavily below, in exposing and fighting against the ideologies of militarization and the ways in which it acts to constitute the US as a military state while at the same time undermining crucial social programs, constitutional liberties, and valuable public spaces (Roy, 2004). I begin through addressing perhaps the most explicit state-corporate-sporting coupling, the Bell Helicopter Armed Forces Bowl. To do so, I draw heavily on the excellent reading of this event offered by Michael Butterworth and Stormi Moskal (2009). Following this, I turn to the work of those scholars who have exposed the ascendancy afforded to particular bodies—those that are functional and productive in the militarized neoliberal state—in the sporting popular. Drawing on the work of Michael Giardina, Josh Newman, Samantha King, and Kyle Kusz, attention is given to the valorization of former NFL footballer turned soldier Pat Tillman, the cultural politics of NASCAR (and its emotional laborers), and pathologization of the abject, unproductive, and dysfunctional citizen / corpus.

ESPN, Bell Helicopter-Textron, & the Armed Forces Bowl

It might be an impossibility to locate a more overt, and troublesome, example of the militarization of sporting culture and the apparent ‘natural’ relationship between sport, corporate, and military interests. In 2006, media behemoth ESPN, Bell Helicopter-Textron, First Command Financial Services, and officials from the annual Bowl game in Fort Worth, Texas, conspired to create the Armed Forces Bowl. Michael Butterworth and Stormi Moskal (2009) offered an intricate reading of the event (the 2006 incarnation), suggesting that audiences are sold, through the Bowl, an image of national identity that depends on war, an image that relies on the logic of corporate sponsorship to normalize the presence of military spectacle. Butterworth & Moskal (2009, p. 417) revealed how the production of this entertainment spectacle—sponsored by a military hardware manufacturer, supported by Department of Defense initiatives to “support the troops,” and broadcast by the self-proclaimed “world wide leader” in sports, ESPN—“masks the violent realities of war and exploits the members of the U.S. military as a means for justifying corporate-military expansion and defusing critiques

of military policies.” Through the incorporation of ‘fun’—such as the fan-fest exhibition featuring armored vehicles, tanks, helicopters, simulation machines, recruiting booths, military demonstrations, flyovers, the performance of a military band, and so on—and the incorporation of service personnel into the event itself (including a halftime enlistment ceremony, the introduction of players by military personnel, and a videotaped message from General David Petraeus, Commander of the Multi-National Forces in Iraq), the spectacle both further embedded the machinery of the military within the culture of sport and served to dismiss the seriousness of warfare (Butterworth & Moskal, 2009). There are many exceptionally troubling elements in this coupling; at this juncture I would like to draw out three central concerns.

First, despite the articulation of sport, corporatism, and the military—manifest in spray-painted advertisements for “Textron Systems” and “America Supports You,” the consistent mention of “Bell Helicopter” as sponsor, commercials for various branches of the military—the corporate sponsorship of the game was deemphasized; instead “sponsorship” was replaced with an invitation to support those idealized expressions of American identity: the troops (Butterworth & Moskal, 2009). Indeed, following this line of argument, the product for sale through this event was acceptance of the offer to support the troops—through appropriate acts of citizenship and consumption and, indeed, “tacit support” for an organization (Bell Helicopters) that profits from sending troops to war (Butterworth & Moskal, 2009, p. 420).

Second, and building on an acceptance that ties citizenship to military support, there is an exceptionally worrisome trend—although perhaps not that surprising given Giroux (2008) suggested that the university is a militarized knowledge factory within the broader context of *the biopolitics of militarization*—towards the use of college football as a site of military recruitment. As Butterworth and Moskal (2009) outlined, the Army alone spends \$1.5 billion per year on places and products—high schools, shopping malls, videogames such as America’s Army—to capture youth recruitment (see also Rutherford, 2005; Winseck, 2008). In the Armed Forces Bowl, the conflation of sport, the military, and the university was normalized through the incorporation and display of military hardware (although even this hardware was ‘softened’ given no comments were offered on how such hardware was actually used in warfare) and military personnel. Butterworth and Moskal’s (2009) reading of the event suggested that active members of the military were easily folded into the narrative of the event: Brigadier General Tod Wolters’ introduction of starters for the game directly from the cockpit of an F-22 jet, the induction of new recruits during halftime, and a ‘message’ from General David Petraeus during the halftime show that emphasized the magnificent job of US forces overseas and an expression of gratitude for the support given by members of the crowd / television audience. With Butterworth and Moskal (2009), these rhetorical strategies served to justify US

policy through recognition of, and support for, the ‘magnificent’ work of idealized military citizens; in turn this left no space for any questioning of the morality or necessity of the actual work being conducted overseas. Such questioning would, simply, not “constitute the proper limits for American citizenship” (Butterworth & Moskal, 2009, p. 427).

Third, and finally, Butterworth and Moskal (2009) pointed to the way in which Petraeus’ message equated the ‘War on Terror’ with World War II through reference to the men and women of the Armed Forces as “America’s new, greatest generation” (as with Fox’s revision of Aaron Copland’s *Lincoln Portrait* referred to in the previous chapter). Such deference to the nobility of the ordinary heroes of World War II—no matter how mythologized in popular texts such as *Saving Private Ryan*, *Band of Brothers*, *Pearl Harbor*, or *The Pacific*—draws on a nationally defining moment that evoked resilience and unity against a common foe. It framed the contemporary narratives of war and anger with the deployment of history ‘lessons’ as the metaphor through which the current world should be viewed (see Winfield et al., 2002). Through superimposing contemporary concerns (the War on Terror) onto reconstructed versions of the past (the Greatest Generation), these narratives are mythologies that simplify and dramatize the nation’s past and its place in the world, elucidating its contemporary meaning through (re)constructing its past (Bell, 2003). Much like the rhetorical deployment of the Blitz following the 7/7 terror attacks on London’s underground system (see Falcous & Silk, 2010), these narratives imagined American unity and an external enemy, an important continuity deployed in the present. Further, they acted as an important national myth that gave a point of origin and an idea that we are a common community, travelling through history together (Stephens, 2007). As Gilroy (2004) noted in relation to the continual revision of the Blitz in England, such rhetorical strategizing acts as a model of commonality, a dominant trope through which to understand contemporary national ‘struggle.’ Following this reasoning, as Butterworth and Moskal (2009) suggested, the reference to the Greatest Generation is far more than a simple historic touchstone, it is a rhetoric of identification that sutures the past to the present and makes an appeal to a foundational unity, a nationalist narrative that asks citizens to actively support and participate in the recovery of a lost moment of apparent harmony (Stephens, 2007).

The Post-9/11 Patriarchal Body Politic: Sport, Sacrifice, & Media Spectacle

On April 22nd, 2004, Pat Tillman, a 27-year-old former safety with the Arizona Cardinals who famously turned down a US \$3.6 million NFL contract in 2002 to enlist in the army, was killed in Afghanistan. Initially, it was claimed by US Army Special Operations command that he was killed in action, after which he was posthumously promoted and awarded a Silver

Star; however, it was subsequently revealed that Tillman had died from 'friendly fire' (see King, 2008; Kusz, 2007). The subsequent media spectacle surrounding his death, as well as the initial efforts to cover up the details of his death, points to a quite telling mythologizing and humanizing of the relatively faceless (dehumanized) military personnel in Iraq and Afghanistan (manifest for example in the Bush administration's ban on media images of dead American soldiers returning in coffins; see Kusz, 2007). Indeed, as Butterworth (2008, p. 321) suggested, no other sporting narrative in the post-9/11 period better symbolizes the multiple contradictions of the Bush administration, pointing to the ways in which his death was represented as a "condensed symbol of American heroism and sacrifice." Tillman was lauded by a rampant American media, eulogized and valorized as an athlete (despite being under-sized and thus having to work 'even harder'), as an ultimate American who gave up his career to serve his country, and as a principled, ambitious, humble, and unassuming hero—as *USA Today* proposed, "the best of our nation" (Kusz, 2007). Despite being somewhat non-conformist (he was his own man, he had long-hair, he liked to debate, his friends and some male family members drank beers while giving speeches at his funeral, his wife was absent), he was depicted as the "embodiment of the ethos of carpe diem" (Kusz, 2007, p. 85).

In his hometown of San Jose, his funeral service, televised live on ESPN and hosted by "testosterone infused" (Kusz, 2007, p. 84) sports talk personality Jim Rome, included speakers Senator John McCain as well as Maria Shriver, who read a tribute from her husband, then-California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger (King, 2008). Further, a scholarship in his name was announced at Lincoln Law School in San Jose, his high school named their football field after him, the Arizona Cardinals and Arizona State retired his number, the NFL devoted \$250,000 to the United Services Organizations in his memory, the Arizona Cardinals renamed the square surrounding their new stadium the Pat Tillman Freedom Plaza (King, 2008), and a number of other tributes, including uniform decals, naming of tunnels, bridges, a foundation, an iPhone app, and a running event, surfaced in his name. Indeed, as King (2008) pointed out, in contra-distinction to normal policy, even the White House acknowledged a casualty of war when it released a statement calling Tillman an inspiration both on and off the football field. Not to miss a trick, and building on the themes of heroism and sacrifice that surrounded Tillman's death, Fox further exploited his death by incorporating Marie Tillman, his widow, in the reading of the Declaration of Independence that formed part of their Super Bowl coverage at Super Bowl XLII (see chapter 2). Appearing by the statue that memorializes her husband, she read, "We mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes," with the sentence being completed by NFL running back LaDainian Tomlinson, who concluded, "and our sacred honor" (Butterworth, 2008). As Butterworth (2008, p. 321) argued, in memorializing Tillman for making the ultimate sacrifice, the coverage "served as a metonym for all of the . . . Americans who have died [near

6,000 at the time of writing] in the “war on terror,” echoing the common refrain, “You shall not have died in vain.”

Drawing on the work of Kyle Kusz, the media spectacle surrounding Tillman’s ‘sacrifice’ operates as a symbol of wounded (white) America. Kusz (2007) argued that Tillman is represented as both an American underdog and a white, masculine American ideal: for even though he was “slightly different” (a nonconformist, non-establishment “wild-man”), he was memorialized as “everyman”—a cultural embodiment of the celebration of dominant American mythologies and the revival of conventional patriarchal masculinity. Importantly, following Kusz (2007), the valorized white, male patriarchal body politic is juxtaposed with the demonization of the black (sporting) body. As Kusz (2007, p. 86) argued, the spectacle made of Tillman’s “heroic sacrifice produces (and is produced out of) a subtle and strategically coded racial hierarchy where his patriotism, heroism, and articulation as ‘the ultimate American’ are predicated on the defining of African-American male athletes as selfish, greedy symbols of American excess. This twin celebration of virtuous White male athletes such as Tillman (or Andre Agassi or Lance Armstrong) and demonization of self-centered Black male athletes such as Terrell Owens (or Mike Tyson or Kobe Bryant) is a discourse of White anxiety and resentment, where White fans’ anger and discontent over a loss of White dominance on America’s national sport stages silently echoes through a seemingly nonracial discussion of the deficient values, honor, and morality of contemporary ballplayers compared to players from ‘the good ole days.’” In this regard, Tillman is represented as the most ideal of neoliberal citizens, one who made the ultimate sacrifice through death; indeed, his choice to serve was framed to erase the labor of those who have less choice to enter military service, namely the poor, African-American, disposable populations so over-represented in both professional sport and the military (King, 2008). In this sense, these narratives actually work to mask white privilege. That is, as Kusz (2007) argued, through representing Tillman as one who shunned the spotlight and the socially and privileged lifestyle associated with being a professional athlete—one who, it was reported, arrived at training camp on a bike and wearing flip-flops—it was easy to juxtapose him with the everyday discursive assaults on black masculinity (selfishness, greed, lack of discipline) regularly expressed in American sports media culture. Samantha King (2008, p. 532), for example, points to the “racial logic that structures the American public’s love-hate relationship with professional Black male athletes and its often self-righteous and duplicitous critique of their supposedly brattish behavior and outlandish lifestyles” (see also Andrews, 1995; Andrews & Silk, 2010; Leonard & King, 2011).

Professional sport, especially the National Basketball Association (NBA), has become a key space in the commercially inspired representation of blackness. Indeed, these highly spectacularized sporting institutions provide an instructive window into American fascinations and

fears, aspirations and anxieties: the NBA faithfully mirrors the tensions between “Blackophilia” and “Blackophobia” that pervades the contemporary American condition (Yousman, 2003). As Leonard (2006) argued, this amounts to a commercially expedient basketball *ghettocentrism*, realized through the strategic promotional mobilization of what are stereotypical signifiers of the urban African-American experience and associated aesthetics (including socio-spatial location, family history and constitution, preferences for particular cultural practices, forms of attire, music, hair style, and modes of verbal and nonverbal communication) (Andrews & Silk, 2010). This prevailing *ghettocentric* logic, and the associated mobilization of a black urban imaginary, offers both highly commercialized and highly politicized cultural metaphors framing the manner in which African-Americans (and African-American males in particular) are represented and understood in contemporary American culture (Andrews & Silk, 2010). Of course, because prominent African-American NBA players become commercially crafted “metonymic personifications” (Maharaj, 1999, p. 228) of the ‘street,’ they mark it as a place of racial authenticity and consumer desire. As they do so, their imaged personas are responsible for the re-inscription of historically grounded, biologically and culturally essentialized discourses of race and racial difference onto the bodies of those who remain bound by their socio-spatial location (Andrews & Silk, 2010). The carefully managed ghettocentrism of basketball culture thus mirrors the pernicious neoliberalism expounded by the mainstream American cinema, where “films imagine American ghettos as places where individual choices/failures, and not the state/policy/racism, has the greatest impact. That is, individuals hold the responsibility to change their own lives toward securing the American Dream” (Leonard, 2006, p. 24). In this regard, portrayals of black American athletes as threats to ‘traditional’ American values and as some of the most ungrateful, over-privileged, and unpatriotic Americans in post-9/11 America works to reinforce the subtle modes of contemporary cultural racism expressed in the meanings attributed to Tillman: the idealized neoliberal American citizen is connected to, and depends on, specific, demonic representations of African-American athletes (Kusz, 2007). Indeed, it is necessary to examine the sociocultural processes involved in the production and reproduction of white privilege to fully understand the social production of racism and systemic racial inequalities; that is, it is necessary to contemplate the racial meanings expressed through the stories about Pat Tillman with those of African-American athletes (Kusz, 2007).

Samantha King (2008) discussed the representation of two African-American athletes in the context of Tillman’s death. The first, Kellen Winslow, then (November 2003) a University of Miami footballer and now playing for the NFL’s Tampa Bay Buccaneers, was critiqued in the media for equating being a footballer to war and suggesting that he was “out to kill,” that he was a “fucking soldier.” In May 2003, the NBA’s Kevin Garnett (then of the Minnesota Timberwolves), similarly deployed a series

of military metaphors—based mostly on use of specific weaponry such as grenades, missile launchers, M-16s, and Uzis—to describe his readiness for war (in the form of an upcoming play-off game). Both players were castigated by the media; “the overwhelming response was to lambaste Winslow and Garnett as ignorant, spoiled celebrities who play games for a living and who thus have no concept of the harsh reality of war” (King, 2008, p. 531). Both players subsequently issued markedly similar apologies that centered on respect for those serving in the armed forces. However, Winslow and Garnett were quickly admonished by a predominantly white media which made visible, and thus subject to suspicion, the demand for compensation for their labor (King, 2008). That is, the adoration for African-American athletes “coexists alongside a thinly veiled discourse that constructs these stars as overpaid thugs who are unable to handle the rewards of middle- or upper-class existence and whose lives off the field thus comprise an endless cycle of bar brawls, drug stings, attempted sexual assaults, paternity suits, and domestic violence charges” (King, 2008, p. 532). Put differently, whereas white desires for economic privilege were masked (e.g. through the response to Tillman), black desires were portrayed as all consuming: complexly, “these stories work to mask White privilege. They do so by projecting socioeconomic privilege onto Black male athlete-celebrities while forwarding White athletes as disinterested in wealth. As a consequence, professional sport subtly appears as a space where the reversal of the racial order has taken place, where Whites appear less privileged and Blacks seem to possess all the power and ‘bling.’” (Kusz, 2007 p. 86). In this regard, following Kusz (2007), Tillman’s white masculinity was coded as deserving mass admiration precisely because it was cast as the “inverse of the much-maligned greedy, over-privileged, selfish pro athlete of the contemporary American sporting world” (Kusz, 2007, p. 85).

The Cultural Politics of the Post-9/11 NASCAR Nation

Haridakis & Hugenberg (2009) suggested that the relationship between NASCAR and the US Military after 9/11 is without a parallel in US history. Historically ground in a distinctly southern aesthetic and rooted in moonshine runs during prohibition, NASCAR has morphed to become the archetypal neoliberal corporate sport (Newman & Giardina, 2010). The sport has grown from a purely southeastern US phenomenon to a national ‘pastime.’ Even though there were informal links between the military and NASCAR during and in the aftermath of World War II, the relationship has become more pronounced since 9/11 (Haridakis & Hugenberg, 2009). In addition to sponsorship of racecars, teams, and drivers by every branch of the military, recruitment has become embedded within the sport: from military themed interactive displays and activities (such as going on a virtual patrol of Baghdad, shooting at insurgents, riding in a Humvee simulator, fighting in cyberlocales) to a more subtle targeting of ‘influencers’

(moms, dads, aunts, uncles, and so on) through to the incorporation of military technologies on the actual racecars (Haridakis & Hugenberg, 2009). Through understanding NASCAR as all things American and America increasingly as all things NASCAR, Haridakis and Hugenberg (2009, p. 246) suggested that through shared core values, there exists a strong mutually beneficial relationship between the military and NASCAR: “no other sport puts patriotism on display quite like NASCAR. No other sport is as completely sponsor-driven and puts U.S. capitalism on display like NASCAR. And no other sport applauds the military and all things American like NASCAR.” Further, in seeing the two as inseparable, Haridakis & Hugenberg (2009, p. 247) concluded that “NASCAR and the military will continue to do their part to remind Americans that the values that undergird each institution are America’s values and that the Republic for which America stand is truly one nation—indivisible.” Yet, in looking under this corporo-military veneer, it becomes possible to expose many of the taken-for-granted concepts in Haridakis & Hugenberg’s (2009) analysis. Questions remain about whose America is represented, democracy, and civil liberties, whether such core values are American values, and indeed, about the racial politics of this supposedly united nation. Indeed, following Newman & Giardina (2008; also Newman, 2007), a more revelatory analysis of NASCAR is more likely to reveal that the ideologies, wares, and subjective practices that dominate “NASCAR Nation” are those of “a post-9/11 American empire defined by rampant global capitalism under the throws of neoliberalism and a resurgent sociocultural fundamentalism under the auspices of neoconservatism” (Newman & Giardina, 2008, p. 483): a far more divided, and divisive, nation. Newman and Giardina (2010) proposed that cultural and political intermediaries endeavored to systematically reorganize the spectacles of North American stock car racing to reinscribe and re-present the hegemonic order of free-market capitalism (Newman & Giardina, 2010). That is, through suturing political, military, and cultural ‘values’ through NASCAR, in the post-9/11 moment the sport came to represent cultural conservatives’ clearest, and most intentional, attempt to politicize sport and mobilize it as an affective means of generating support for the Bush administration (Kusz, 2007). To understand the complexities of this relationship requires comprehension of the complex interplay between neoliberal economics, neoconservative polity, and a southernized military aesthetic embedded within NASCAR nation.

Newman and Giardina (2008) argued that in George W. Bush’s neoconservative America, the symbolic South has been transformed into cultural tender for reproducing the conditions of production and consumption. That is, the South, in its numerous discursive iterations—of which NASCAR is central and sits alongside the popularity of *The Dukes of Hazzard*, Jessica Simpson, *The Beverly Hillbillies*, Carrie Underwood, and Reese Witherspoon—has been refinanced as the acculturated currency of Bush-era corporate capitalism. Indeed, for Newman and Giardina (2008), the

popularization of the South has provided a highly problematic (in terms of white supremacist biker bars in Kentucky, Confederate flag rallies in South Carolina, and the sprawling plantations of many of Dixie's "genteel elite" spread throughout the region) cultural seedling from which national (and indeed global) hyper-white, hypermasculine, (neo)conservative mediated identities have been sowed, nurtured, and, in terms of political and cultural capital, harvested (Newman & Giardina, 2008).

It was perhaps during the 2004 presidential election campaign that the relationships between NASCAR and the Bush administration were bought into sharpest focus. Newman and Giardina (2010) proposed Bush utilized NASCAR as part of the effort to (re)capture its traditional red state voting bloc. Through deployment of high-profile cabinet members to NASCAR events, and in an effort to create an identity for their political platform (often combined with military-themed extracurricular activities) at which they offered pre-race declarations of Christian fundamentalism (the abolition of affirmative action, increased funding for homeland security, "support" for the troops, and a reentering of middle-class American "family values"), the Republican party sutured itself to NASCAR nation (and its citizenry) (Newman & Giardina, 2010). Bush himself, emblazoned in a black Daytona 500 leather jacket covered with NASCAR insignia, and drawing applause from the 180,000 spectators, headlined the most prestigious race of the season, the Daytona 500, accompanied by Lee Greenwood's rendition of "God Bless America" and flanked by two F-15s and a B-2 stealth bomber overhead (Newman & Giardina, 2010). Indeed, Newman and Giardina (2010) argued that the sport-polity reciprocity between America's political elites and NASCAR executives valorized a Bush-era socioeconomic aesthetic: a normalized and 'harmless' southern heritage-based lexicon of hypermasculinity, heteronormativity, (celebrity) whiteness, consumerism, and militarism.

The key point here, beyond the state-sport-corporate-military coalescence, is that in the post-9/11 period, Bush appropriated NASCAR—with its southern aesthetic, its traditional neoconservative fan base, and its close association with the military—and mobilized it as part of a conservative administration intent on protecting white male privilege and cultural normativity (Kusz, 2007). Put slightly differently, following Newman and Giardina (2008), NASCAR, as a seemingly natural heritage culture, operated as a lingua franca of white masculine privilege and supremacy. That is, in the words of Newman and Giardina (2008, p. 482) "the South' stands for something in contemporary NASCAR: It symbolizes and represents the confluence of a romanticized history of White privilege and a localized (re)mediation of (neo)conservatism. . . . [This is] a new 'Southern-ness' that is constituted by a mélange of time (new identities and old power structures) and space (local subjectivity and global plurality), and whereby the burgeoning sport of stock-car racing currently articulates an Old South cultural vernacular and racialized power structure with more

recently popularized neoconservative identity politics.” Perhaps what makes this power structure even more ‘legitimate’—at least in the eyes of those inculcated into NASCAR nation—is the hyper-Christian neo-conservatism that punctuates the co-articulation between NASCAR and the Bush administration. For, under this discursive convergence of God, the Republican party, and the southern aesthetic, being at a NASCAR event, as revealed through the ethnographic musings of Newman and Giardina (2010), equates to supporting the Bush administration. In this sense, under the recurring themes of the “gospel according to NASCAR” (Newman & Giardina, 2010, p. 1522), “NASCAR fans—conceived of as American citizens—are (positioned) to be ‘*thankful* for the leadership of President Bush’ and for the ‘freedoms we have thanks to homeland security’ and are to pray for the continued luxuries afforded by this ‘American way of life’ without ever questioning it.”

For Kusz (2007), as with his reading of Pat Tillman, NASCAR creates, projects, and celebrates a racially exclusive image of America while simultaneously trying to disavow any white supremacist or white normative intention or racial politics. Kusz (2007) argued that NASCAR is an institutionally racist (and patriarchal) organization, despite proclamations of inclusivity and superficial displays of ‘incorporation’ in publicity materials. Kusz (2007) argued that the intergenerational displays of fathers, sons, and families involved in the sport—which NASCAR implicitly draws on to sell its product—implicitly celebrate the continuity of white patriarchy and serves to position women in supportive roles as wives, girlfriends, and mothers relative to their “boys” (see also Talley & Casper, 2007, for a discussion of Hollywood’s NASCAR parody, *Talladega Nights: The Ballad of Ricky Bobby*). Further, he proposed that superficial racial representation—in, for example, publicity material—is strategically deployed to avoid a deeper, more substantive, and important understanding of racism as institutionalized (Kusz, 2007). That is, for Kusz (2007, p. 82), NASCAR operates as a form of white cultural nationalism that attempts to “bury and obscure their internal racial contradictions, such as the notion that the sport’s history of racial exclusivity and its present-day overwhelming Whiteness have nothing to do with conservatives’ desire to feature it as an American national sport worthy of public support and admiration.” In this regard, NASCAR is instructive of contemporary strategies of racialization used to deny racism and white privilege (Kusz, 2007). Thus, with Kusz, Newman and Giardina (2008, p. 483) suggested NASCAR nation is one that “at once gives license to the resurgent regimes of the most vigilant factions of the ethnocentric (American) White Right while simultaneously profiting off of the race-based identity politics imbedded therein.” In this sense, and in the post-9/11 moment, NASCAR, through a tripartite articulation of neoconservative beliefs, military / blue-collar (southern) background, and the masculinized iconicity of George W. Bush within NASCAR’s popularly imagined fan base, is “incontrovertibly bound to its seductiveness as a

consumer-based expression and market-oriented extension of (neo)-conservative White paranoia” (Newman & Giardina, 2010, p. 496).

CAPITALIZING ON WAR: COPORATISM, THE CORPUS, AND A COMPLICIT CITIZENRY

The potent significance of the sporting popular, and the subsequent entwinement with post-9/11 political, military, and state trajectories of the US, is clearly evidenced in the examples drawn on in this chapter. As King (2004, p. 2) noted, “a range of sporting events, institutions, celebrity figures, and texts have become key vehicles for reproducing and channeling militarist and nationalist identification—and the range of supremacist forces that attend them.” That this identification was explicitly interconnected with corporatism, militarism, and neoconservatism reveals sport as a key rhetorical space for the constitution of *a normalized masculine, intensely white national corpus*—a constitution of a highly mediated and thus highly visible national ‘we’ which clearly distinguishes between those bodies that mattered and those that did not properly belong (Butler, 1993; Zylinska, 2004), or were far from productive and functional, to this conjunctural moment.

What is perhaps most telling about the sporting popular is its seemingly unquestioned masculinized and militarized organization. Structured within what Giroux (2004a, p. 212) has termed a “military-corporate-industrial-educational complex,” the politicized sporting popular, as a powerful component of a post-9/11 public pedagogy, was embedded with values supporting a highly militarized patriarchal and jingoistic culture (see also Willis, 2003). Framed by Giroux (2006) as a spectacle of terror—the complexities of which rub against and feed off / on the neoliberal forces of the market—manifest in fear, and the promotion of distrust, patriarchy, and intolerance. Masculinity became associated with violence, and action was often substituted for the democratic processes of deliberation and debate (Giroux, 2004a). The interface of a patriarchal body politic and the reassertion of a national narrative (Hall, 1991) became manifest in those ‘chosen’ as representative subjectivities of nation. As described through this text thus far, the sporting popular in the post-9/11 moment is blazoned with images of the Stars and Stripes flag that endured the 9/11 attacks, firefighters, police, post-office workers (due to the ‘Anthrax threat’), and productive and functional sporting ‘heroes’ are represented as functional to the synergies between corporatism and militarism. That Fox should develop a mascot for its National Football League coverage (Cleatus) who, as a cyborg clad in military-style combat armor, bounds across the screen and is embedded within the overall graphic presentation, is perhaps of little surprise. Indeed, that you can buy this mascot—as an action figure—in your nearest *ToysRUs* store, or that Cleatus looks like the type of robot that

Project Alpha, a US Joint Forces Command Rapid Idea Analysis group, is developing to replace humans in many of the combat functions on the battlefield (<http://usmilitary.about.com/cs/weapons/a/robots.htm>), is of even less surprise. Unsurprisingly, then, Fox also worked hard to redefine heroes in the immediate aftermath of 9/11. In its coverage of the 2002 Super Bowl, Fox produced a pre-game segment titled Tribute to America introduced by then-Secretary of State Donald Rumsfeld. Rumsfeld stated: "As Americans we all have the freedoms to come and go as we please, to work, to play, to spend time with our families, and to enjoy the pleasures of life, and that includes being able to watch the Super Bowl. God bless you and enjoy the upcoming Tribute to America." The Fox production, incorporating scenes from 9/11, firefighters emerging from the smoke of the Twin Towers, the Stars and Stripes flag, the Brooklyn Bridge, an African-American soldier in full combat gear, an African-American professional footballer, a white male naval officer, a decorated veteran soldier (presumably of Vietnam given the age), footage of Robert Kennedy, a NASA astronaut, a postal worker, footage of troops returning from World War II kissing their 'sweethearts,' an African-American police officer, a mountainside vista, an old Ford truck winding down a vibrant yellow country road, and a final image, set against the national flag, of a seemingly mixed-race family with father in absentia. From the expression on the faces of the family members, and with their positioning in front of the Stars and Stripes, it is likely that the family (a mother, two daughters, and a son) represented a widow and her children, who were representing Americans whose male patriarch had made the 'ultimate sacrifice' in defense of the nation. The narrative accompanying this segment was equally telling:

September 11, the day that will never be forgotten by any American. And because of that day, America has taken a closer look at its heroes. American heroes, past and present. Throughout our history, many people have paid such a price for us to be here today, to live this American way of life that means so much to so many. Our common vision has never been more clear. Our diverse landscape is abundant with vibrant colors, because Americans don't see in black and white, they see in beautiful red, white and blue. Today on Fox, we celebrate this great, but unofficial American holiday. We are here today, standing as one people, united in the fight to preserve not only our present, but more importantly our future and our children's future. Children have always looked up to heroes. We all need heroes more than ever before. But to our surprise we found heroes in places that maybe we overlooked.

Expressing the dominant tropes of freedom and sacrifice, and connecting the post-9/11 moment to the (military) triumphs of the past, this segment reaffirmed the valorized and heroic patriarchal body politic of the period. Further, as argued in the previous chapter, the Tribute to America politicized

the popular, clearly indicated what was democratic, free, and right, sutured a supportive and innocent (especially through the use of children) citizen to the religiosity, militarism, and neo-imperial ambitions of the Bush Right, and declared a national unity in the face of terror. Further, and importantly, reworking Kusz's (2007) comments on NASCAR, Fox was able to bury and obscure their internal racial contradictions—race simply did not matter, nor did any past predicated on a history of racial difference. Yet, at the same time, with Newman and Giardina (2010), through the incorporation of the black athlete, soldier, and police officer, the segment was instructive of contemporary strategies of racialization while simultaneously profiting off of the race-based identity politics embedded within American football and the military. Here, discourses of 'diversity' were reconciled with one of 'unity,' with the US posited as a paragon of harmony—an exemplar of tolerant and unproblematic multiculturalism—in which Americans saw in red, white, and blue. Such representations evident in the sporting popular are enactments of what Fortier (2005) termed 'pride politics': a reactionary response to the critique (or attack) of nation, a (relative) loss of power and / or feelings of national vulnerability. Rather than a simplistic retraction to an essentialist core, these 'pride politics' involved the assertion of multicultural tolerance, which necessitates "interpellating 'others' to be seen to speak out as proud subjects of multicultural [America]" (Fortier, 2005, p. 562). These selective narrations take impetus from a coalition of interests: state-political, civic, sporting, and corporate. Their significance is in asserting a mythic, inclusive post-9/11 America. Such dynamics assert a "multiculturalist nationalism" (Fortier, 2005) working to assuage ongoing anxieties about national legitimacy. The representations of harmonious, youthful multiculturalism and the provision of "ideal" multicultural subjects within this production offered a neo-ethnic version of national identity in which "'minority groups' are not only be let in, but redefined as integral to the nation" (Fortier, 2005, p. 561). The key question, as Fortier noted, is who are the legitimate multicultural subjects entitled to belong to the national community and to speak in its name? The assertion of an inclusive civic nationalism in such narratives exists in tension with the 'clash of civilizations' paradigm that dominated political and media discourses. First, there is a bombastic defiance in the face of terrorist threats from "culturally dysfunctional Muslims" (Meer and Modood, 2009), a wistful harking back to World War II 'glories,' and reassertions of Manichean struggles between 'our' civility and the barbarism of 'others.' Second, and related, the Super Bowl was framed as an exemplar of *our* own apparently unproblematic diversity and inclusivity. This unresolved contradiction became played out in the sporting popular in the post-9/11 moment; that is, sport became a symbol of how 'our' values differ from 'others' and also an exemplar of our apparent inclusivity and 'tolerance.' In a familiar construction, sport, as a soft-core ideological domain, was constructed as a utopic social field—the foremost exemplar of integration and multiculturalism. Yet it also served

as a symbol of our humanism and civility in (apparently) stark opposition to that of others.

Fox, NASCAR, and the representations of the death of Pat Tillman clearly capitalized on the (corporatized) corpus that mattered in the post-9/11 period. Further, during the 'parade of nations' at the Salt Lake City Olympics, accolades were reserved for some countries over others. The biggest accolade, however, was reserved for the British; importantly, Britain's entrance into the stadium was framed by the rhetoric accompanying the normally moribund and anonymous bearers of the placard that announced the name of the paraded team. Even though Olympic narrative is normally reserved for the flag bearer of individual nations, NBC was ready and waiting with a graphic and commentary lauding the honor 'afforded' the British team who were led in by Steve Young, former NFL quarterback for the San Francisco 49ers. The choice of Steve Young is significant, for he embodies the neoconservative, 'wholesome' righteous morality so associated with the Bush regime (see e.g. Giroux, 2005b; Harvey, 2003). Not only did Young play for Brigham Young University, hence establishing his link to the Mormon Church and Utah (something he has carried on through charitable work with his Forever Young organization), he is renowned for his 'scrambling' style of play, overcoming adversity in the face of the pass rush. Furthermore, and in the much played upon link between the nation's founding fathers and the present, Young was presented to the consumer as great-great-great-grandson of both Brigham Young and his brother Joseph Young. Like Tillman, Young was presented as an idealized neoliberal citizen, part of a wider process of the reentering of white masculinity as an American normative" (Kusz, 2007). Indeed, following Kusz (2007), Young acted as a white everyman figure (complete with neoconservative religiosity), serving as the most heroic and patriotic embodiment of the post-9/11 nation (think of the media's lionization of the mainly white and male New York Fire Department and New York Police Department personnel in the immediate coverage of 9/11). Further, such constructions took place with "little fear of public criticism from those who, prior to 9/11 in the relative domestic tranquility of post-cold war America, surely would have objected to the problematic racial or gender representational politics of such imagery (Kusz, 2007, p. 79). Indeed, given that the narratives around Tillman, Young, and NASCAR are essentially produced as nothing more than an effect of a groundswell of public desire for inspiring stories of patriotism in this time of crisis, following Kusz (2007), these narratives hardly seem concerned about advancing a reactionary racial and gender politics at all. Indeed, those who "would dare pose such a pessimistic or defeatist question in this age of terror are often quickly condemned as anti-Americans whose failure of faith is aiding the terrorists" (Kusz, 2007, p. 79).

Militarism, in both its old and new forms, views life as a form of permanent warfare, and in doing so subordinates society to the military rather than subordinating the military to the needs of a democratic social order

(Giroux, 2004b). Importantly, and as alluded to throughout the examples in this chapter, militarism, as an ideology, is about the rule of force and the expansion of a discourse of moral absolutes, revenge, and public acts of denunciation. Further, again following Giroux (2004b, p. 219), such embedded military values strip the (sporting) community of democratic values by configuring politics in religious terms and defining every citizen and inhabitant of the US as a potential terrorist: politics becomes empty as it “reduces citizens to obedient recipients of power, content to follow orders, while shaming those who make power accountable.”

Of even greater concern is the relationship between a compliant and fearful citizen and sporting capital, often appearing in the guise of a deeply disturbing corporo-political-militarized philanthropy. As King (2008) revealed, in the period following 9/11, the NFL made a multimillion dollar commitment to encourage tourism in New York City by providing free promotional time on radio and television networks, donating money to the city’s September 11 commemoration, and establishing the NFL Disaster Relief Fund. The relationship culminated, in 2002, in the inaugural Kickoff Live, a glitzy, star-studded music and football festival held in Times Square to celebrate the launch of the new season (King, 2008). The NFL Kickoff event was merely the tip of the NFL philanthropic iceberg. Following the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the NFL developed explicitly patriotic and militaristic projects in collaboration with the Bush administration—manifest in, for example, players visiting wounded soldiers, donation of equipment to teams associated with the military, and its partnership with the Tribute to Freedom program, which helps American citizens express their support for the troops (King, 2008). Repeated the following year, this time taking place on the National Mall in Washington DC and delivered by Pepsi Vanilla—the first time that a private business had been granted permission to take over the public land—the NFL invited 25,000 troops (in open-collar, short sleeve uniform given this was perceived to make a better impression on television) to listen to performances by Britney Spears, Aerosmith, Mary J. Blige, and Aretha Franklin, who sang the national anthem (King, 2008), in a celebration of the veterans of the ‘global War on Terror.’ As King (2008) argued, although the Pentagon is not able to officially participate in corporate promotions, by partnering with the NFL and Pepsi, through the Tribute to Freedom program, it was able to deliver an “oddly synchronistic mixture of patriotic, hypermasculine, family friendly entertainment” (p. 536) through the NFL, a strategy that positions the NFL “as something akin to a for-profit marketing arm of the government, immersed in ongoing relationships with a variety of departments and offices, we might think of the NFL as a Department of Propaganda, neoliberal style” (p. 537). What we seem to have, then, in these examples, is sporting capital *capitalizing* on war, terror, and fear. The logics are clear: popular (and privy) propaganda, support for the War on Terror, a culture of fear and the silencing of dissent, the promotion of military values and a military body politic, *and profit*.

It is therefore relatively unsurprising in this conjunctural moment that in 2010, as with the ESPN / Bell Helicopters Armed Forces Bowl, the *Military Bowl*—another college football game, this time previously called the Eagle Bank Bowl—would be presented by military defense company Northrop Grumman. Played in Washington DC, the game stands as a telling testimony to the implosion of capital, the capital, militarism, the state, and the sporting popular.

In the previous chapter, I suggested that the *context* and the *processes* through which national cultures are produced and reproduced is being transformed (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, & Peraton, 1999); that is, the locus of control in influencing the manner in which the nation and national identity are represented is becoming exteriorized through, and internalized within, the promotional strategies of (trans)national corporations. I raised a number of questions about what might happen in the interactions between state formations, nationalism, and popular culture. Specifically, in thinking through how the politico-cultural nation of the nineteenth century sits alongside, however (un)comfortably, the “corporate-cultural nation” of the twenty-first century (Silk & Andrews, 2001; Silk, Andrews & Cole, 2005), following Prideaux (2009), I was concerned with understanding the ways in which companies play a role in the construction of national identity and how we, as “cultural citizens,” are seduced, inducted, and incorporated into discursive systems and materialisms dictated by both state and transnational capital (Giardina, 2005; McCarthy et al., 2005). The sporting popular, produced by a strange neoliberal amalgam of state / military and corporate entities invested in the pursuit of profit—the new ‘modern intelligentsia’ to paraphrase Anthony Smith—points to the extent to which the lines between war and entertainment, service and consumption, fighting and fun have become blurred (Butterworth & Moskal, 2009). Indeed, as sporting organizations incorporated Bush administration policies into their business strategies with the aim of enhancing brand identification and capital accumulation, there emerges “an intensified depth and mutuality to the sport–war nexus in the present moment—a shift that might be understood as a further indication of the militarization of everyday life, and, simultaneously, of the ‘sportification’ of political life—in the contemporary United States” (King, 2008, p. 529).

The visibility of the military at these sporting events is of course explicit; there is a constant reminder for citizen-consumers of the centrality of the military in everyday life (Butterworth & Moskal, 2009; King, 2008). However, it is the related attack on democracy that is most alarming: these sporting narratives not only promote a culture of militarism, mask America’s deepening dependence on the defense industry and its expansion into more and more aspects of public culture, “but it also has the capacity to blunt the growing resistance to the ‘war on terror’” (Butterworth & Moskal, 2009, p. 429). In this sense, as Newman and Giardina proposed with respect to NASCAR, we “find ourselves mired in a space for collective consumer

experience that has been formed by the collision of *active* consumerism, an ether of political ideology, and the adornment of corporatized badges of citizenship—all of which are validated through the communal exaltation of a political economy that goes against most fans' own self-interests" (Newman & Giardina, 2010, p. 1523). Sport, in this formulation, then, becomes a form of militarism dependent on a complicit citizenry in which these citizens are reduced to spectators, through which any resistance to a faltering war on terror is seen as unpatriotic, and in which war becomes sanitized, the personnel of the armed forces become commodified, and American identity is reduced to a brand (Butterworth & Moskal, 2009).

Finally, these sporting representations sutured the construction of new heroism and patriotism with the celebrated the American male worker—historical and contemporary. Women alternatively became passive receptors of historical moments despite the ironies of the war on the Taliban being, according to official rhetoric, about the liberation of Afghan women (see Ahmed, 2002; Eisenstein, 2002; Kusz, 2007; Paur & Rai, 2002). Kusz (2007) proposed that the forwarding of a white male, an "average," everyman who represents the quintessential embodiment of America—represented as the antithesis of the overpaid, oversexed, and ungrateful African-American athlete—is the main feature of a post-9/11 white cultural nationalism. In this chapter, the NASCAR driver, the fallen soldier who turned his back on a pro-football contract, and the absolute moral righteousness of the religiosity of neoconservatism acted to "represent all those Americans invested in the 'traditional' values and fundamental ideologies for which America has always stood (individualism, freedom, and meritocracy)" (Kusz, 2007, p. 80). Indeed, as Kusz (2007) argued, through coding such celebrities as somehow just a little different from dominant whiteness or lacking economic privilege—a wild-man, or being coded as southern, or Mormon—a social hierarchy is implicitly produced that celebrates the working, average white man as the embodiment of the ideal American citizen for post-9/11 America.

The intensification of the militarization of the sporting popular and the emergence of a 'preferred' *post-9/11 patriarchal body politic* needs to be understood as part of a wider militarization of public space and culture in which the line between war and entertainment has become increasingly blurred. Even though sport has often been conflated with war (e.g. Guttman, 1978), it is important to place the commercial sporting spectacle—lest we forget such representations were interspersed with a thirst quenching circuit of automotive, financial, and alcoholic commodities—alongside the apparent ubiquity of militarism within educational and penal institutions, civic governance, fashion, toy sales, and family life (Giroux, 2004b). The impact of 9/11 has seen the sporting popular in the US become entrenched within the machinations of the "violent politics of truth concerning America [sic] and the so-called threats by terrorists to democracy and freedom" (Denzin, 2004, p. 137); it might be bold to add here that the threat to

democracy and freedom is equally felt in the relationships among sporting organizations, their commercial partners, and the militarized state.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS: THE CULTURAL POLITICS OF THE (REINVIGORATED) POST-9/11 PHALLUS

The insidious reach and appropriation of the geo-political tentacles of the “Day that Changed Everything” (see Morgan, 2009) within the normalized and seemingly banal, if not innocent, sporting popular has been felt in the elevated place of the white male (athlete). Sporting spectacle—itsself already a hypermasculine domain (see Messner, 1992)—provides a fictive solution or response to what Faludi (2008) termed America’s lack of masculine fortitude. Faludi’s (2008) engaging argument revealed the paradoxes of how the last remaining hyperpower, attacked precisely because of its imperial pre-eminence, responded through fixation on its weaknesses and ineffectuality. Like Giroux (2001b), Bhabha (1995), and Kusz (2001), Faludi’s (2008) discussion centers on the loss of the image of the tightly hewn worker using his body and labor to create the necessities for everyday life. Rather, replaced by the “masses of weak-chinned BlackBerry clutchers” (Faludi, 2008, p. 8), the white male body has transformed into a receptacle for consumption facing increasing uncertainty and insecurity and inhabits a life in which ennui and domestication define its everyday existence (Giroux, 2001b). Through the reassertion of the specters of the Cold War, the revision of the frontier, the rousing tributes to veterans, the embodiment of core American values in figures such as Tillman and Young, or the white cultural nationalism embedded in NASCAR, and fully ensconced in a heightened military sensibility, these sporting spectacles champion the return of the ‘manly man.’ In this sense, and playing an important visceral and affective role in reestablishing national fantasy predicated on a myth of invincibility in which capable women are denigrated and manly men magnified (Faludi, 2008), the sporting popular reasserts an old, if not forgotten, and distinctly white, masculinity. Certainly, difference exists, but difference is incorporated, through a post-9/11 pride politics that sets the discursive and material limits for difference. This is a productive and patriarchal body politic as the post-9/11 zeitgeist, a rejuvenated and xenophobic phallus capable of penetrating even the most nebulous, viral like, enemy in our Viagra fuelled, neoliberal, neoconservative, present (see also Rutherford, 2004). In this sense, evoking Gilroy’s (1992, p. 53) terminology, then, the representations of the post-9/11 sporting corpus acted as:

an imaginary definition of the nation as a unified *cultural* community. It constructs and defends an image of national culture—homogenous in its whiteness yet precarious and perpetually vulnerable to attack from enemies within and without. . . . This is a racism that answers the

social and political turbulence of crisis and crisis management by the recovery of national greatness *in the imagination*.

In this regard, the ascendancy of the sporting popular provides a rallying point, serving as a 'nationally defining' moment evoking resilience, unity, spirit, and whiteness (see Pitcher, 2009)—a model of commonality, of America at its best, to which people should aspire: the dominant trope through which to understand contemporary national 'struggle' (Gilroy, 2004). What though should we make, then, of such complexities and ambiguities surrounding a rhetoric on multiculturalism? What role do corporatized narratives, ceremonies, and rituals of a neo-ethnic nation play in a civic multiculturalism (Modood 2007) that emphasizes strong masculine multicultural or minority identities that complement a framework of vibrant, dynamic, national narratives? Unfortunately, there exists an all-too-familiar and uneasy discord in the development of bell hooks' notion of stylish nihilism, which Giardina (2003) developed to suggest a growing trend toward a "stylish hybridity," that is, a proliferation of performative representations of hyphenated persons and culture(s) occupying leading spaces in the sporting popular. Importantly, even though purporting to be positive and progressive artifacts subverting the status quo, the majority of these iterations commonly efface the harsh realities witnessed in the everyday interactions of a diverse population. In this regard, the appeals to a foundational unity in the response to 9/11, the mobilization of neo-ethnic subjectivities of nation, and the privileging of 'our' way of life, appear to offer little more than a "boutique multiculturalism" (Fish 1997), that is, a thin veneer obscuring a (social) structure, that essentializes and stereotypes difference and ignores the historically entrenched 'race'-based inequalities responsible for (masked) social divisions (Troyna and Carrington, 1990; see also Hutnyk, 2000). Unsurprisingly, these narratives have nothing to say about the complexities of everyday life: intensified hostility towards Muslims since the commencement of the War on Terror'; feelings of disillusionment and resentment; 'Islamophobia'; urban segregation; disproportionate levels of unemployment, health, and poverty; and differential immigration statuses and the concomitant restrictions of rights (Kundnani, 2007; Meer & Modood, 2009; Rehman, 2007; Vertovec, 2007). In sum, then, and following Pitcher (2009), the intent here is not to reject multiculturalism per se, but it is to challenge the epistemological violence (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005) of such glib, popularized multiculturalist nationalism: specifically, how it offers a narrative effacing the major social and economic problems at home, the wider social inequalities and unrests from which terrorism may develop, and the links between domestic terror and foreign policy (Pitcher, 2009; Stephens, 2007; Rehman, 2007).

Finally, with Stempel (2006), popular masculinist sports provided an important and highly popular arena to garner support for the Iraq War and for a broader Bush Doctrine that asserted the authority and obligation of

America to attack countries and enemies prior to direct threats to the US. Indeed, as Stempel (2006, p. 82) proposed, this is predicated on a “televised masculinist sport–militaristic nationalism complex” (MS-MN complex) that contributes to support for imperialistic wars by the United States” through “televised sports that represent, iconize, and naturalize a combination of masculinist and nationalistic ideals and morals and a field of politics where imperialist military projects are imagined and popular support and acquiescence is garnered.” Following Stephens (2007), the post-9/11 patriarchal body politic offers a return to a similar, albeit commodified, point of origin (no matter how arbitrary) and an idea that we are a common community, travelling through history together, an ‘idea’ that serves to justify military action and encourages the ideal American citizen to ‘support the troops.’ In so doing, whiteness disappears, becoming normalized as sporting spectacle operates as a powerful cultural pedagogy in the legitimation of social structures and inequalities (Riggs & Due, 2010). Manliness is reasserted—the “old male” (Rutherford, 2004) in the forms of firefighter, soldier, and selected athlete returned to public esteem—and linked to a religious morality that would rearm national pride and reverse the decadence of post-industrialism, the men of the armed forces spearheading a ‘spiritual’ (and ‘moral’) crusade for ‘freedom’ (Rutherford, 2005).