

1

Posting Up: Introductory Notes on Race, Sports, and Post–America

American sports, we argue in what follows, in common with the broader national context shaping them, always have been rendered in the overly simplistic racial terms—red, white, and black. In our minds, the ritualization and representation of racial difference associated with intercollegiate athletics, from mascots and half-time shows to media coverage and popular narratives, have long offered the clearest illustrations of this pattern. Importantly, we contend, as the articulations of signifying practices, political ideologies, and social conditions have changed, described variously as post–civil rights, postmodern, or postcolonial, the complex, contentious, and ultimately conflicted interplay of redness, blackness, and whiteness in college sports has become increasingly significant.

We begin with impossibilities, structures, and sentiments no longer conceivable to capture the centrality of racial spectacle to college sports. We do not introduce these episodes to erect a screen onto which to project a progressive tale about the unenlightened evils of previous formulations of race in sports. Rather, we want to caution readers against trivializing, if not evading, the fundamental importance of the interpenetration of redness, whiteness, and blackness. We dwell on these moments, then, to activate the critical faculties of our audience, to alert them to the political economy of racial signs in college sports.

In 1891, Yale University and Princeton University renewed their rivalry on the gridiron. The *New York Times* not only covered the game but attended to the symbolic struggle between students as well. Fans from Yale paraded their established icon, a bulldog, across the field. Not to be outdone, supporters of Princeton, shortly thereafter, invented an impromptu mascot, designed to match the school colors of orange and black (quoted in Oriard, 1993, pp. 229–230):

Princeton was not going to be outdone in that way . . . pretty soon came out old Nassau's mascot, and the boys of the blue had to confess that they of the orange had scored a point. Princeton's mascot was a comely young colored girl. She was dressed in a flaming orange dress, with an orange bonnet and an orange parasol. She walked around the field eating an orange and apparently entirely unconscious of the tremendous sensation she created.

Euro-American fans crafted themselves and their teams not simply by displaying racialized bodies but by playing, enacting, or otherwise mimicking them as well. In the first decade of this century, students at Simpson College, a private, Methodist school in central Iowa, adopted “The Scalp Song” to cheer their Redmen. The victory chant made reference to the ferocity and bellicosity of the Simpson football team through allusions to cannibalism and combat (see Springwood & King, 2000). Elsewhere, drawing on the myth of the frontier, popular stereotypes about American Indians, Wild West shows, and a longing to escape modern life, students, coaches, administrators, and journalists facilitated the invention of Native American mascots (Davis, 1993; King & Springwood, 2000; King & Springwood, 2001; Staurowsky, 1998). Throughout the first third of the twentieth century, but especially during the 1920s, at schools as diverse as Dartmouth College, Eastern Michigan University, Juniata College, Mississippi College, Stanford University, the University of Illinois, and William and Mary College, they elaborated rich traditions of “playing Indian” (Deloria, 1998; Green, 1988; Huhndorf, 1997; Mechling, 1980).

Ironically, at precisely the moment Euro-Americans began to imagine themselves as invented Indians, embodied Indians rose to

prominence on the gridiron (Churchill, Hill, & Barlow, 1979; Deloria, 1996; Oxendine, 1995). At boarding schools designed to educate and even “civilize” Native Americans, most famously at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, football became an important tool of assimilation. Playing football promised to make disciplined, modern subjects of Native American boys, promoting dominant Euro-American values of fairness, responsibility, and autonomy (Pratt, 1964). The students at Carlisle eagerly embraced and by all measures excelled at the sport, producing a number of all-Americans, most notably Jim Thorpe, during the first decade of the twentieth century. In spectacles attended by thousands, in some cases more than 15,000, Carlisle competed against and often defeated the elite teams of the day. These games frequently were read as racial contests. Media coverage was commonly racist, stressing the savagery, physicality, and innate differences of the Indian players (see Oriard, 1993). Importantly, the mass appeal of these games, combined with the success of Carlisle, may have challenged stereotypes (Gems, 1998), while leaving white supremacy intact (King & Springwood, 1999).

In spite of the celebrity enjoyed by Native American collegiate athletes during the first quarter of the twentieth century, Jim Crow haunted college athletics and American society more generally. Many white Americans endorsed and enjoyed the privileges associated with the structural separation of blacks and whites. In sports, teams and institutions often were entitled to refuse to play interracial games. On occasions when “this gentleman’s agreement” was invoked, black players were held out of the competition. For instance, before agreeing to play in the 1939 Cotton Bowl, Clemson University insisted, and its opponent Boston College agreed, not to play its star black running back, Lou Montgomery. Rarely did fans, coaches, athletes, journalists, or administrators question the tradition of Jim Crow in college sports. One notable exception occurred at New York University (NYU) in 1940. The Violets were scheduled to play the University of Missouri Tigers, an all-white team, which objected to competing against a black player. They requested that NYU leave its fullback, Leonard Bates, at home. NYU agreed, a decision that sparked intense student protests at the institution, calling for the end of Jim Crow in sports, while prompting lively debates at many other Eastern universities (Spivey, 1988).

In retrospect, the scopic pleasures, the fears and desires, the fragile, fabricated identities, and the rigid social asymmetries embedded within such racial spectacles rose to the surface. Indeed, the briefest glance at previous regimes of signification and classification makes plain, if not palpable, the power at work in the play of difference—the power to adopt the visage of the other, to define, to name, to educate, to civilize the vanquished, to exclude. Moreover, reread today, these historical events and all that they imply unsettle, evoke dis-ease, and even disgust. The easy reading and evocative force of such incidents turn on the deep contrast between previous and present configurations of racial signs and sports spectacles: that is, the regimes and representations typifying the postmodern, postcolonial, post-desegregation present invert those peculiar to the modern, imperial, segregated past. Whereas Native Americans, once celebrated as embodied athletes, now operate largely as empty images, African Americans, formerly excluded from the spectacular economy of college sport, are currently energized as star players and troubled delinquents. Largely invisible but pervasive throughout, Euro-Americans remain constant as spectators, coaches, administrators, journalists, and athletes; they perform and police frequently unmarked as racial subjects.

These shifts, as well as their causes and consequences, suggest something more. As in the past, the provocative tensions between presence and absence highlight the flows and fault lines of racial signs in college sports. They direct attention, on the one hand, to the practice of “playing Indian at halftime,” the use of stereotypical images of Native Americans as mascots, and, on the other hand, to the “pleasures” of gazing at black bodies at play. By an overwhelming margin, the most prevalent of “human” mascots characterize Native American peoples and histories, yet, Native Americans play a seemingly insignificant role—as athletes, spectators, coaches, and owners. The conspicuous presence of Indian signs and symbols, underscored by their relative absence on the field of play, is contrasted in a curious fashion with the overwhelming presence of African-American athletes, albeit characterized by a virtual absence of black mascots. The way in which Indian mascots have emerged as being central to the identity of sports teams, and the way in which black American participation

in sport has grown, suggests that contemporary athletics stage—perhaps unwittingly—particular, often stereotypical images of race and racial difference. The cultural and racial differences embodied within these images serve to communicate something about the identities of the people who created them in the first instance—European Americans.

In what follows, we offer a history, an ethnography, and a social critique of racial spectacles in intercollegiate athletics. Focusing on the spectacles associated with contemporary intercollegiate athletics, including halftime performances, commercialized stagings, media coverage, public panics, and political protests, we outline the constellation of overlapping techniques through which individuals and institutions have (re)constructed, contained, and challenged racialized images, imaginaries, identities, and imagined communities during the last twenty years. Restricting our gaze to revenue sports, football, and basketball, we explore the political economy of racial signs structuring and structured by intercollegiate sports. We simultaneously address formulations of redness, whiteness, and blackness, endeavoring to locate the larger system of racializing signifying practices at the heart of collegiate sport. Drawing upon a rich corpus of semiotic scholarship that recognizes how social relations and social identities are inseparable from performance, history, and power, we examine the way in which collegiate sporting signs and spectacles produce multiple (overlapping and contradictory) systems of knowledge *of*, *for*, and *about* others. We seek to move beyond more commonplace studies of campus, sport, and race (Adler & Adler, 1990; V. Andrews, 1996; Brooks & Althouse, 1993; Hawkins, 1995/1996; Lapchick, 1991, 1995; Shropshire, 1996, Smith, 1993; Wonsek, 1992)—which typically have displayed a preoccupation with narrowly defined or statistical notions of stratification, racism, and structural roles—to interrogate the ways in which racial difference is practiced within the imaginaries of university athletics. Indeed, we aim not simply to document *why* race matters but to make sense of *how* it matters.

Linking whiteness, redness, blackness, and racial difference, we foreground the ironies, articulations, and contradictions of the racial sign systems structuring and structured by intercollegiate athletics. It is inappropriate to consider signs in isolation,

as independent bodies. Signs work in relation to one another within a necessarily open, historically positioned system. In addressing racial difference within college sport, then, we must understand how the formation of racial icons and identities is mutually constructed across time and space. We understand signifying practices to be fundamental to such constructions. Indeed, everyday actions and interpretations (both personal and institutional) constitute meaning, power, agency, and resistance. In our interpretations of these racial signs and their convergence within institutions of higher learning, we take culture to be a messy, even contradictory, process, characterized by contestation and change.

This nuanced understanding of culture affords a complex rendering of the intersections of race and college sports. It permits us to interrogate specifically the ways in which the university has become a staging ground for many aspiring athletes to showcase their talents in hopes of getting a professional sports contract, revealing the entanglements of the distribution of financial resources, recruitment, stereotypes, post-secondary educational goals, and the exploitation of students. We argue that the contemporary system of collegiate sport is experienced by students, student athletes, professors, and the broader public through a vast array of public spectacles (Debord, 1970/1967), such as halftime shows characterized by Native American mascots and Confederate flags, or glossy media portrayals of the black college athletes, or the racialized social narratives of angst over which college athletes will or will not “go pro.” Indeed, collegiate sport and its close relative professional sport are produced as a spectacle imbued with a range of contradictory meanings and narratives. In the post-civil rights era (see Frankenberg & Mani, 1993; King, 2000; Stratton, 2000), we are convinced that Americans have come to know and think of themselves as a freer, more racially harmonious society largely through sport and discourses that boast of an integrated sporting world. And yet, sport, as a social field characterized by a series of (mass) mediated spectacles (Rinehart, 1998), unpacks and celebrates racial difference, often from the point of view of the Euro-American spectator. Such spectacles are best viewed as cultural practices that locate, structure, and perform race and racial identity in America.

Importantly, by situating racial constructions of redness, whiteness, and blackness at the center of this analysis, we do not pretend that either the United States or the American university can be reduced to three racial poles. At all levels, the university is comprised of numerous individuals beyond the population of Native Americans, Anglo-Americans, and African Americans. Furthermore, in locating the prevailing system of power that structures the university and its sporting spectacles within a matrix of historically fashioned white practices, we do not also assume that American colleges are controlled exclusively by white interests, or even that there could be such a monolithic thing as white interests, or for that matter, minority interests. We intend, however, to read how exhibitions of these predominant signs of racial difference have been practiced under the influence of particular, uneven regimes of power.

As should be apparent by this point, this is not simply a book about sport and race. It is not merely about mascots or the predominance and exploitation of the black athlete. It is not a sociological book about graduation rates, achievement levels, or the success or failure of interracial relationships. It is neither an apology for, nor a critique of, attempts to explain the success of the black athlete in terms of genetics. It is not a formal, institutional critique of collegiate athletics and its legal apparatuses. It is not a comprehensive survey, but a partial interpretation that aims to illuminate the technologies employed in the narratives, performances, and stagings of intercollegiate athletics to reconfigure, even to reanimate, racial difference. We endeavor to craft an account of race and sport that, in the words of Lawrence Grossberg (1992, p. 64), “describes how practices, effects, and vectors are woven together, where the boundaries are located and where the fault lines lie. This structured assemblage is a force-field encompassing different forms of objects, facts, practices, events, whatever can be found along the way.” Thus *Race as Spectacle in College Sport* offers a cartography of racial spectacles in contemporary collegiate sports, mapping how the processes underlying them change over time. It traces the means and meanings of materializing race in college sports, exploring the linkages connecting signifying practices and social structures, binding images, ideologies, and identities in disparate contexts.

STRUCTURES AND SPECTACLES

Race continues to imprint intercollegiate athletics, as well as the idioms, identities, and imaginaries animated by it. In fact, as we argue throughout, sports has become an increasingly important space in which individuals and institutions struggle over the significance of race. It simultaneously facilitates efforts to reproduce, resist, and recuperate naturalized or taken-for-granted accounts of difference, culture and history. Too often, fans, media, coaches, and players fail to recognize the significance of sports stories. Indeed, scholars and spectators frequently think of sport as a fun diversion, a pleasurable release, a cultural time-out that is mere entertainment. The celebration of sports as the ideal, if not the only, instance of racial harmony in post-integration America exacerbates the difficulties of thinking about representations of race in association with sports. These views, in our opinion, (dis)miss the centrality of athletics to popular interpretations of race and race relations, formulations of identity and difference, and efforts to create public culture. Moreover, they neglect the vitality of racialization in college sports, inhibiting critical accounts of its force.

In *Race as Spectacle*, we work against the trivialization of race and sports. We interpret moments in which individuals and institutions activate, enjoy, ignore, contest, and refuse racial difference. We highlight competing means and meanings of making race matter. On the one hand, we linger on the ease with which whiteness, blackness, and redness materialize within sport spectacles, while on the other hand, we direct attention to the myriad efforts to challenge such enactments, making them uneasy. We gather together disparate incidents to interrogate the practices and precepts energizing the production and consumption of racialized ideologies and identities. We seek to understand the significance of fleeting feelings and enduring sentiments such as the following.

At the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, one Saturday afternoon in the Fall of 1995, a handful of students protested the school's Native American mascot, Chief Illiniwek, and related misappropriations of Indian-

ness. Carrying anti-Chief signs, they marched outside the football stadium. Although not expecting a warm welcome from supporters of the mascot, they were shocked by a large sign posted on a Winnebago RV that read “Save the Chief, Kill the Indians!”

After a loss in 1994, Keith Dambrot, the white basketball coach at Central Michigan University—the Chippewas— informed his players, “We need to have more niggers on this team.” (quoted in Chideya, 1995, p. 162)

Bobby Bowden, the white football coach at Florida State University—the Seminoles—signs autographs for fans with the identifying phrase, “Scalp’em.”

In the early 1980s, whenever Oklahoma State University played football or basketball against its in-state rival, the University of Oklahoma, the campus radio station would stage fictitious interviews with black athletes. The following dialogue, according to Funk (1991, p. 43), exemplifies these racial dramas.

Interviewer: Well, Mr. Tisdale, what are your thoughts on the upcoming game?

Tisdale: Ugah bugah hoogaloo ugh ugh.

Interviewer: Really—would you share your thoughts on your coach, Billy Tubbs?

Tisdale: I be, yo be, we be, yo’ mama!

These incidents underscore a simple truth animating this study: American colleges and universities, intercollegiate athletics, and sporting spectacles structure and are structured by an insidious, if largely invisible, white supremacy. We engage this complex system knitting together structures, symbols, sentiments, and subjectivities through the political economy of racial signs.

Even the briefest glance at contemporary intercollegiate athletics reveals significant racial differences. Although African Americans receive less than 25 percent of athletic scholarships at National

Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) institutions, they dominate the revenue sports, particularly basketball.¹ Of the 844 men's scholarship athletes in basketball in 1997, 532 were black (Haworth, 1998). That is, 63 percent of those who play college basketball are African American. In football, roughly 40 percent of the players are black. The presence of African Americans becomes even more disparate, even problematic, when one considers that they represent only a fraction of the total student body at predominantly white institutions, often less than 5 percent. Importantly, sports does not enhance social mobility for most participants (see Riess, 1990). Fewer than 45 percent of all African-American scholarship athletes and 37 percent of male basketball players—compared to 62 percent and 47 percent for Euro-Americans—graduate from college, and only a few will ever become professional athletes.

Coaching and administrative positions show a similar racial asymmetry. Indeed, in spite of their importance as players, African Americans do not hold positions of authority. A recent study of football coaches at NCAA institutions found that while roughly 50 percent of players are black, only 18 percent of coaches are African American, with an additional 1.6 percent representing other minority groups (Suggs, 1999, p. A49). In fact, of 112 Division I-A schools, only five have African American head coaches, and for all three divisions, less than 8 percent of head coaching positions are held by blacks. Although slightly better, the distribution in basketball mirrors that in football: 10.6 percent of head coaches in men's basketball (7.8 percent for women's basketball) were African American (Suggs, 1999, p. A50). Even fewer athletic directors are African American; only 1 percent of assistant, associate, or chief athletic directors are black.

Beyond the numbers, race matters, because popular conceptions of the difference it makes—particularly in terms of perceptions of physiological features (such as speed) and their presumed organic linkages to psychological qualities (such as intellect)—shape the positions coaches assign to individual players. In the 1970s, sports sociologists noted this pattern, which they termed “stacking,” or the segregation of players by position (Lewis, 1995; Smith & Harrison, 1998; Yetman & Berghorn, 1993). “In football,” to take just one example, Stanley Eitzen (1999, p. 19) observes that Euro-Americans “are more likely to play at the

thinking and leadership positions that more often determine the game's outcome. African Americans overwhelmingly play on defense and at positions that require physical characteristics such as size, strength, speed, and quickness." Such stereotypes also mold media coverage and popular appreciation of intercollegiate athletics. Here again, whereas African Americans tend to be praised for their physical talents, European Americans are celebrated for their mental gifts. In a brief, albeit informal, study of five NCAA basketball games, Derek Jackson observed that 63 percent of comments about intelligence referred to white players, while 77 percent of remarks about physicality described black players. What is more, over 80 percent of the stupid plays were associated with African-American athletes.

The prevailing theoretical concept that inspires this study is "spectacle," a highly layered, nuanced term developed by Guy Debord (1970/1967, p. 10), which "unifies and explains a great diversity of apparent phenomena." Debord was concerned with the practices and ideologies that animated the contemporary media and consumer society. In particular, images, commodities, and spectacles form the structuring structures (Bourdieu, 1990/1980) of this televisual world. "Spectacles are those phenomena of media, culture, and society that embody the society's basic values, serve to enculturate individuals into this way of life, and dramatize the society's conflicts and modes of conflict resolution" (Kellner, 1996, p. 458). Here we bring into focus those spectacles that transform the university space into a broader field of public culture where race is, quite literally, practiced as an allegory of play and performance. People do attend these games and rituals, merging with those who perform them, in such a way that, "Experience and everyday life is . . . mediated by the spectacles of media and culture that dramatizes our conflicts, celebrates our values, and projects our deepest hopes and fears" (ibid.).

Using an approach informed by Foucauldian genealogical history (1979, 1981, 1987), an appreciation for an affective, post-modern political economy of meaning and signification (Baudrillard, 1983; Kellner, 1995; Giroux, 1992), and a neo-Gramscian reading of power and hegemony (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991; Gramsci, 1971; Hall, 1980, 1981, 1985), we consider history and

power inseparable and practice and agency contingent upon positionality and an array of continually emerging social fields. David Palumbo-Liu (1997, p. 4) asks, "How is cultural hegemony refused, diffused, absorbed, reproduced, and reconfigured, given the particularities of its interpolation into multiple contexts and under different pretexts by various agents?" This project, by tracing the intersections of red, white, and black as practices of racial signification, seeks to throw light on possible answers to Palumbo-Liu's question by engaging the everyday complexities of university athletics through critical ethnography, historical analysis, and semiotic deconstruction. This set of orientations permits us to speak of the forms of power, the fields of discourses, and the conditions of possibility that, through sport and play, construct "America."

RACIAL PEDAGOGIES

Critical cultural studies have begun to grasp how racial difference animates much of the popular aesthetics of sport. Understandably, to date, much of this scholarship has focused on professional athletics, notably the National Basketball Association (NBA) and Michael Jordan (Andrews, 1996; Cole & Andrews, 1996; Denzin, 1996; Dyson, 1993; Kellner, 1996). Here we shift the frame. The university, as we elaborate, is a particularly useful site for critically unpacking the racialized social relations of sport. "Recognizing that whiteness is produced differently within a variety of public spaces as well as across the diverse categories of class, gender, sexuality, and ethnicity" (Giroux, 1997, p. 381), we consider the 1990s' social field of collegiate sport predominant in terms of economic, political, and popular capital, and thus analytically ideal for unpacking the complexities of race and American history. Indeed, the articulation of sport and the university in many ways has always turned on the play of racial signs and the production of "racial pedagogies" (*ibid.*).

The so-called revenue sports of college athletics (football and basketball) are wholly interwoven with the larger world of professional sport, and the political economy of this relationship needs to be critically examined in the context of the university's historical

role as a site of public symbols and meanings. The university has commonly been idealized as a liberal place that champions social equality and justice while encouraging social innovation. Campuses will always be remembered as spectacular spaces of the 1960s' student political protests, when the struggle for civil rights articulated with antiwar and antigovernment movements. Thus it is here—where lecture halls and libraries have become linked to a multibillion dollar sporting world—that the discursive ruptures of a utopic, postintegration mythos are perhaps most contradictory and conspicuous.

To offer one example, in February 1995, at Rutgers University, President Francis L. Lawrence, reportedly after reading *The Bell Curve*, commented at a faculty meeting that Africans Americans were “a disadvantaged population that doesn't have the genetic heredity background” to succeed in higher education. Once made public, his repugnant remarks sparked a national controversy. At the local level, black students responded to Lawrence not in letters to the editor nor through an occupation of the administration building; instead, they interrupted a men's basketball game between Rutgers University and the University of Massachusetts on the evening of February 7. The audience assembled to watch the mostly black teams compete, rather than applaud the actions of the protesters, insisted that the game resume and yelled “Niggers and spics . . . go back to Africa.”

As at Rutgers, these racial spectacles frequently highlight, or play off of, the homosocial (white, middle-class) nature of many college campuses, in such a way that these “performances of difference” constitute racial identities. In the idealized space of equality, university culture remains silent about the racially (and otherwise) stratified nature of its student bodies, where participation in revenue sports (and thus, nonrevenue sports) is strongly racialized. In many medium-sized colleges, for example, nearly the entire basketball team is black, while the swimming team is largely white, but the meaning behind this stratification is not engaged, critically or reflexively, by students, professors, and administrators. In what follows, we initiate such a project in the hope of encouraging dialogues about race, power, and representation on college campuses and throughout public culture. To clarify the form and force of racial spectacles in collegiate athletics, we fix

our interpretive gaze on the construction and contestation of redness, blackness, and whiteness.

PLAY BY PLAY

As authors, we write from particular positions and relate to our project with certain personal and social histories. Both European American, we were raised in the Midwestern United States during the 1960s and 1970s. We both enjoyed sports as well as school. We participated in games of “Cowboys and Indians,” and we played with action figures depicting fictitious characters, such as Custer or Geronimo, to reimagine the past. Playing Little League baseball and youth basketball, we were affected by games bringing white children and black children into proximity for the first time. C. Richard King attended the University of Kansas (Big Eight) as an undergraduate, while Charles Springwood studied at Purdue University (Big Ten). Each institution exposed us to the intense spectacle of collegiate sport and its position within a tremendously powerful political economy. We both matriculated to the University of Illinois to complete our doctorates in anthropology. There we reacted to the mascot, Chief Illiniwek, with similar horror. We closely observed the practices of the athletic department, sports teams and their student athletes, and the community, more generally. In fact, many University of Illinois athletes, from both “revenue” sports and “nonrevenue” sports, attended the classes we taught as teaching assistants. While we each continue to watch athletic contests—both collegiate and professional—we now do so more skeptically. Throughout this book, then, our past entanglements with and ongoing enjoyment of intercollegiate athletics encourage us to offer a “contaminated critique” of the place of race in these spectacles.

In the next chapter, we map out the complex, often contradictory stagings of race in American intercollegiate athletics as the twentieth century drew to a close. We focus explicitly on techniques of erasure, on the narrative, media, and exhibitionary performances that dematerialize race. In this chapter, we work against commonsense notions of integration within popular, commercial, and official representations of race, history, and sports after deseg-

regation. The prevailing understanding has long been that America has been integrated and racially united through sport. By examining popular accounts of desegregation and public exhibition of sports history, we argue that racial spectacles often operate by exercising the significance of race.

In Chapters 3 and 4, we turn our attention to Native American mascots. We present detailed interpretations of the means and meanings of playing Indian at halftime at the University of Illinois and Florida State University. We examine the manner in which the invented Indians associated with these universities have circulated, marking identities and shaping lives while grounding imagined communities, new social movements, and uneasy alliances. We focus here on the mobility of mascots, on the continuous, seemingly countless ways in which their significance has been made (up) in motion, in processes of (dis)placement, and on the multiple receptions evoked by their stagings. Throughout our analyses, we develop a complex conceptualization of hegemony, multivocality, and consent to apprehend, on the one hand, the creation of coalitions between Native American communities and universities with Native American mascots and, on the other hand, the articulations between redness, whiteness, and blackness.

Against this background, in Chapter 5 we discuss the use of exaggeration to materialize race, particularly blackness, in public discourses about intercollegiate athletics. We work through the manner in which the black athlete has become a racial spectacle. We explore the ways in which race energizes discourses about race, suggesting that the media has remade blackness in such a way that prevailing (white) notions of criminality, respectability, and responsibility work to racially mark individuals and populations, as well as their styles, habits, and cultivations of self (see Cole, 1996; Cole & Andrews 1996; Cole & Denny 1995). In particular, we focus on two recent public panics: (1) the contradictions and uneven portrayals of the predicaments of Lawrence Phillips, a University of Nebraska football star who was suspended and nearly expelled from his team for his arrests for domestic violence; and (2) popular concerns about athletes “turning pro,” leaving school early to pursue careers in professional athletics. To contextualize our interpretations, we locate the emergence of the aesthetization of the black athlete as a spectacle within this earlier history of the

black-face performances—representations such as Aunt Jemima and Uncle Ben—and mythologies of black cannibals.

In Chapter 6, we turn our attention to whiteness and its defense. Focusing on the University of Mississippi with Notre Dame University, we detail the diverse, even competing, formulations of whiteness at play in college sports. At the former institution, “Colonel Reb,” who resembles the stereotypical portrayal of a nineteenth-century plantation owner (see “Ole Miss . . . ,” 1997/1998)—a mascot contrasting with the ubiquitous Native American mascot—along with the presence of the Confederate flag and the song “Dixie,” affords students, fans, and alumni the opportunity to rehabilitate white identities through nostalgic restagings of the Confederacy. In recent years, concerns voiced within the university community have curtailed the official use of such symbols, challenging the ideological core of this neo-Confederate whiteness. We contrast Ole Miss with Notre Dame. Supporters of the Fighting Irish frequently celebrate its emblematic whiteness. To establish the significance of this unmarked whiteness, we connect the current popularity, reputation, and affection of the renowned institution and its mascot to the historical processes through which the Irish became white. Whiteness is both embattled and applauded, mutable and multiplied, a privilege and a position in process.

Having mapped the erasures, inflations, and elaborations of redness, whiteness, and blackness in the preceding chapters, in our final chapter we again turn our attention to impossibilities, to the emergent desires, policies, and practices that begin to undo reigning racial spectacles. Concerned with efforts to refuse and reinvent dominant ideologies and identities, we ask difficult questions: Has whiteness as conventionally formulated become unbearable? Has a more critical or progressive understanding of Indianness begun to take shape in the wake of activism directed at mascots? Is there hope that interventions and innovations will reconfigure blackness? We begin with an analysis of current policies that prohibit colleges and universities from playing against schools with Native American mascots, and then we reflect on related attacks of white supremacy. We then speculate on the possible reformations of university life and policy that might reconcile various discursive and representational contradictions identified throughout this book.