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Racial Ideology in NFL Draft Magazines**

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**The Location of Meaning in Football Discourse: Racial Ideology in NFL Draft
Magazines**

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Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the MA in Communication.

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This study looks at how National Football League Draft Magazines represent players of different racial groups and, in turn, the part these magazines play in maintaining a legacy of racist knowledge. A content analysis is used to qualitatively evaluate how black and white players are described and divided through the use of language and how historically-endowed ideologies are translated and maintained through current professional football discourses. The results reveal that the representations of white and black athletes conform to roles that were derived out of historically racist knowledge and that white superiority shapes the evaluation and representation of athletes in professional football, supporting and essentializing traditional racist notions of black and white males.

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Introduction

This thesis examines the representation of black and white athletes in National Football League (NFL) discourses, focusing especially on the ways in which their racial identities may play a role in how they are described. It centers on the five most widely distributed magazines from 2007 that focus entirely on the evaluation of football players leaving college and entering the NFL draft. These magazines were selected because they represent the most thorough collection of information on this event and are the most ubiquitous on store shelves.

The magazines are produced annually for fans interested in the NFL draft, an event in which NFL teams take turns selecting the best athletes who are leaving college and hoping to enter the NFL. The draft process is primarily focused on evaluating the physical and mental capabilities of the incoming players and, thus, should serve as an incredible resource for discourses regarding how the athletes are viewed by scouts and decision-makers of the NFL. The magazines feature articles about different aspects of the scouting process, spotlights on certain players and issues that are influential in the draft, as well as detailed evaluations of the top players eligible for the draft. The evaluations are separated by position and each player's height, weight and time in the 40-yard dash are listed above a thorough list of their positive and negative qualities. Here lies a wealth of discourse that can reveal the ideology that shapes and structures the way in which black and white athletes are viewed and represented in the American sports culture. While most in the football world might claim to be colour-blind when evaluating talent or watching a game, the discourses of the NFL seem to suggest that the invisible

lens of white superiority shapes the perceptions of sports fans and coaches in professional football.

The goal of this thesis is to analyze content of these texts for their discourses and identify to what extent a history of racism influences and structures the evaluation of professional football players today. In order to do this I will be employing a qualitative content analysis methodology to look at the representation of athletes of different colours and evaluate to what extent these representations fit within a sociohistorical legacy of racism in North American culture. Utilizing pertinent works on representation, ideology, discourse, and power, I will analyze the NFL's college draft discourses from the perspective that these discourses perform the role of regulating and disciplining people into certain historically circumscribed roles.

This project is specifically looking for codes that fit within the theme of racialized knowledge. I will be looking for language and descriptions that represent a white supremacist knowledge of white and black males. Therefore, I will be looking for codes that articulate a contemporary version of the historically-formed archetypes of black and white males, those being that black males are inherently gifted with powerful physical attributes, but inferior mental capabilities and that white males are naturally more intelligent and better leaders. Consequently, my research will be limited in that I am actively looking for modern articulations of this racist ideology, which I have identified as foundational to American society.

Thus, this research contributes to the field of Communication Studies because it focuses on the ways in which meaning and knowledge are produced, changed, and maintained through discursive articulations of ideological positions. Put simply, I want

to investigate how historically-formed ideologies of racism are communicated, changed and maintained within the forum of NFL draft magazines. This thesis seeks to answer the following questions: (1) What are the dominant representations of white and black football players within NFL evaluation discourses? (2) How are these dividing practices of representation maintained and replicated? and (3) how does this fit within a historical legacy of racist ideology?

Literature Review

The literature needed to locate meaning in the seemingly naturalized racism of the football world will be taken broadly from a variety of works on the concept of ideology, discourse, and representation. Broadly, popular culture analyses will serve as a framework for my discursive analysis of the primary texts in sport discourse. Sport clearly occupies a huge portion of modern North American life, garnering its own section in all the major newspapers, radio and television news. Furthermore, football deserves the tag of culture itself and, thus, is a vital area of investigation as a microcosm of the ideologies that rule North American societies. The American football culture is a section of society that is separate from the mainstream; coaches and players cloister themselves into their own subculture that has linguistic codes and rites of passage that separate them from others. Yet, while the private practices and rituals of football players are quite distinct and unique they are nevertheless at the mercy of dominant ideologies and structures that influence and guide its formation and activity.

In *Resistance Through Rituals* Stuart Hall (1976) explains that culture refers to the “level at which social groups develop distinct patterns of life and give expressive form to their social and material life experience” (10). In other words, a social individual is born into a particular set of institutions and structural relations which help configure meaning and work in conjunction with other institutions which help situate one within a culture (Hall, 1976, 11). A social practice such as football, in its relation with other prevailing structures of society, helps to articulate meaning to a social individual. Consequently, engaging dialogue between racial scholarship and the culture of football

will lead to greater understanding of the practice of the racial ideologies, meaning making processes and their location and effect in football discourse.

Therefore, the analytical perspectives utilized in this section include the mapping of works on ideology and discourse. The works of Louis Althusser and Stuart Hall shall guide understandings of ideology and Michel Foucault's definition of discourse and power will aide in the understanding of ideology's ability to reproduce itself in new ways of knowing and expressing language. The analytical perspectives suggested by these authours will serve as support for understanding the representation of blacks in sport and popular culture.

On Ideology

Louis Althusser (1969) reworked the classic Marxian conception of ideology. He criticized the notion of false consciousness, as he took umbrage with the classic philosophical notion of the essential self. Althusser (1969) emphasized the idea that it was not the subject that produced ideology as ideas, but that ideologies, through practices and rituals, produced the subject. Thus, ideologies are not produced by individual thoughts and actions, but rather individuals devise their beliefs within positions already determined by ideology. Put differently, cultural and social practices that seem authentic and unique on the part of the individuals formulating them are actually influenced by and filtered through an ideological framework that is not of their own creation. Ideologies function covertly to guide and direct different positions and influence discourse. From this perspective, ideologies predate the cultural practices themselves.

These prevailing ideologies are by no means pure. Instead, they are influenced by a number of, what Althusser called, “interpellations” and these interpellations do not necessarily run straight across class lines, but instead are structured by a “complex totality” (Althusser, 1969). This totality is made up of a relationship among multiple levels, created through relations of correspondence and difference and are not reducible to a single essential connection. Stuart Hall’s articulation is framed in a similar way.

Hall (1990) writes that ideologies are not made up of isolated or separate concepts, but rather a sum of different “elements into a distinctive chain of meaning or understanding.” Ideological statements are “those images, concepts and premises which provide the frameworks through which we represent, interpret, understand and ‘make sense of some aspect of social existence’” (Hall, 1981, 31). Consequently, statements made with no intention of being overtly, or even subtly, racist can articulate or produce an ideology of racism as they may maintain the racist framework of the society in which they were created. For example, it could be argued that the representation of blacks in football discourse has suffered from historically white supremacist ideology that has informed the development of the United States of America and, therefore, a system of covertly entrenched racism is maintained.

We see the complex nature of ideologies and their influence; seemingly unbiased, non-racist sports reporters, journalist, coaches and even players of all colours can be guilty of supporting a system of entrenched naturalized racism through their actions and language without realizing it, as they carry with them codes and references that were created within an ideological framework of racism. Here lies the insidious nature of

racism in the sports world, it is covert in nature, and this nature makes it benign and ignorable while it influences the game to a great extent.

Charles Lawrence's analysis of Critical Race Theory Scholarship notes that American racism is pervasive and largely unconscious.

Americans share a common historical and cultural heritage in which racism has played and still plays a dominant role. Because of this shared experience we also inevitably share many ideas, attitudes and beliefs that attach significance to an individual's race and induce negative feelings and opinions about nonwhites. To the extent that this cultural belief system has influenced all of us, we are all racists.¹

In other words, racism today is enshrined through an ideology entrenched in the subtle workings of the institutional structures that Hall (1976) states are so formative for the social individual.

How is this covert pervasiveness achieved? Language is the medium through which things are represented and, "thus, is the medium in which ideology is generated and transformed" (Hall, 2004, 35). Ideology works through language to stabilize a particular form of power and domination and to "reconcile the mass of the people to their subordinate place in social formation" (Hall, 2004, 27). Thus, from this interpretation, we can see how those involved in the American football subculture can be made to view even their own subordination as natural and unquestionable. Certain meanings and references have become historically secured and their logic is maintained through an interconnection of related meanings "reverberated" off of one another (Hall, 2004, 40). This is true of certain meanings regarding black and white males and, consequently, their roles in the football arena which become enshrined as obvious reality, rather than historical creation or racial practice.

¹ As quoted in Peggy C. Davis (2000) "Law as Microaggression" in *Critical Race Theory: The Cutting Edge*. Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic (eds.) Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 141.

Following these observations, racism, sexism, classism and other 'isms' and problems that characterize the inequalities in Western societies are often not the product of misguided or evil individuals, but are the product of the essential nature of that Western culture (Young, 2001). Thus, rather than focusing on isolated, explicit instances of racial hatred, an approach that recognizes the insidious nature of the structural power of racism is necessary to expose the privileged framework of racial divide between black and white and identify the issues of representation that enforces it. Hence, this project will seek to address the problem of ideology deemed most important by Stuart Hall (2004).

I want to locate the meaning of football discourse and understand ideology's role in this particular social formation and how ideology makes racialized football discourse a material force. Althusser's (1969) notions of interpellation become important here, as they help to explain how racist articulations can be made in a sport where rich, black men often occupy the football spotlight and are revered. Althusser's theory of interpellations recognizes the complex and tangled nature of the ideologies that influence the world of American football.

The Ideological Codes of the Black Body

In trying to explain the prevalence of black body myths, Hall notes the "epistemic violence of the discourse of the other." (Hall, 1996, pp. 445) He emphasizes the idea that racism has historically constructed the black subject as a "noble savage." Thus, there is a doubling of fear and desire that manifest themselves across the structures of identity formation for the 'Other.' This makes the politics of racism complicated, as can be seen

in the case of professional sports, in the persistent dual representations of black athletes as hero and scoundrel. de B'éri (2006) notes the many complex historical formations of black identity by white America in the construction of two kinds of slave: one is an "assimilated black man or woman capable of giving his/her life to protect the master's goods, life and family" (86). The other is the "out-housed" slave who sleeps in the farmyard. "This slave is not really part of the main house despite his contribution to the well-being of his master" (ibid). Articulations of these identities can be seen in the sports world, interpellations of ideologies expressing the sociohistorical context in which they were formed. Hall (1996) insists that these representations are only possible because they are produced "within codes which have a history, a position within the discursive formations of a particular space and time" (446). It is these codes and discursive formations which I intend to investigate.

George Yancy (2005) provides a personal account of the ways in which the white gaze articulates the black body and returns it to its owner. Yancy asserts that the black body's subjectivity becomes a lived reality, as its identity is formed in the white imaginary and returned to the black body (216). The body's meaning is fundamentally subjective, but the black body has a meaning fixed upon it through the repetition and reiteration of symbols and signs that support certain norms (Yancy, 2005, 216). In other words, media representations of blacks portray them as predominantly athletes or deviants, ascribing a meaning to them that is hard to contest without access to the means of representation. Consequently, in the public imaginary, the black body is fighting a losing battle in defining its own meaning, as the dominant representations are so pervasive that the ability to self-construct a black identity is elusive (Yancy, 2005, 216).

Yancy (2005) suggests that the outside construction of identity for the African-American reinforces the hyper-visibility of black and the invisibility of white (219). The white gaze is not passive, relying on language imbued with historical power, which is constituted by the existence of stereotyped attitudes forming the basis of signification. The white gaze recycles meaning to signify the hyper-visible black bodies upon which it gazes, affixing connotations to them in the public arena through the processes of representation. Here, we witness the process of mediation: the “intermediality” of the images of black men in popular culture and the sociohistorical stereotypes that reinforce an ideology of common sense racism work together to reassert a code that is not defined by the people that inhabit those bodies. Hall (2007) explains that certain codes become so widely distributed, and are learned at such an early age, that they “appear not to be constructed—the effect of an articulation between sign and referent—but to be ‘naturally’ given” (473). Certain codes, specific to a society, achieve a “near-universality” and are overwhelmingly naturalized (ibid). It is these socially constructed codes which, naturalized, mask an unidentified racial privilege, creating white as the unquestioned baseline for comparison.

Foucault (1988) asserts that these problems stem from the imposition of particular ways of knowledge of the self and others. For instance, whites become leaders, blacks are the raw materials whom are in their service on the football field. These dividing practices are a socially constructed division that controls individuals by demarcating their place in society, be it normal, abnormal, black, white etc. (Foucault, 1983). Foucault (1970) argues that within different sets of understandings, discursive conditions shape what can be known and concurrently obstruct what other forms of knowledge can be known. This seems to be the case in the ideological construction of codes of the black

body. Ways of understanding the black body that date back to the days of slavery are maintained through discursive arrangements, in football discourse and elsewhere, that highlight the traditional tenants of the savage, black identity that is incapable of trustworthiness, or leadership. The burden of particular ways of knowledge creates problems of classification, division and surveillance. These dividing practices are socially constructed partitions which serve to control and segregate people (Foucault, 1983). How are these dividing practices maintained? Foucault (1970) argues that within different *epistemes*, different knowledge or discursive conditions form what can be understood while simultaneously making other forms of knowledge irrelevant or unlearnable. Therefore, knowledge was always only a partial or local reality, as it was at the mercy of the epistemological and, hence, the discursive limitations of a particular environment. Thus, the knowledge of North American football, is subject to the racist past of its environment and reflects this local knowledge in its accepted truths today.

Discourses are the “unwritten rules that guide social practices and help to produce and regulate the production of statements that, correspondingly, control what can be understood and perceived, but at the same time act to obscure” (Foucault, 1972, 80). In this way, discourse, power and knowledge are inextricably linked, reinforcing and maintaining the production of one another. I want to suggest that the ideology that informs the discursive formations of the black body is articulated in American football discourses.

Thus, football press is a fertile ground to examine where meaning about black and white bodies is located and how a particular kind of naturalized racial knowledge is produced.

Research Problem

The issue that this project seeks to investigate is well researched and has been approached from a number of different points of entry. Bryan E. Denham et al (2007) perform a content analysis of the 2000 NCAA men's and women's Final Four basketball tournaments. In their analysis, they looked at 1,118 descriptors of the athletes in the tournament used by television commentators to explore whether black athletes were disproportionately praised for their "natural talent" and physicality and white athletes for an "innate ability to overcome seemingly insurmountable odds to accomplish their athletic stature" (355). The findings showed that differential representations of black and white athletes were maintained through language that subtly referred to their abilities as distinctly different. Codes that expressed the physical prowess of a player were overwhelmingly used to describe black athletes, while codes that expressed the intellectual or mental prowess of a player were disproportionately used to describe white athletes.

David J. Leonard's (2006) research on a small group of black male football players at a major college sports program found that the players perceived different treatment from their white counterparts and believed that blacks were denied access to leadership and decision-making positions in college and professional sports. Singer's (2005) interview-based study of African-American football players at a high-profile university, reveals that some black athletes feel that they are being denied access to leadership and major decision-making positions in college and professional sport. Long and McNamee (2004) conducted similar interviews with British soccer players and found that, while the prevailing norms of the soccer world deemed racism non-existent, the

black and Asian players found that they were still subjected to racist taunts and assumptions while also being prevented from making any cultural influence felt on the game they played. A similar study conducted by Brown, Jackson et al. (2003) asked white and black college athletes a series of questions to determine the level of racial identity centrality in conjunction with their sports identities and how that affected their perception of the level of racism in college sports. They tried to identify the student athlete's levels of "athlete identity centrality," which is the level to which they identify themselves as athletes above other personal identifiers, such as American, student, black, white or other such indicators. The results found that those who identified more highly with athletics and rated their sport as extremely important to them felt that racism was less of a problem while those athletes that had a lower level of athlete identity centrality and identified more with their personal identifiers (who were primarily not white) felt that racism was more of a problem. The white student athletes were less race-conscious and did not identify race as an issue that was of too high importance. These results appear to support the notion that whiteness and its normative privileges are less visible for those whom it benefits than for other racial groups (Giroux, 2006). Put differently, whites privilege is a normative form, because the whites do not have to consider their own race as an object of study in a day to day situation. Therefore, white athletes can choose to ignore the power that their whiteness provides to them because whites are naturalized to think of their skin colour as the basis against which others are judged (McIntosh, 2002) and, thus, do not have to see racism as a big issue because it does not have to affect them if they choose to ignore its systemic manifestations.

Racial Ideology Represented

An aspect of racism in sports that has been significantly documented is the representation of black athletes in sports media. For example, McCarthy and Jones (1997) analyze the language of television commentators during coverage of English soccer games to identify the different codes used to describe white players and 'Other' players. They found that, while black players were described positively in all of their areas of testing criteria, "evidence of covert racial stereotyping was found in the excessive positive depictions related to the physicality of the Black players and the psychological characteristics of the White players." (McCarthy, 1997, 348) For instance, white players were predominantly praised with comments such as: "intelligent play" and "general awareness," while 'Other' players were complimented by comments on their "natural physical ability" and "effortless athletic capabilities" (McCarthy, 1997, 351). The implications of the commentary seem to suggest the reification of black male stereotypes; crediting any of their success to innate physical characteristics which subtly suggests a negative evaluation of the black players' work ethic and mental capabilities.

In an American context, Rasmussen, Esgate and Turner (2005) conducted a study with a similar hypothesis, asking track coaches to make judgments on the factors contributing to the success of black and white sprinters. The results indicated that stereotyping based on black physical superiority persist even within the, one would assume, more informed world of competitive coaching.

Similarly, David L. Andrews' et al (2003) study of the white American, suburban acceptance of soccer as the de facto childhood game finds that there are very strong racial stereotypes informing the American pastime of soccer. Studying discourse from

publications and the parents of children who play soccer, Andrews et. al. believe that one of the reasons for soccer's popularity in suburban America is that parents want a sport that is not so dominated by blacks like football or basketball. Based on assumptions and fears of the natural physicality of the poor, "urban", black, that are often signified in basketball and football discourse, the popular imaginary has divided the worlds of soccer and basketball into a set of dichotomies including suburban versus urban, white versus black, and cerebral versus physical (Andrews, 1999). The juxtaposition of "white sports" versus "black sports" brings up a host of subtle racist assumptions, including the *demonization* of black family values, and the innate intelligence and leadership of white athletes. This discourse of suburban soccer could serve as an example of the insidious process of producing meaning on black people or what Stuart Hall's (1990) "common sense racism" or "covert racism" articulates as the racial and class assumptions that are never stated explicitly, but rather are understood through subtle floating signifiers. So when Andrews' soccer parents say that soccer is a more intelligent game, they are really saying that it is an "un-black" game. Codes work in this way to signify deep racial meanings that remain unspoken, but are expressed through terms that are laden with historically-powerful connotations about race.

Gamal Abdel-Shehid (1999) notes the complex ways in which race was signified on the Canadian national basketball team illustrating the practices of recognizing race without ever mentioning it that Andrews et. al. identified in their suburban soccer research. In 1994, a scandal involving the release of two black players from the Canadian national team led to white basketball coach Ken Shields coming under scrutiny for alleged racism. In the investigations that followed, it seemed that the two black

players were cut from the team for being “black” in terms of the racial signifiers popularly used to connote blackness. The report that came out of this investigation used the words “inner city” as a way of “reproducing the biological category ‘race’ and therefore occluding actual social relations of power and inequality” (Abdel-Shehid, 1999, 250).

From the above-cited example, we can see the manifestation of a Foucaudian understanding of the notions of a discursive framework, which we can see uses linguistic codes to “systematically form the objects of which they speak” and “shape the perceptions of reality.” For Foucault (1972), these codes are used to structure power by controlling “what can be understood and perceived” (80). Here, the term inner city, which holds little validity in a Canadian context, was used as a stand-in for the word black and connoted a host of things including a lack of family values, violence, defiance, and a “playground style of basketball” that is highly un-coachable. The term inner-city was used as a code for “black” and, thus, played on the host of historically-signified stereotypes which are associated with young, black men. The use of the terms inner city had no literal basis and, thus, is an act to deny racism as a social relation and rather credit it to cultural or spatial differences (Abdel-Shehid, 1999). Goldberg (1994) argues that the ways of organizing and racializing space, as Abdel-Shehid and Andrews et al have described, are central to racist culture and control through maintaining marginalized groups on the metaphorical periphery of public life.

The rhetoric of professional sports and the messages they endorse usually place blame on the individual and often subtly pathologize the black body and family for their role in the deviance that supposedly causes social ills such as unemployment and crime.

The pathologizing disavowal of historically based racial discrimination actively belittles the importance of racially-oriented social policies and justifies the cutting of dollars from social welfare budgets (Thornton, 1999). This is where sports comes to be seen as the savior of black families. There is a wealth of discourse latent with the message that sports can provide the discipline, role models, structure, support, care and pro-social behavior to black youth that black families cannot (King, 2004).

Andrew D. Thornton's look at the Toronto Raptor's sponsored street basketball tournament extends the discussion on the construction of racialized spaces. The event was heavily attended and supported by the Toronto Police. Here, we see the concept of sports as being capable of constructing "pro-social" behavior in black youth (Thornton, 1999). Here, pro-social behavior comes to stand in for the actual meaning of non-black behavior, in an event that heavily pathologizes black family and community values. Thus, we see the emergence of the two-slave dichotomy that de B'éri (2006) talks about. Behavior that is pro-social is "non-black" and police-sponsored, while black youth are inherently anti-social without intervention such as this. Interestingly enough, Thornton identifies the "inner city" as a racial signifier with powerful connotations in white Canada. Thornton (1999) writes: "'Toronto the white' likes to imagine that social problems arise out of the 'inner city'...however, I would argue that the inner city is nowhere in particular...it is a discursively manufactured social object" (275). Through the discourse of blame which identifies the "inner city" (read: black population) as the root of social ills, blacks are identified as the "'enemy from within' destroying the fabric of 'civilized' culture" (Thornton, 1999, 271), naturally gifted at sports but prone to anti-social criminal physicality without its supportive influence. Michael Nevin Willard

(2002) asserts that the relationship between exoticism of the primitive other and assimilation have gone hand-in-hand and serve to reinforce one another. The exotic primitive exalted and reinforced the elevated status of civilized white culture, while the assimilation of the nonwhite into athlete in organized sports proves the civilizing and elevating influence that sports can have (Willard, 2002).

JR Woodward's (2002) content analysis of National Football League College draft publications to examine the different characterizations of white and black players at the "thinking" positions (quarterback, centre, and inside linebacker) reveals the simultaneous mythification and distrust of black bodies. Woodward begins by explaining the significance of the myth of black physical superiority and its lasting legacy on the game of football. The black body myth, and concurrent myth of black mental inferiority, has produced a phenomenon known as "stacking" in which black players are urged towards the less-cerebral positions that demand the best athletes and white players are pushed towards the "thinking positions." The results showed that scouts were more likely to describe black players in positive terms for their physical and athletic capabilities than white players. Furthermore, white players were more likely to be described positively for their mental attributes.

In addition to being identified as different by virtue of natural abilities, much scholarship has suggested that black bodies are subject to heightened surveillance. As Douglas (2003) and Leonard (2006) observe, the famous black athlete is woe to the projections of incivility and criminality that characterize popular conceptions of African Americans. Douglas (2003) analyzes the discourse surrounding the incredible rise to international championship levels of Venus and Serena Williams to study the ideological

cultural boundaries into elite tennis. His findings suggest that racial articulation is replicated in much of the discourse in the coverage of the Williams sisters, putting up ideological boundaries that focus on their difference and attempt to use them to mark “social, cultural and political differences as if they were unbridgeable human divisions” (pp. 9). This particular articulation creates discursive barriers to their entry into the world of elite tennis competition, as the Williams sisters are identified as uncivil and animalistic. Douglas (2006) explains that this “love of black culture with the simultaneous suspicion and punishment of black bodies is not unusual” especially in sports where it results in “big contracts and demonization, fanfare and condemnation” (160).

Likewise, Barrett (1997) states that the United States and the NBA subscribe to a national “sanitary normative;” a sort of typical American Family values type idea, that emphasizes the family as a precondition for emotional and moral social life and claims a moral and ethical monopoly on economic and public entertainment life. (109) Considering the predominantly black make-up of the NBA today, this would appear to present a crisis to the “sanitary normativity” of the league, as the notion of black bodies articulates an otherness that would seem to be wholly threatening to the moral framework in which the NBA operates. However, because race is not a genetic reality, the sanitary normative is maintained by black players acquiescing to the prohibitions on social desire and morality demanded by the NBA. (pp. 110) Here, the projections of fear and suspicion of the white imaginary on the black body have the potential to influence sports culture in a very significant way.

David J. Leonard (2006) argues that the proposal of age limits barring players from going to the NBA immediately after high school is a move that corresponds to the societal urge to monitor and police black males. For Leonard (2006), the National Basketball Association, under pressure from fans contemptuous of the “hip-hop influence on the NBA”, is seeking to condemn the black youth culture that has made it so popular in recent years. This is akin to King’s (2004) assertion that black athletes are denied the ability to fully affect the culture of professional sports. Similarly, Andrews (2001) and Barret (1997) use the examples of Michael Jordan and Dennis Rodman, respectively, to discuss the ways black athletes are accepted into professional sports; they are allowed to compete, but must adhere to the sanitary normative of white America and remain properly marketable. While the cultural marks of black influence are felt in the forms of hip-hop aesthetics and the like, there is still the perception of being “hired help” in professional sports. Providing the “raw materials” in the forms of their bodies, but being denied the ability to lead and manage.

While there are a host of destructive roles that sports plays in the representation of black bodies, there is a wealth of scholarship and discourse that offers professional sports as a site of resistance for marginalized black men. CLR James (1963) believed that sports had the potential to serve as a stage with immense symbolic currency. Amy Bass (2002) offers the example of Tommie Smith and John Carlos raising their black-glove covered hands in a gesture of black power and solidarity on the podium at the 1968 Olympic Games medal ceremony and the Olympic Project for Human Rights (OPHR) who tried to turn the Olympics into a source of black empowerment, as opposed to an arena in which racist assumptions ruled. Similarly, Thornton (2002) cites the

performance of black competitors at the street basketball tournament as resisting white notions of how black bodies should be publicly displayed and controlled, signifying a disharmony with racist conceptions of the superhuman black.

The main problematic with the research object that I have laid out lies in two main areas: (1) discourse and (2) ideology. Discursive formations operate to maintain and furnish racial ideologies. Therefore, linguistic codes must be examined in order to locate the meaning of these ideologies and how they function within the discourse of talent evaluation in professional American football.

Critical Race Theory

In examining the discursive articulation of racism present in professional sports ideology and the racial ideologies through which this discourse is framed it would be wise to mobilize the complex field and literature of Critical Race Theory (hereafter CRT). Emerging out of critical legal investigations in the 1970s and 1980s and crystallizing in the Critical Legal Scholar (CLS) conferences of the Mid-90s, CRT progressed from a “loose group of coloured folk at the margins of CLS to an experienced group of insurgents who occupied centre stage at the national CLS conference” (Williams Crenshaw, 2002, 15) helped understand how relations of power and powerlessness are institutionalized in legal structures (Inglesias, 2002). Scholars using Critical Race Theory focus on the analysis of the “procedures” and “substance” of law and, more specifically, of anti-discrimination law; their analyses suggest that most of these legal structures work to maintain white privilege (Valdes, 2002). Furthermore, the neutrality and objectivity espoused in the discourse of anti-racism are “harmful fictions that obscure the normative

supremacy of whiteness in American law and society” (Valdes, 2002, 1). Thus, the typically highly-touted quality of “colour-blindness” is shunned by Critical Race Theorists as passive and ignoring the normative function of white privilege that pervades through law and society.

In the Valdes, McCristal Culp, and Angela P. Harris’ collection entitled *Crossroads, Directions and a New Critical Race Theory* the authors introduce this analytical perspective as coming from an explicitly race-conscious and decisively outsider perspective (Valdes, 2002). They go on to explain the three entrenched, mainstream beliefs concerning racial injustice that CRT staunchly opposes:

1. “blindness” to race will eliminate racism
2. racism is a matter of individuals, not systems.
3. one can fight racism without paying attention to sexism, homophobia, economic exploitation, and other forms of oppression and injustice.²

Indeed, for CRT scholars, racial identification can be a source of fulfillment, strength and progressive legislation in a world in which most of us are complicit in complex structures of exploitation and domination. One of the central arguments of most CRT analyses is that the intricate web of domination which goes unnoticed or unchallenged poses the real threat and helps to maintain racial privilege for some and injustice for others. For example, a CRT approach would also support a common allegiance with other exploited groups that operate under the same restrictive matrix of domination (Nunn, 2002); conceptions such as colour blindness and the rhetoric of “merit” operate as discourses of racial power in presumptively race-neutral institutes (Williams Crenshaw, 2002). In fact, from a CRT perspective, such discourses ignore the way that laws contribute to the structural power of white privilege and facilitate the systemic disempowerment of the

² Valdes, Francisco, Jerome McCristal Culp, and Angela P. Harris (eds.) (2002). *Crossroads, Directions and a New Critical Race Theory*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1.

powerless (Williams Crenshaw, 2002). As Kenneth B. Nunn (2000) points out, law contributes to Eurocentric hegemony in three concrete ways:

1. Law “controls the beast” by organizing and directing white institutions and cultural practices
2. Law “polices” white culture and operates to help determine which ideas and practices are valued in that culture and which can be identified as threat subjects
3. Law works to legitimate white institutions and practices of white dominance (432).

Thus, the law provides structure and control to ideas of white privilege and dominance that have founded North America and Western culture in general.

In her tracing of the history of the development of CRT, Williams Crenshaw emphasizes the ways in which the rhetoric of colour blindness and merit serve to support the structural power of white domination by maintaining the invisibility of whiteness and its privileged position in the injustice of racial minorities. Crenshaw describes the colour blind discourse as a virtual lunch counter, “the rationalization for racial power in which few are served and many are denied” (Williams Crenshaw, 2002, 26).

For Robert Young (2001), race is the result of articulations of production. Young notes that racism emerges out of the real economic, social and cultural conditions of market capitalism, as racial categorization is the historical articulation of divisions of labour that structure unequal access to surpluses (336). Young, like Stuart Hall emphasizes that racism is not a case of evil or misguided individuals, but rather

a structural designation and (ideological) legitimation of a subordinated structural position within the relations of production. Thus the transformation of racism is part of the larger struggle to transform the economic enabling conditions of possibility—the regime of wage-labour, which deploys race to maintain and increase necessary profit margins (338).

Young's analysis of the social construction of race goes even deeper than most CRT applications. He moves his analysis beyond social relation to support the idea of the myths of meritocracy and erasure of difference that are so integral to CRT. For Young, racial oppression and inequality operates in the service of justifying capitalist exploitation and inequity, central in the North American economy. According to Kenneth B. Nunn (2000), the very centre of European culture is distinguished by morals that are highly materialistic and this has a pervasive influence on all of that culture's social relations. The nature of reality is conceived in material terms and the acquisition of objects is the primary social goal (Nunn, 2000, 430). Consequently, competition becomes extremely critical and individualism and aggression are valued as tremendous assets in the quest for property accumulation. From this comes an incessant need to dominate and control, out of which these racial meaning-systems or hierarchies are created. Objectification of other people becomes a necessary outgrowth of this materialistic mindset, in which people are categorized for ease of domination.

Catherine A. MacKinnon (2002) reiterates the CRT ethos that colour blind rhetoric hides and maintains white privilege. She insists that there remains a social and cultural "racialism" that affixes certain attributes to certain racial groups and explains racial difference as "the natural outcome of meritocracy and the free play of the market" (MacKinnon, 2002, 88). This new subtle, "non-racist" racialism functions in the same way as the classic overt racism of old, in that it serves to justify material conditions and disparities that are distinctly racialized (MacKinnon, 2002). However, the new racialism, in MacKinnon's view, does so without ever acknowledging the importance of race that

seems to nonetheless be the focal point. Such is the insidious nature of racism which the race-conscious perspective of CRT seeks to flesh out.

Anthony Paul Farley, in “the Poetics of Colorblind Space” articulates the extent to which the white supremacist ideology pervades society and makes racial policies that use the language of equality and colour blindness such a farce. For Farley (2002), race finds its expression in many areas of North American society, not the least of which being law. “The law is an argon of perception—a great ephemeral skin and through it we come to see ourselves as masters and slaves, segregators and segregated, white and black, subject and object, sadist and masochist” (Farley, 2002, 99). According to Farley (2002), the law was created within a culture that takes pleasure in the dominance of white over black and, thus, the laws are imbued with the same lens of white privilege and scorn for blacks that has historically characterized white/black relations in the United States; an unequal distribution of power, with the black body propping up the white identity by its identification as inferior. As Farley (2002) emphasizes, “to be black is to be available for humiliation, to be white is to partake of race-pleasure, and to be colour blind is to repress one’s awareness of the entire enterprise” (108). The structural power of white racism and white privilege depend on these three aspects—humiliation, pleasure and denial (Farley, 2002). As Ross (2002) points out, some right-thinking whites see themselves as “burdened by their whiteness” in the face of policies such as affirmative action and the rhetoric of “political correctness” (Banning, 2004). Consequently, a proper reading of CRT suggests that laws that ignore this history are useless in providing racial justice as they would be merely building on the tradition of white privileging structures and

controls. CRT suggests that the best way to resist white dominance is outside of the law (Nunn, 2000, 433).

The CRT approach to dispelling the myth of colour blind equality is supported by Robert L. Hayman Jr. and Nancy Levit (2002), as they claim that a conception of equality as sameness requires a denial of difference. This difference means the rejection of the “we are all the same” ethos. However, this rejection is accompanied by the articulation of the disparities in terms of sociopolitical realities for different races. Thus, the real differences of specific existing contexts are submerged and viewed as abnormal or nonexistent, resulting in an oppressive stigma attached to races and the differences they may have.

Rory McVeigh (2004) puts forth a theory that identifies that structural differentiation, such as unequal opportunity as in the previous example, can be seen as plausible by a mass of people. McVeigh (2004) argues that “racial and ethnic heterogeneity, industrial heterogeneity, income inequality and changes in the economic structure within local communities provide ‘evidence’ that may appear to be consistent with white supremacists’ claims” (895). This certitude comes from the suppressed differences of colour blind meritocracy rhetoric; historical and socially-ingrained disadvantages are ignored, yet differences are used to confirm previous white supremacist assumptions. As bell hooks (2007) notes, the “liberal belief in a universal subjectivity (we are all just people)” ignores the “primacy of whiteness as a sign informing who they are and what they think.” (pp. 487)

This point is clearly distilled by Derrick A. Bell Jr. (2000) in his analysis of the legal legacy of whiteness. Bell (2000) states that “a major function of racial

discrimination is to facilitate the exploitation of black labour, to deny us access to benefits and opportunities that would otherwise be available and to blame all the manifestations of exclusion-bred despair on the asserted inferiority of the victims” (71). This discrimination is apparent in the denial-of-difference discourse in the anti-affirmative action rhetoric, in which the denial of difference is used as proof of the inferiority of black candidates.

To accept these denials is to accept the notions of meritocracy and equality that accompany most anti-racist colour blind rhetoric. However, Hayman (2002) suggests a brief review of history reveals that the ideas of merit and intellect were developed together with notions of white superiority and made to correlate in the tradition of colonialist racism. In Bell’s (2000) description of the ways in which white power resists challenges to its privileged position, he reveals the implicit character of meritocracy and colour blind discourses. The resistance to affirmative action and other meaningful forms of relief for discrimination intone that black gains threaten the comparative status of whites, who feel they are entitled to preferential treatment over blacks. However, this is usually couched in a discourse of the “better man for the job being denied because he is white” or blacks benefiting from government-sanctioned programs rather than having to work hard. Thus, the denial of any difference in starting-position becomes a way to express white power and prestige. A black person getting any type of prestigious job now becomes a site of scorn upon which the fears of dwindling white privilege can be affixed.

As a movement of resistance, CRT analyses challenge the dominant narratives by ascertaining race-conscious positions that dispute the silently accepted truths of race,

what Stuart Hall (2004) would call “moments of rearticulation.” Sumi Cho and Robert Westley (2002) cite the example of student diversity activists that worked at the forefront of the CRT movement. To them, the work of the student activists constituted a form of subjugated knowledge that challenges unifying theories that offer a totalizing, singular explanation of how societies are structured (Cho, 2002, 35). For Cho and Westley (2002), dominant discourses absorb and make invisible these illegitimate bases of knowledge that resistant movements use for their ends. The narrative of privilege alters events in remembrance in order to subjugate the movement and the knowledge which it produces (Cho, 2002, 49). The anti-subordination discourses espoused by CRT proponents are based on, for Elizabeth M. Inglesias (2002), “reorganizing institutional structures, reforming legal doctrines that construct white privilege and restructuring the order of knowledge that informs and legitimates these doctrines” (316).

The field of American football discourse brings up many problems. The discourse which I intend to investigate is imbued with ideological considerations, such as invisibility, privilege, and a host of converging and negotiated interests. The wealth of CRT scholarship that I have merely outlined will serve me well in performing analysis on the complex field of football discourse. CRT provides a foundation and analytical template for deconstructing the institutions that produce racism, and enables new articulations to be made in this terrain that it has cleared. Consequently, this history is invaluable in the discourse analysis of the structure of meaning in the National Football league.

Power, Discourse and Cultural Practice

From the synthesis of CRT and the extensive scholarship on racial representation and sport, it is clear that essentialist racist ideas are discursively manufactured and perpetuated. de Certeau (2006) refers to it as “the black sun of language,” in that there is an inability on the part of language to explain itself, as there is “an essential void,” in which language and the epistemological spaces of perception constantly refer back to themselves (de Certeau, 2006, 174). The weight of ideology and its implications on knowledge weigh heavily and, as de Certeau says, “the ground of our certainty is shaken when it is revealed that we can no longer *think* a thought from the past” (de Certeau, 2006, 177). This describes perfectly the “genealogy of discourse” which Foucault describes and I have appropriated for this project. It is the unknowing replication of thoughts from the past through changing language and discourses. This questioning of our *a priori* comes into play when examining the seemingly naturalized roles that are used so often in football discourses. Indeed, this research focuses on the location of meaning in sport discourses. Precisely, the following questions guide this investigation:

1. Where is the meaning located in football evaluative discourses? Is it on the surface level of the descriptions or are ideologies being transmitted through codes in the language?
2. What are the easily-understood codes that work to transmit ideology?
3. Do the codes and ideology found in football evaluative discourses fit within a history of racialized knowledge of black and white bodies?

These questions aim to help us de-essentialize the meaning that circumscribes roles and talents based on the race of a player and opens up the location of this “knowledge” to a new kind of investigation and debate.

Discourses, according to Foucault (1983), function to provide order and stability. Consequently, discourses coalesce within a specific social context and help people to produce meaning and conceptual understanding about objects and subjects.” Discourses function to systematically form and define the objects of which they speak, as they are not merely language, but “practices that shape the perceptions of reality” (Foucault, 1972, 49). “Discourse is (a) regulated practice that accounts for a certain number of statements” (*enoncé*) and acts as “the unwritten ‘rules’ that guide social practices and help to produce and regulate the production of statements that, correspondingly, control what can be understood and perceived, but at the same time act to obscure” (80). In other words, discourses, which as Althusser and Hall state, are under the influence of ideological frameworks, control acceptable areas of speech and communication and create certain accepted knowledge that could become naturalized and common while making other realities, *voice-full*, voiceless and ignored.

De Certeau (1984) emphasizes that discourses and discursive positions are determined by rules that cannot be clearly seen. These rules are pervasive and serve to naturalize and essentialize discursive positions that are neither natural nor essential. Consequently, following de Certeau (1984), it can be articulated that the seemingly natural roles of football players historically associated with white and black players are organized through language and practices filtered through an ideological web of racial discourses. Thus, roles for players based on race would potentially become

circumscribed under an ideology that has been rooted in racist “knowledge” of the capabilities of differently coloured people, discourses helping to articulate a particular demarcation of player roles on the football field.

This research focuses on understanding the ways in which this separation of roles for black and white football players is articulated. The existing literature on race and sports in North America poses several questions, which lead to investigating the location of meaning in football discourses that has positioned black players in a marginalized position beyond stats leader or top-draft picks. Therefore, how this social history of racist ideology manifests itself in the forum of player evaluation is an important question that needs to be acknowledged.

Methodology

The methodological approach to this project will consist of a qualitative content analysis that will systematically scan the language of from cover to cover of five different magazines that are specially printed annually for the NFL college draft; (1) The Sporting News Pro Football 2007 Draft Guide, (2) Street and Smith's Pro Football Draft Reference 2007, (3) ESPN NFL Draft Guide 2007, (4) Pro Football Weekly 2007 Draft Guide, and (5) Lindy's Pro Football Draft magazine from 2007. The NFL draft is an annual event where the NFL teams take turns picking, and then signing to their team, the best football players leaving college that year.

I will be using Hall's method of articulation in conjunction with a genealogy of discourse from Hall, Althusser, Foucault, and de Certeau as the guiding principles of my investigation. Furthermore, de B'éri's key characteristics of zoological cinema will act as a model for my examination as I need an intermedial positioning for my evaluation. Because my object involves so many elements, de B'éri's model of zoological representations in cinema will help me to link discursive markers with a particular set of meaning, but as well make clear identifiers of a naturalized racist knowledge that is rooted in American social history.

Hall's Theory and Method of Articulation

In order to examine the complex and subtle ways that racial ideology may influence and inform the world of football talent evaluation, I am going to mobilize Stuart Hall's *theory* and *method* of articulation. Articulation as both a theory and a method in Cultural Studies allows me to interpret the complicated and conflicting ways in

which power manifests itself in the arena of sports discourse as represented in the magazines and interviews and the structures which dominate the discourse. According to Hall, articulation is a way of thinking about the structures of knowledge and discourse as an interplay between correspondencies, non-correspondencies and contradictions as ruptures in the formation of what are thought to be unities (Stack, 2004, 112). Thus, articulation, as a method and theory, can help provide *possible* linkages to the connection between a sociohistoric legacy of racism in North America and the place of racialized football discourse in that history. Jennifer Daryl Stack (2004) rightly points out that Hall's theory of articulation "is not just a thing, but a process of creating connections, much in the same way that hegemony's not domination but the process of creating and maintaining consensus or of coordinating interests" (114).

Articulation is, thus, able to be used as a method of exploring possible connections and explanations for cultural and social forms of representation, as in this case football discourses. For Hall an articulation is thus:

the form of the connection that can make a unity of two different elements, under certain conditions, it is a linkage which is not necessary, determined, absolute and essential for all time...the so called 'unity' of a discourse is really the articulation of different, distinct elements which can be articulated in different ways because they have no necessary belongingness. The 'unity' which matters is a linkage between the articulated discourse and the social forces with which it can under certain historical conditions, but need not necessarily be connected (Hall, 1986, 53).

Articulation, therefore, is an ideal method to examine the complicated ways in which power and a racialized logic of people and their bodies can come to inform the evaluative discourses of professional football.

In the method and theory of articulation comes a unity, however it is a complex unity that is always a complex structure which is related as much through difference as through similarities (Hall, 1986). Using articulation to form a connection means that “the combination is a structure (an articulated combination) and not a random association—that there will be structured relations between its parts, i.e., relations of dominance and subordination” (Hall, 1986, 53). Here, the method of articulation is ideal for the examination of football discourse as it is a complex field in which several racial groups and combined, multiple, and intricate identities or positionalities combine for team achievement and goals in a distinctive subculture that still seems to have distinctive hierarchies and ideological infringement transmitted from the dominant culture, negotiated into that particular framework.

An important number of studies conclude that black athletes feel like they are under a heightened surveillance and are watched and policed more harshly than their white counterparts. Others feel that there is less access to positions of power in professional sports and a dominant hierarchy and tradition that maintains a racist atmosphere in the football world. Therefore, examining sports discourse for possible connections becomes important as Richard Delgado (2000) “the accumulation of negative images presents them with one massive destructive choice: either to hate one’s self, as culture so systematically demands, or to have no self at all, to be nothing” (132). Consequently, articulation provides the best route to investigating discourses as “the analysis of any concrete situation or phenomenon entails the exploration of complex, multiple and theoretically abstract non-necessary links” (Stark, 2004, 119). Discourse,

after all, has no essential class meaning and the connotations of discourse are always *associatively* linked to different class interests and characters (ibid).

Approaching race, as I have chosen to, as a historically formed, discursively-reinforced object (I view race as a discursive category, with nearly no scientific reality; race as “more like a language than the way in which we are biologically constituted” (Hall, 1997, “Race, the floating signifier”). According to Hall, race is a signifier that is constructed through a social history that has endowed these signs with so much power. Thus, racial meaning changes with context as it is merely a floating signifier and is, therefore, negotiable not essential or fixed and therefore open to redefinition and appropriation (ibid.). Consequently, the codes (Hall, 2007) I am forced to use *black* and *white* are not my preferred terms; nor am I perfectly comfortable with this binary of identity classification, however, I am constricted by the naturalized terminology within the culture we live in. Thus, as is the case with most representation of black and white in North America, white comes to signify people of European-descent, with light skin, European names, and certain Caucasian identifiable features. Black, on the other hand, comes to signify “the Other.” In accordance with the “one-drop rules”, black players come to represent all that is not normatively white. Included in this category is the popular conception of black, regardless of the multiple meanings and identities in collective connotation.

“If what is at issue is the operation of the discursive, it is easy to leave behind any notion that anything exists outside of discourse. Struggle is reduced to struggle in discourse where there is no reason why anything is or isn’t potentially articulatable with anything and society becomes a totally open discursive field” (Hall, 1986, 56). For de

Certeau (1998) the world of language and culture becomes “the battlefield of a new colonialism” (134). As all forms of need and desire “get covered” by the media, the democratic experience is replaced with “the reception of standardized signifiers that destine workers to become consumers...turn people into a public mass” (ibid). The discourse that informs the mass, becomes a spotlight for struggles over representation and against “a hardening mentality, continuing patterns of traditional behavior beneath their outer metamorphosis” (133). Historical ideological practices are maintained despite changing discursive practices, as new signifiers come to represent old ideas. Discourses come to essentialize subjects and circumscribe the limits of acceptable expression, much the way the boundaries of a football field define the territory demarcated for play within the rules.

Hall (1986) supports this notion, stating that “to conceptualize all practices as nothing but discourse, and all as nothing but discourse, and all historical agents as discursively constituted subjectivities, to talk about concrete individuals can be interpellated in different subject positionalities” (56). It is in the open field of discourse where identities are formed and notions created and maintained. This is where words and images operate in maintaining the “rules of play” in North American discourses on black and white subjects, the sociohistoric legacy of brutality subjected upon the black body and the exaltation of white intellect protecting invisible whiteness and threatened white masculinity.

Hall’s method of articulation will be utilized in examining football evaluative discourses and their possible connections to a seemingly prevalent phenomenon of black “marginalization” in professional sports, as it accounts for the many interpellations of

ideology that can occur in such a complex world of multiracial collaboration. The world of football is often portrayed as an autonomous institution, separate from the racist history of North America, where results and participation are innocent and free of impingement from extraneous influences. However, because the football world is an articulated structure, it must be examined with the idea of the ways in which the seemingly autonomous social, institutional, technical, economic and political forces are organized into unities that are successful and are reasonably empowering (Stark, 2004, 124). Football discourses which, under investigation, are highly racialized have become naturalized through articulated relationships that are formed discursively and create a racialized knowledge of the athletic body and mind.

On Ideology: Articulating Althusser's and Hall's Views of Articulation

This examination is informed by current theories on the practices of representation and knowledge production. Here, Althusser's and Hall's analysis of ideology and the impact of ideology on discourse and representation are central to the understanding of the object of my research. In addition, Foucault's ideas regarding the power of discourse will be used in examining the articulations of a racial knowledge in the discourse of the National Football League. For example, Foucault notes that "dominant individuals, groups, corporations and states do not arrive at their position because they have power but because of contingent workings and at times the tactical usages of discourses." (Foucault, 1983, 223) In discourse, the web of power, passing through apparatuses and institutions without being localized in them becomes entangled and manifests itself in the

effect of certain phenomena. This notion of power as fluid and inconspicuous will tailor my analysis of the discourse of the professional football community. Put differently, I will analyze the NFL's college draft discourses from the perspective that these discourses perform the role of regulating and disciplining people into certain historically circumscribed roles.

Objects of the Study

The core of this research object consists of evaluative discourses on players entering the 2007 NFL college draft, from five magazines that rate and describe the pros and cons of college players eligible to be drafted into the NFL. These magazines are:

1. Lindy's Pro Football Draft 2007 magazine
2. Sporting News Pro Football Draft 2007 magazine
3. Street & Smith's Pro Football Draft 2007 magazine
4. Pro Football Weekly's 2007 Draft Guide
5. ESPN's NFL Draft Guide 2007

The rationale that guided the selection of these magazines is their selling rank; indeed, they represent the top selling draft guidebooks on the market, with the most extensive coverage and in-depth analysis.

The coding of potential racial discourse in these magazines lies in the ways in which they articulate (give particular kind of meaning to) *meat-market* indexes, which list heights, weights, speeds, bench press repetitions and personal histories as well as the potentials and limitations of analyzed players. Here, seasoned-scouts see and qualify prospective draftee's future in the world of professional sports, with precise indexes and

codes that have been naturalized in the language of this sport. In addition, each magazine describes the desired qualities of each position and what it takes to be the best in that role. Consequently, in an atmosphere that is highly focused on determining the mental and physical capabilities of NFL candidates there is much to be learned about how different coloured athletes are evaluated and how their talents are represented. It would seem as though there are few other prints of discourse that can tell us so much about how black and white bodies are viewed and their qualities defined as these annual guides can.

Qualitative Content Analysis

The nature of this project demands a non-traditional approach to the content analysis. Traditional content analysis is a method for analyzing the content of communication message or representation. Therefore, a researcher in a typical content analysis identifies units of analysis within a set of communications. These units of analysis could include words, phrases, sentences, speeches, television programs, or any other type of symbolic communication (Wimmer et al, 2003). Whereas for Baldwin et al (2004) content analysis is a “method of studying and analyzing communication in a systematic, objective, and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring variables” (141).

This thesis is not looking for purely statistics, nor could I claim to be approaching the objects of this research from a purely objective standpoint. Rather, I am performing a systematic analysis of the research object for certain markers that have racial connotations from which I can draw inferences and conclusions and create my own articulation of the meanings that these codes have within a history of racist knowledge.

Indeed, one can then perform a content analysis on virtually any message that they wish to investigate further; and this is essential to the project. Consequently, it would be foolish to not employ some elements of content analysis. However, unlike a traditional content analysis, I will be looking for phrases as a unit of analysis to support my qualitative description of these statements.

While I will be employing some elements of empirical study such as Denham et al. (2007) do in their article “Differential Accounts of Race in Broadcast Commentary of the 2000 NCAA Men’s and Women’s Final Four Basketball Tournaments,” there are some significant differences. Denham’s analysis looks at thousands of words as indicators referring to the physicality, background, work ethic, leadership, intelligence, personality and tries to gauge the frequency of them and the statistical relationship to the race and gender of the player being described. This thesis focuses on similar codes, but does so more for a qualitative analysis in which these coded-statements can be located within a history of meaning that is heavily influenced by a racialized-ideology: a social doxa. Thus, this project can be understood as a combinaison of methods of analysis which mobilizes some elements of content analysis, such as can be found in the Denham (2007) article, together with discourse analysis as can be found in the Douglas (2003) work, in which Douglas makes articulations between the discourse of media coverage and commentary on Venus and Serena Williams and their class, race, gender and the sociohistorical context in which these statements were made.

Attempting to locate a racialized meaning of football discourse necessitates a systematic approach to analyzing codes in combination with a theory and method of articulation that recognizes the fluid and changing nature of discourses. Hence, I am

identifying and quantifying codes in conjunction with a method of articulation that makes connections between these codes and a racist ideology.

Application

To ensure there is a qualitative evaluative framework in my assessment of these discourses, I will employ Boulou Ebanda de B'éri's (2006) tropes of zoological representations in cinema onto the evaluations of black and white. It appears that white players have certain set signifiers that seem to be naturalized and inalienable. Therefore, with the help of de B'éri's tropes of racial representation in colonial cinema, I want to be able to explore how black players are characterized in evaluative discourse. In other words, it appears that white players, as in accordance with the "one-drop" rule which seems to guide popular North American conceptions of identity, represent the norm against which the Other is formed. Consequently, this investigation will explore how "the Other" came to be represented in contrast to the normative white players through the main characteristics of classic colonial representation de B'éri (2006, 80) defines as:

1. Wild animal: Blacks were characterized as animalistic and uncivilized
2. Untrustworthiness: Blacks could not be a 'right-hand' because of their obscurantism, barbarism, and especially their unpredictability.
3. The servant character: Blacks could serve under the control of civilized white masters.

The fourth characteristic of zoological representation is *reinstalled nobleness*. This characteristic representing "the idea that Blacks could become noble after their faithful service to the master of bloody fight for their own liberty" (ibid), will not be included in this research because this characteristic is hardly applicable in the discourses of the draft evaluation magazines. However, by analyzing the evaluative discourse on black players

in this framework, we can place football discourse within a sociohistorical legacy of racism and racist ideology in which it was organized. Through a synthesis of the principles of ideology and discourse and how they combine to form and represent subjects within a historical and socially articulated place, I hope to interrogate the world of football evaluation practices of representation and locate the meaning of these highly naturalized terms to which both black and white players and coaches seem to subscribe.

Analysis

When examining these five football draft publications it becomes clear that the football field is racially divided. There are specific positions where white athletes are almost wholly excluded and other positions where white players outnumber black players and one position, tight end, where black players are almost entirely absent.

Consequently, the discourse analyses of these magazines follows the player's position in the football field: 1) quarterbacks, 2) offensive tackle, 3) offensive guard, 4) defensive end, and 5) outside linebacker. I have divided the sections this way, as these positions have the greatest parity in terms of white players and black players and, consequently, should provide the most indicators of how black and white players' skill sets are represented by the scouting staff at these magazines.

The traits described in de B'éri's (2006) characteristics of zoological representation could be metaphorically applied in many capacities within the pages of these magazines. Sometimes, they can be stated outright, but more often than not, they are inferred from the proximity of descriptions of black athletes next to white athletes. However, there are very clear signifiers which demarcate black from white and, in many cases, it is not hard to infer the colour of a player just from the terms in which he is described.

Wild Animal:

The *wild animal* characteristic is often represented through the expression of a "natural" athleticism on the part of black athletes. John Edgar Wideman describes this as a contemporary slavery, in which black men have been "caged" within this notion of

black masculinity, as these long-standing representations of black masculinity and physicality are built on the animalistic representations of the black male body that have long been the site of white fascination, consumption and fear (in Guzzio, 2005, pp. 223-224). Thus, the preoccupation with the supposed physical superiority and masculine power of the black body takes part in the history of zoological knowledge and depiction of the black male.

The wild animal characteristic becomes articulated in football in the description of the physicality of black players and the potential of off-field violence. Black players are most often described for their physical measures and qualities that could make them superior athletes. Within the sociohistoric context that these descriptions are made, they articulate contemporary manifestations of a legacy of racial consciousness; a legacy which sees the black body as possessing inherently superior physical gifts, which coincide with inferior intellect or work ethic. The utterance of praise for the physical specimen that is the mythical black body silently footnote “they were bred to work” connotations. The black body is enshrined with mythical super-human, almost wild animal-like abilities (Andrews, 2001).

For instance, *ESPN* magazine’s 2000 NFL preview features a cover emblazoned with a bare-chested Edgerin James (the then Indianapolis Colts running back) with his clenched fist punching his open palm, baring his gold teeth in a menacing scowl, sweat dripping down his body. Inside, articles proclaim that black teenagers in Miami “have two choices: football or die” (vol. 3, no. 18, 118). Simeon Rice’s body is described as “a thing of wonder...his arms reach so wide that when you see replays of him sacking Brett Favre, it looks like Shaq hugging Kobe” (*ESPN*, 2002, vol. 5 no. 26, 50). Describing

Jevon Kearse, then rookie defensive end with the Tennessee Titans, *ESPN* (2000, vol. 3, no. 24) proclaims “people are drawn to him because of his Molotov explosiveness on the field, and because of an absurd genetic mixture of 4.3 speed in the 40-yard dash, off-the-charts athleticism and waffle-iron-size hands rarely seen outside of Saturday-morning cartoons” (54). The black male is repeatedly constructed, in football discourses, as naturally gifted with natural physical prowess that must be honed, kept under control and reigned in. The interpellations between this and other popular representations of black males articulate a popular connotation of the black male as wild animal.

Untrustworthiness

The second characteristic of zoological representation that de B'éri (2006) describes is “untrustworthiness”. This characteristic is most frequently articulated in NFL evaluative discourses. Most often, concerns about the work ethic, desire, “heart” and “character” of a black NFL prospect brings about this characteristic. In addition, this characteristic is articulated, hand-in-hand with the notion of natural physical superiority. As Rasmussen et al. (2005) note, the success of white players is often attributed to environmental factors while success for blacks is attributed to biological factors.

This does nothing to acknowledge the work ethic of black athletes or the environmental factors that may have influenced their success, for instance, family involvement. Thus, the wild animal characteristic is reflected in the untrustworthy characteristic and vice versa. McCarthy and Jones (1997) explain: “to say that Blacks are athletically gifted comes close to the negative stereotype of the lazy Black athlete in that he or she does not have to work hard to obtain athletic excellence” (357).

This observation is a very common symptom of these evaluative discourses. For example, when white athletes are alone together it is an oft lamented notion that black players have been blessed with natural physical superiority and that white athletes must work twice as hard to even keep up. We see this reflected upon the discourse praising white athletes for their “toughness” (*ESPN*, 2007, 33), “motor” (83) and “desire” (73), while conversely qualifying black players as “raw and undisciplined” (*Sporting News*, 2007, 53) and, thus, unworthy of trust and responsibility. This can be seen in the aforementioned description of Jevon Kearse’s abilities, describing his speed and athleticism as “freak”-like and the product of a “genetic mixture” (*ESPN*, 2000, vol. 3, no. 24, 54).

The black athlete is also inscribed as untrustworthy through criminality and lawlessness. The article entitled “character counts” in *Street and Smith’s* draft guide describes how NFL teams are placing more value than ever before on a player’s “character” instead of his athletic abilities or statistics. The article, without ever overtly saying so, inscribes the black athletic body as lacking in character and, thus, untrustworthy. Within the article, a litany of black players are marched out as examples of players with criminal records being character risks when teams are looking to sign a player.

Jonathon Joseph, Chris Henry, Odell Thurman, Lawrence Taylor, Ray Lewis, AJ Nicholson, Reggie McNeal, Adam “Pacman” Jones, and Maurice Clarett are lacking in character due to criminal charges (*Street and Smith’s*, 2007, 7). This seems at odds with the fact that Lawrence Taylor is frequently lauded as the greatest defensive player of all time and Ray Lewis is a sure-fire first ballot choice for entering the NFL Hall of Fame.

The two examples of white players in the article come in the forms of Eric Steinbach, a guard for the Cincinnati Bengals, who was arrested for operating a boat while intoxicated and Ryan Leaf, a high drafted, highly paid quarterback who under-performed in the NFL and retired after a few seasons. Ryan Leaf has, through sports media discourse, become stamped with traditional black signifiers and discursively formed as a black subject. It is interesting, because here we see the power of signification as applied to the body and infamous legacy of Ryan Leaf. Ryan Leaf has been described as the “biggest bust in NFL history”, a bust being a highly paid, high-drafted player coming out of college who turns out to be a disappointment in the NFL. Ryan Leaf is described in all the terms characteristic of black players: highly-skilled, waste of talent, lack of commitment, lack of desire, mentally weak and a flop after he got a big pay cheque. Furthermore, Leaf is perennially compared to the quarterback drafted one spot ahead of him. Peyton Manning, perhaps the “whitest” player in the NFL as both his father and brother played in the NFL, he is characterized by his unwavering dedication to the game and his team, his selfless play, his commanding leadership, his intellectual approach to the game and his lack of speed and agility. It is, thus, not surprising that Ryan Leaf and other non-criminals’ character issues are placed in proximity to the criminal woes of some black NFLers. Criminality becomes associated with “black” athletes (whether or not they are dark in skin colour) and becomes synonymous with character concerns of the black athlete. Consequently, the black football player, be it the African-American Chris Henry or the white Ryan Leaf, become conjuncturally connected to crime and untrustworthiness. This seems to fall in line with dominant associations of black men, hip hop and crime. When overt blackness or outspokenness is perceived as threatening, it becomes demarcated as

non-white (or not prescribing to the sanitary normative of the dominant hegemonic order) to the dominant hegemonic order and, consequently, marginalized as untrustworthy (Douglas, 2003).

The discourses of professional sports has circumscribed Leaf with characteristics that have been historically naturalized as being constitutive to black; just as black players can gain conditional acceptance into the white world (Fanon, 1967). In football, this is done by black players ensuring that they hustle on every single play, work hard in the film room, lead by example, refrain from any overtly cocky talk and excessive celebration and refraining from speaking about black issues, racism or being overly visible in any way other than playing football in a straight forward manner. In this way, black players who become *honourarily white* make the concerns of race and equality less visible and hide the hegemonic ideology by acting as tokens. Tokens only have a vague possibility to speak up and act as an alibi for the dominant order in order to salve their conscience and present the illusion of full participation and racial harmony and equality. Here, when a black athlete does not conform to the usual archetypes that have been historically imbued upon him, the black athlete is evaluated in terms of how well he is able to assimilate and gains conditional acceptance into the realm of the white athlete.

Because the athlete in question, be it a white player like Ryan Leaf or a black player like former Dallas Cowboys running back Emmitt Smith who was head of the President of the United States' Council on Fitness, eschews the archetypal signifier associated with his race, he becomes articulated as something else. Indeed, Ryan Leaf could then be discursively inscribed as black and Emmitt Smith could be white. For example, black running back Tony Hunt from Penn State University is described as "a

team player who has a quiet personality” (*Street and Smith*, 2007, 67). This definition differentiates him from the traditional role of selfish, untrustworthy and loud black. Here, Hunt seems to represent the “blue-collar” -a type of term that is usually reserved for white running backs, as he is described as “not a fancy guy who will cutback and make a lot of highlight films, but he is effective and looks like a nice north-and-south runner” (ibid). These are terms that refer to the unselfishness of the player, his willingness to sacrifice for his team and his un-“fancy” play. These are all traditional indicators of white players that persist today when one reads the evaluations of many white players within these magazines. In the Hunt example we see an example of a discourse in which black players can be described in traditionally white terms. An historical unity is made between the black athlete and lack of character, which is further articulated in the evaluative discourses that fill the magazines. “There may be some gifted athletes we won’t pick that we might have picked a year ago”³ (*Sporting News*, 2007, 7). The “gifted athlete” refers to the black athlete and the article emphasizes that sometimes the best athletes (blackest athletes) do not have the most trustworthy character.

The other side of this discourse is that historically potent signifiers become associated with skin colour and create an ideological environment in which a sociohistorical legacy of racism is manifested in the perception of these athletes’ abilities and character. The overly-talented, underachieving football player is synonymous with black and the under-talented, hard-working football player is white. The popular connotation of the formerly impoverished black athlete running wild with his new found wealth is enacted in this discourse as well. As Rich McKay, general manager of the Indianapolis Colts, identifies “they’ve never had money and now they’re in trouble (ibid).

³

Mike Brown president of the Cincinnati Bengals football club.

The *they* refers to the *black* players who satisfy the zoological characteristics of black representation, be they white or black. These meanings, as to which players are fully black and which are fully white, become secured and their logic is maintained through an interconnection of related meanings “reverberated” off of one another (Hall, 2004, 40). This is an example of Hall’s theory of articulation, in that, unities are made through seemingly disharmonious objects and connected through language which Hall qualifies as the medium through which things are represented and, “thus, is the medium in which ideology is generated and transformed” (Hall, 2004, 35).

Language, in this case the language of football evaluative magazines, plays an important part in presenting signs and signifiers which represent the black and white players and the *honourarily black* and *honourarily white* players.

Servant

The third characteristic of zoological representation is that of the servant black. While white players are described for being “natural leaders” (*ESPN*, 2007, 104), “smart” (*Sporting News*, 2007, 24) and “competitive” (61), black players mostly occupy positions that represent servitude to white players, who dominate the foremost leadership position in the game: quarterback.

The servant characteristic is presented through comparison with white athletes who are over and over again articulated as leaders. Contrary to the character concerns that plague black football players, white players are most often portrayed as virtuous and righteous. It is this characterization that, through juxtaposition with the discursively identified untrustworthy blacks, the servant characteristic is rearticulated in football talent

evaluation discourse. Combined with the wild animal characteristic of zoological representation that I have mentioned above, the servant character and the classic physical black and white mind comparison is quite evident in the introduction of the quarterback evaluation section in *Pro Football Weekly's* (2007) draft guide;

he [white quarterback Brady Quinn] is not nearly as talented as [black quarterback] Jamarcus Russell from a raw physical standpoint in terms of sheer size and pure arm strength, but from the shoulders up, which determines about 90 percent of a quarterback's effectiveness, Quinn clearly has an edge...Quinn has learned how to dissect defenses, become a more confident decision-maker and learned to take the bull by the horns as a leader (28).

In this example, the white Brady Quinn is characterized as physically inferior, but mentally superior to the black Jamarcus Russell, who *Pro Football Weekly* (2007) describes as “not a great worker and may not have the mental makeup that is so critical to succeeding at the QB position” (29). His evaluation goes on to state that Russell is the most “naturally gifted quarterback in the draft” (ibid). These statements can be seen as constitutive of the traditional discourse that presents white players as intellectually superior to their black counterparts and, thus, natural leaders. Similarly, we can see how this reverberates nicely off of the “naturally gifted” notion of black athleticism that relies on the historical articulations of the black body as animalistic.

In football evaluative language, the servant characteristic seems to also be expressed through the code of “maturity.” This term separates the player in question from the “typically” lazy, boastful, cocky black males who are incapable of leading properly. For example, in the five 2007 draft magazines, the words “maturity,” “mature” or “lacking in maturity” are never once used to describe white-skinned players. However, within these five magazines, several black or Polynesian players are described

with one of these labels; quarterback Troy Smith “has matured and improved significantly over the past two seasons” (61), running back Gary Russell “has struggled with academics. Questionable maturity” (69) and cornerback Jonathon Wade “seemed to grow up quite a bit off the field last season and that made him a much more viable prospect” (119) in *Street and Smith’s*; Jamarcus Russell is a “mature, confident, lead-by-example type” (12), Gary Russell “needs to prove he has matured off the field and demonstrate better work ethic” (21), running back Nate Ilaoa “showed better maturity as a sixth-year senior, but previously ran afoul of the coaching staff due to weight issues” (21), corenerback Leon Hall is “a mature, hard-working player who will maximize his ability” (73), cornerback Jonathon Wade “was considered by some to be immature and unable to reach his potential” (75) and safety Brandon Merriweather “was a team captain, yet questions persist regarding his maturity and propensity for questionable behavior” (81) in *Lindy’s*; Jamarcus Russell “showed great maturation during his junior season” (22) and running back Kolby Smith “could start in the future if he matures” (31). In *the Sporting News*; Troy Smith “for all his maturing, his past off-field issues remain a concern” (33) and running back Deshawn Wynn is an “underachiever with questionable durability, maturity and work ethic” in *ESPN* (39), and defensive tackle Joe Anoai “works hard, and although he is quiet, he matured into a respected team leader” (89) in *Pro Football Weekly*.

The “mature”-tag seems to be a code that expresses how different a prospect is from those other black players. We can see from, these examples, how maturity is used to indicate players who are hard working, good leaders, smart and those that are not. Recently, black males have been posited as naturally deviant, unproductive, irresponsible,

uncivilized, promiscuous, and polar to the preferred white norm (Andrews, 2001, 117). However, when a black player is described as “mature” he is gaining *conditional* acceptance into the dominant forum of sanitary normativity (Barrett, 1997) which is a sort of mainstream America family values, appearing on a Soup commercial type of respectability, and leading to the process of becoming “one of the goods ones.” This means that the player in question is not overly loud, cocky, disrespectful, “street” or “urban” or prone to irresponsible behavior or criminal conduct. Instead, this player is someone worthy of respect and admiration and, therefore, gains conditional acceptance. The black players deemed “mature” are not black, because blacks are savage, disrespectful and unintelligent, whereas the conditionally accepted black athlete is “mature.” The black athlete who has “matured” becomes honourarily white and, thus, deemed worthy of trust and respect, even able to lead.

These characteristics of zoological representations mobilized in de B’béri’s work allow us to see the discourse constructing an essentialized racist knowledge of black and white football player bodies and intellectual capacities.

Quarterbacks

The quarterback position is regarded as the most important position on the football field. It is renowned for, beyond its physical skills of strength, speed, throwing ability and accuracy, its mental skills of leadership, poise, confidence, smarts and game management. While in 1953, Chicago Bears backup quarterback Willie Thriver became the first African-American to play nothing but quarterback in a professional American football game, it was not until the early 1970s that James Harris was given the

opportunity to start at quarterback for a lengthy period of time. He made the Pro Bowl in 1974 and was the first ever black quarterback to start in a play off game. However, James Harris had few contemporaries that were able to stay on a roster as a quarterback, let alone start a game in the National Football League. For the most part, it was unheard of to have a black athlete starting at this position for any more than a temporary replacement, until Warren Moon and Doug Williams of the 1980s. It was covertly understood, by coaches and fans alike, that black men, gifted with superior athletic abilities, were cursed with inferior mental abilities required for a quarterback position and, consequently, unfit to lead a team and play such an intellectually demanding position when the big game was on the line.

In accordance with these myths regarding the superior physical and inferior intellectual qualities of the black athlete, black quarterbacks' fluid athleticism is not questioned, but their abilities as quarterbacks are almost uniformly doubted.

Chris Leak, one of the few black quarterbacks in the 2007 draft class, is described as "more of an athlete than a polished quarterback" (*Sporting News*, 2007, 27). Similarly, the bottom line on Princeton Shepherd is that "he could be quarterback on a practice squad or be switched to running back, wide receiver or safety" (*Sporting News*, 2007, 26). Isaiah Stanback is similarly identified as a player with "a great deal of innate ability but may not be a quarterback at the professional level. In time, he easily could become an outstanding inside slot receiver and return man" (*Pro Football Weekly*, 30).

The position-change is a common phenomenon in the football world, as black players are directed towards positions that accentuate their *apparently natural* skills, such

as wide receiver or running back and whites are directed towards positions which reflect their *natural* skills sets, such as tight end, offensive line or quarterback.

Conversely, white athletes that exhibit speed and agility are described as “surprisingly athletic” or “deceptively fast.” Brady Quinn, second ranked Notre Dame quarterback, is described as a “sneaky athlete” (*Sporting News*, 2007, 23). In addition, the “naturalized” physical ability of black players is contrasted with the way in which a significant percentage of the white quarterbacks are described as “hard weight-room workers.” Brady Quinn, John Beck, Tyler Palko, Luke Getsy, and Jeff Rowe are all white quarterbacks described as hard workers and gym rats who do whatever it takes to train their bodies to perform. Interestingly enough, the ‘light-skinned’ Chris Leak is the only black quarterback to be described in more than one magazine⁴ as a hard worker in the gym.

These discursive articulations, which enshrine the black quarterback as a naturally gifted athlete and white quarterbacks as developed through hard work and against the struggles of genetic limitations, represent a racial logic – *raciology* (de B'éri 2006, 8,9 & 84) – that relies on “the use of a dichotomous code that creates a chain of correspondences both between the physical and the cultural, and between intellectual and cognitive characteristics” (Hall, 1997, 290). These seemingly innocent evaluations, in this context, play a part in unifying the chain of correspondences or the “imaginary signification” (in de B'éri's term), throughout which the knowledge of a black male as a natural physical wild animal become intelligible.

⁴ Street and Smith's (2007) called Leak a “hard worker” (64); ESPN (2007) describes Leak's best asset as his intangibles and describes him as a “hard worker who logs long hours in the film room. Smart, strong leader with the character and resolve to handle adversity” (33); Pro Football Weekly (2007) describes Chris Leak as “very dedicated to the game, determined and competitive. Film junkie. Will do everything he is asked to do to improve and more (34).

The untrustworthiness characteristic is expressed regarding quarterback Jamarus Russell. The number one ranked quarterback in the class in all but *Pro Football Weekly* is described as “not a great worker and may not have the mental makeup that is so critical to succeeding at the QB position” (*Pro Football Weekly*, 2007, 28), despite being called a confident leader and good decision maker in every other magazine.

In the context of a predominantly black league, these discursive concerns draw on the classic fears, the untrustworthiness leading to qualify these players as irresponsible, and prone to criminality (Andrews, 2001).

Troy Smith, the quarterback from Ohio State University, who won the Heisman Trophy as the best player in college football, became an object of suspicion through the draft process because of an incident in his first year of university that raised concerns about his character. Smith was charged with misdemeanor disorderly conduct after a fight with five women in which a car window was kicked out and a woman reported that her jaw was broken. He was also suspended for the Alamo Bowl after accepting \$500 from a team booster in his second season. As a result, scouts worry that he lacks character and could be more trouble than he is worth, because he:

tends to run with the wrong crowd and can rub some people the wrong way. Sources say he likes to point the finger and pass blame in games and practices. Expects prima-donna treatment, and questions linger about how he will be able to handle money and all the trappings of NFL success (*Pro Football Weekly*, 2007, 30).

Another magazine also indicated their apprehension about the trustworthiness of Troy Smith: “negatives: character. For all his maturing, his past off-field issues remain a concern” (*ESPN*, 2007, 32), “has had several off-field issues” (*Street and Smith*, 61).

In ESPN's draft guide (2007), white quarterback Brady Quinn is called "competitive, hardworking and durable" (32); Drew Stanton is called an "emotional, competitive leader...intelligent" (ibid); John Beck is a "hardworking, competitive, tough leader...quick study"(33); Jeff Rowe is "tough and aggressive...confident leader" (ibid); Zac Taylor is "intelligent and tough" (ibid); Luke Getsy has "great intensity, plus good awareness and leadership skills" (35); Josh Swogger is a "confident leader" (35); Drew Tate is a "solid leader" (35); John Stocco is a "leader and winner with competitive fire." Conversely, only two black quarterbacks, Isiah Stanback from Washington and Chris Leak from Florida, are described as confident leaders.

In the *Sporting News* (2007), "teammates rally around him [Kevin Kolb] and play at a higher level" (23); John Beck is "smart and reads defenses well...Beck's mental capacity and his ability to make quick, accurate passes will help him" (24); Luke Getsy is "tough and will play through pain" (25); and Jon Grant "shows good leadership skills" (27). On the other hand, black quarterbacks Chris Leak and Princeton Shepherd are more athletes than football players and may be more valuable at other positions; Leak is "more of an athlete than a polished quarterback" (27) and Shepherd "could be a quarterback on a practice squad or be switched to running back, wide receiver or safety" (26).

In *Street and Smith's* (2007), Brady Quinn has "guts" (60); Drew Stanton "looks the part of a big time quarterback" and "shows the ability to lead and manage an offense...tough, will play hurt...competitive" (61); Kevin Kolb is "intelligent " and "shows the ability to lead and manage an offense...confident. Durable" (62); Trent Edwards and John Beck both show the "ability to lead and manage" (ibid); Jeff Rowe is a "natural leader" (63); Jared Zabransky "shows the ability to lead and manage an offense"

(64); Tyler Palko is “intelligent...vocal team leader...competitive...very coachable” (ibid); Luke Getsy is “intelligent...coachable; will do film study, weight-room work and the little things to be effective on the next level” (65).

Troy Smith, Isaiah Stanback and JaMarcus Russell are all described as confident leaders in *Lindy's* draft magazine (2007); Jamarcus Russell is described as “a mature, confident, lead-by-example type. While he’s not a vocal leader, Russell has command of the huddle. A quiet sort who seems to shy away from the media. Russell will put in the extra hours in the film room and takes well to constructive coaching” (12).

Russell is positioned, in this discourse, as a trustworthy black, who has earned nobility through his similarity to classic normative stereotypes. On the other hand, Troy Smith just “takes command on the field and is a tough, confident leader” (13). He is still marked as black, and not a sure thing despite all his skills. The normative description of white quarterback character and intelligence is glowing by comparison. Drew Stanton is “a hard worker like Phil Simms [white] and Tom Brady [white] who goes out of his way to be ‘one of the boys’ ...doesn’t fear contact and is willing to risk life and limb for an extra yard” (13); Trent Edwards “takes good command of the huddle and shows *natural* leadership abilities (14)”; Kevin Kolb is a “hard weight room worker who spends the extra hours needed to improve...a technically sound quarterback who takes charge in the huddle” (ibid); Jeff Rowe is a “hard worker with toughness and will play through injuries” (15).

In *Pro Sport Weekly* (2007), white quarterback Brady Quinn “has shown he can handle the pressure of being the face of a franchise, very intelligent...mentally and physically tough... intangibles are top-of-the-line, good leader... has the mental makeup

and the physical tools to become a great pro” (28); white Trent Edwards “competes hard and will go down with the ship---never gave up regardless of team’s success” (29); white quarterback Drew Stanton “looks the part...very intelligent and grasps football concepts” (30); white quarterback Tyler Palko has “good poise and toughness...good work ethic and really studies the game...outstanding team leader” (30); white Kevin Kolb has “good size and intelligence, smart and efficient...is tough smart and competitive” (ibid); white John Beck is “smart, can absorb a playbook and knows where to go with the ball. Works hard, studies game and is willing to work at it...prepares well and plays with confidence...vocal leader” (31); the white John Stocco has “good football intelligence...works hard and studies the game...mentally tough, great intangibles, and leadership ability” (34); and the white Sam Hollenbach “possesses the size, toughness and intelligence” (34)

Conversely, black quarterback Chris Leak “lacks the height, field vision, intelligence and intangibles to transfer his success to the pro game” (*Pro Football Weekly*, 2007, 34). Similarly, black quarterback JaMarcus Russell is “not a great worker and may not have the mental makeup that is so critical to succeeding at the QB position” (29).

Appendix 1 details every instance of identifiable positive mention of the quarterbacks intelligence, work ethic, or leadership, based on a number of easily identifiable signifiers and separated by magazine. The chart clearly shows that the number of positive comments for white quarterbacks is disproportionately higher than those for black quarterbacks, especially in the categories of intelligence and work ethic.

These statements act as a discursive regularity that forms the objects of which they describe and, consequently, shape the perceptions of reality (Foucault, 1972, 49).

These discourses are made up of signs that are not necessarily unified (Hall, 2004, 40) but are rather unified through a contingent of disunities that have come together to create this particular way of knowing (Foucault, 1972, 49). This is an example of what de Certeau (1996) and Foucault (1972) describe when they refer to the genealogy of discourse and the way in which language refers back to itself and replicates historical meanings in new and, sometimes seemingly, disharmonious ways. In this case, the language used to describe black and white quarterbacks echoes the naturalized and essentialist view of black and white difference; reproducing an “ancient grammar” of black physicality used to explain athletic success and white intellect and mental prowess to explain white athletic success. These descriptions, which have racial meanings not obvious on the surface, act within a chain of codes to explain athletic shortcomings of black players as well (Hall, 1981, 41).

The quarterback position in the football discourse seems to remain one of those positions synonymous with one colour: white. Examining the description of the ideal prototype quarterback in *ESPN*’s draft guide allows us to understand through what kind of lens both black and white athletes are being evaluated. The normalized categories for the ideal quarterback include:

1. Presence: Lives to compete. Plays cool when the game is on the line.
2. Judgement: Makes smart presnap reads. Doesn’t throw into double-teams.
Knows when to bail.
3. Setup: Moves swiftly and smoothly from under center to launch point.

4. Release: Throws with an efficient consistent motion.
5. Velocity: Passes with blinding velocity and RPMs. Throws deep routes with ease.
6. Accuracy: Hits receivers in stride and changes velocities skillfully.
7. Mobility: Can sidestep the pass-rush and scramble out of trouble.
8. Durability: Plays through pain. Works to maintain stamina, strength and conditioning (*ESPN*, 2007, 30).

The areas that depend more on mental toughness focus, dependability and intelligence (presence, judgment, accuracy, release, durability) are dominated by white athletes (Tom Brady, Peyton Manning and Brett Favre) while the skills that require brute force, agility and speed (velocity and mobility) are occupied by a single black quarterback, Michael Vick, who was suspended for the 2007/2008 NFL season by violating the league's new rules on criminal charges.

Appendix 2 shows how the attributes of the ideal quarterback are represented in terms of the race of the ideal prototype to which they are ascribed in *ESPN's* draft magazine. The mental attributes are completely dominated by white quarterbacks and the physical ideals of the NFL quarterback are split between black and white quarterbacks.

These discourses are made possible because they are produced "within codes which have a history, a position within the discursive formations of a particular space and time" (Hall, 1996, 446). Thus, through Hall's theory of articulation, I want to suggest that these evaluations rely on a chain of meaning that have become so widely distributed that they seem to have achieved near universal acceptance; the black QB lacks judgment,

accuracy, release yet is more physically gifted (e.g., velocity and speed) than white quarterbacks.

However, as the nature of articulation is fluid and not fixed, we can see the ways in which different and changing racial understandings are articulated in 2007 draft discourses; race, because it is a floating signifier, racial meaning changes and depends on their context of production (Hall, 1997, *Race, the Floating Signifier* video). Thus, as we can see with the codes of “maturity,” some quarterbacks are “blacker” than others. In fact, the stratified racial history of the quarterback position almost necessitates that the black players who occupy it are “less black” than other football players in the team. However, as we have seen with Ryan Leaf, some white players can be whiter or blacker than others as well. For instance, in the National Basketball Association (NBA), the white player with the nickname “white chocolate” is Jayson Williams, who is covered in tattoos, has been suspended for failing a drug test, has a notoriously bad work ethic and who is often in trouble for verbally fighting with fans (*ESPN*, 2000, vol. 3 no. 24, 64). So, while black quarterbacks can satisfy the sanitary normative of the hegemonic order through selfish service to the team and sport and through “maturity,” white athletes can *become black* by egregiously violating the repository of signifiers and symbols that constitute the traditional white athlete identity. This corresponds to the fluidity with which racial signifiers can move to and from different hosts and the enactment of these fluid racial markers comes to light in the discourses of the other positions.

Offensive Tackle

The offensive tackle position seems to have changed over the years. Once the position of stiff, hulking, brutes, the evolution of the professional American game has made the position an entirely different beast from its inception, the increased emphasis on passing and the huge salaries awarded to quarterbacks has made the tackle position, especially the left tackle who protects the quarterback's blindside one of the most important, highly paid positions on the field. Tackles are required to keep the coveted quarterback safe and sound. Consequently, the increased emphasis on pass blocking (protecting the quarterback while he tries to throw a pass) has placed an emphasis on arm reach, footwork, agility, balance and quickness. In *The Sporting News* (2007) we can read the following:

Right and left tackles rarely share similar skills. The left tackle protects the quarterback's blind side (unless the quarterback is lefthanded [sic]). He must have the athletic ability and quickness to handle speed rushers coming off the edge and the base to anchor against the bull rush. The right tackle must have explosive first step and leg drive to get movement in the running game. Tackles who do the job well in both areas are rare" (50).

The tackle position, a part of the offensive line, has traditionally been one of the "whitest" position groups on a football team. It is often joked about in football circles that you put your least athletic players on the offensive line and, consequently, the offensive line has always been the preserve of the overweight, slower, players. As well, it is a position that gets little to no glory, as there are no statistics that an offensive lineman can earn. Consequently, the offensive line is often occupied by more humble and quiet players who eschew the spotlight of other positions. As mentioned earlier, these are usually regarded as highly "un-black" characteristics and, thus, black and white offensive

lineman are regarded as more white than many of the other position groups. However, with the offensive tackle's transformation within the last couple of decades to a position that is highly prized for its athleticism, fleet feet and obsession with gargantuan size and reach, more and more black players are found at this spot and come to make up the elite of the NFL's offensive tackle population. For instance, in *ESPN's* draft guide, the ideal prototype characteristics of an offensive lineman are all exemplified by African American offensive lineman; Orlando Pace of the St Louis Rams is the exemplar for intelligence, Willie Anderson of the Cincinnati Bengals is the exemplar for strength and run-blocking, and Walter Jones of the Seattle Seahawks is the exemplar for agility and pass-protection. However, in analyzing the data of this research, white tackles are described more positively in the evaluative discourses of the Draft magazines than the black athletes, especially in terms of trustworthiness and leadership. Over and over again the black tackle is described as lazy, inconsistent, and lacking in character. The following are discursive excerpts showing the way some black athletes playing the position of tackle are represented in *The Sporting News* (2007):

Levi Brown, from Penn State University, is described as potentially elite but "it all depends on his work ethic. At his best, he can use his elite athleticism to dominate in protection and be efficient in run blocking. He will be drafted high, but coaches must be wary of his shortcomings" (51); Ryan Harris "lacks competitive fire, a problem that seldom improves with coaching. If someone finds the switch, he could become a dominant left tackle" (ibid); Brandon Frye "tests well but seldom plays up to his physical skills" (52); Herbert Taylor "might not be physical and competitive enough to make it in the NFL. He's athletically gifted, but he must learn to play with a mean streak to become

a starting left tackle” (53); Charles Harris is “raw and undisciplined” (ibid); Jonathon Palmer “is raw and too often doesn’t play with desire...is not aggressive or competitive; allows opponents to dictate play. Looks soft and fleshy” (ibid); all but 4 of the 13 black tackles evaluated by The Sporting News were described as naturally talented, but inconsistent and lazy or lacking in competitive desire. This seems especially incongruous when compared with *ESPN* magazine (2007) which describes several of these same players as “plays with passion” (66) and that they “work to the whistle” (67) and “relentless” (65).

Lindy’s (2007) writes about black tackles: Levi Brown “will get lazy at times” (39); Tony Ugoh “needs to play with more aggression and seems to go through the motions at times” (ibid); Ryan Harris “has the athleticism, his consistency is another matter” (41); Stephen Heyer “can get lazy and lose those fundamentals...has the physical tools to be one of the top offensive tackles in this draft, but doesn’t always play up to his natural ability” (42); and Mario Henderson is a disappointing prospect, “rarely showing the work ethic needed to take advantage of his [physical] potential” (ibid).

Street and Smith’s (2007) writes that Tony Ugoh “would benefit from a mean streak...underachiever with questionable desire...doesn’t always finish plays or show the killer instinct...with a little more of a mean streak he will be able to take over” (87); Levi Brown is described as lacking a mean streak and overcoming concerns of his laziness (86); Ryan Harris “lacks consistency” (88); only the one remaining black tackle, Corey Hilliard, that is evaluated has a positive description of his work ethic (89).

Pro Football Weekly (2007), Levi Brown's play shows up “some mental lapses ” (61); Tony Ugoh is “not a great worker or competitor and lacks passion for the game”

(62); Brandon Frye “is not very tough” and “plays too soft” (ibid); Julius Wilson is “just adequate to process information and may take some time to digest a game plan” (63); Chris Denman is “not a great finisher” (64); Jonathon Palmer is “not tough-minded or nasty and plays like a cake-eater. Too soft” (ibid); Kendrick Shackleford “plays too passively” (ibid); Mario Henderson is “not a glass-eater...plays too soft” (ibid).

A significant amount of the black tackle prospects are discursively articulated as untrustworthy through some types of mental lapse; be it lack of desire, laziness or a lack of intelligence. This is quite a contrast to the way that white offensive tackles are described, which, like the quarterbacks, represents them as mentally and ethically superior, and thus, the natural leaders on the team. I want to suggest that such a production of meaning acts as a manifestation of contemporary articulations of the servant characteristic as described by de B'éri (2006) regarding historical portrayals of blacks in visual representations. The black body is positioned through discourses such as these, as it was historically, in a position of servility and oppression. Though the wealth and prestige of professional football act to disguise the inequity, a history of oppression is acted out almost subliminally within the words of these draft publications.

In *The Sporting News* (2007), white tackle Adam Koets is characterized as “smart and efficient...an intriguing project because of his technique, intelligence and desire” (52); white tackle Andrew Carnahan is also “smart and instinctive”, while white tackle Daniel Inman “competes and fights to the whistle” (54).

In *ESPN* (2007), white tackle Doug Free has an “impressive motor...good awareness...durable and experienced” (64); James Marten’s top strength is his “awareness” (65); Adam Koets has a “good motor” (66); Andrew Carhahanan is a “smart,

physical blocker with terrific work ethic, plays with a mean streak” (67); Steve Vallos’ top strength is his “grit” and he is “a blue-collar type who rarely makes mental mistakes...always looking to throw blocks” (ibid); Daniel Inman is “relentless once in position...good motor” (68); Kyle Tatum has a solid mix of “size, lower body strength and tenacity. Plays with a nonstop motor” (ibid). The code “blue collar” is one of the most glaring. Close examination of these texts reveals that *blue collar* is a notion that signifies *white*. Blue collar represents toughness, hard work, desire, competitiveness, respect, obedience, coachability, work ethic, those characteristics that have historically been designated white traits or, at the very least, not black traits. In these five magazines, less than five black players were described as “blue collar.”

In *Lindy’s* (2007), white top offensive tackle prospect Joe Thomas is “a leader by example, but will not hesitate to get vocal on the field. One day, Thomas will make excellent coaching material” (38); the white Joe Staley is “is quick to pick up defensive schemes, and has very good field vision and alertness. His personality changes from quiet and respectful off the field to aggressive and sometimes downright nasty when he gets in the trenches” (39); Marshal Yanda is a “determined athlete who plays until the whistle, and takes it personally when he is beaten by an opponent” (40); Doug Free is a “hard worker in practices and in the training room who will do the extras to improve” (ibid); James Marten has a “competitive nature and good toughness” (ibid); white Mike Otto “plays with good urgency and is not the type who will make mental errors” (41); Andrew Carnahan “isn’t a top athlete, but before the injuries he had proven himself to be a consistent, reliable producer who made the most of his abilities” (42). This last quote is very telling of the way in which black athletes and white athletes are articulated;

black athletes are naturally gifted, but are hampered by their laziness or mental weakness, while white athletes, such as Andrew Carnahan, are limited athletically but make up for it by working the hardest and using their smarts and natural instincts.

Street and Smith's (2007) describes white tackles in these terms: Joe Thomas is "intelligent. Solid technician. Works hard to sustain. Durable and will play hurt" (86); Joe Staley is "*intelligent*, good technician" (87); Marshal Yanda "shows a mean streak. Works hard to sustain and finish" and one AFC scout said, "I think his attitude will take him a long way, he likes to fight and hates to lose. That should carry him a long way" (ibid); Doug Free is an "intelligent technician" (88); James Marten is "intelligent" and "he is a determined guy who will punish people in the running game" (ibid).

In *Pro Football Weekly* (2007), white tackles, such as Joe Staley "takes the game seriously. Trains his body religiously and conditioning level is great" (61); Doug Free is "smart and does not make many mistakes...competes hard" (62); James Marten is "tough, competes hard. Very smart and understands blocking schemes. Good durability. Great character" (ibid); Clint Oldenburg "plays hard and competes...is a coach's son and shows a solid grasp of the game. Very smart. Learns like a sponge. Plays through injuries. Has a good work ethic" (64); Kyle Williams is a "prospect whose top assets at this time are his size, intelligence and work ethic" (65).

Appendix 3 shows the total number of black and white offensive tackles evaluated in all five magazines and the number of positive comments about their intellect and their work ethic and leadership based on a number of easily identifiable signifiers. While there is an almost equal number of black and white offensive tackles, the positive comments

are quite disproportionately heaped on the white offensive tackles, nearly double in both categories.

These discursive formations, which position the white player as mentally superior albeit weaker physically, subtly reinforce historical discourses which posit black males as inherently physical and servile. The wild animal characteristic of black offensive tackles is formed through the suggestion that black athletes are *naturally* gifted with physical assets that their white counterparts do not have.

These historical articulations of black males are formed today through discourses such as the description of black tackle Jonathon Palmer of Auburn, who “looks exactly like teams would draw them up on the board physically. Naturally athletic with good size and size potential” (*Pro Football Weekly*, 2007, 64), yet “is not tough-minded or passionate enough to make full benefit of his natural athletic gifts” (ibid). The constant repetition that so many black players are not playing up to their natural ability seems to extend the history of the animalistic body that must be guided, educated, trained and civilized; or literally ‘coached’ (or colonized). Consequently, these discourses re-articulate the historical inheritance of racist ideology in contemporary football evaluations. And these ideologies are expressed through naturalized codes that are by no means natural or essential; rather, the discourse producing them have been presented as a natural knowledge – a discursive regularity – that inscribes particular ways of knowing black and white athletes (Foucault, 1988). This Foucaultian way of understanding the function of discourse and knowledge could be articulated with Althusser’s and Hall’s description of the work and practice of ideology. Discourses are manufactured within a covert framework of ideology which guides and positions subjects into certain ways of

knowing that are not natural, but rather are constructed through a relationship of historical correspondences (Althusser, 1961). Hall emphasizes that discourse is the medium in which ideologies are generated and transformed (Hall, 2004). In other words, the Foucaultian ‘discursive regularities’ act in normalizing reality within a specific regime of truth, as these discourses secure a historical logic, relying on references and meanings that are imbued with historical currency within these *regimes of meaning production* (the ideological climate in which rituals and practices form the subject’s position [Althusser, 1969]). These regimes are then passed surreptitiously through generations, before they become a normative model of judgment Foucault defines to be particular sets of truths (Foucault, 1988, 93). Hall’s (2004) emphasis on the disunities of articulation mean that seemingly disharmonious elements can exist within discourses that seem at odds with the ideology in which they were produced. Hence, we can see contemporary articulations of a historically white supremacist ideology accepting some black players as honourarily white and rejecting white players as honourarily black. In football evaluation discourse, the way ideology attempts to fix certain ways of knowing and playing football marginalizes other truths and fundamentally tailors the boundaries of the discourse of today’s professional sports. Truths are established, such as the natural athleticism of the black tackle and the stern leadership of the white tackle.

Offensive Guard

The guard position typically requires more football intelligence and instincts than the tackle position. Guards have many more complicated assignment responsibilities in pass protection and run blocking than tackles and are often required to know more about

the overall offensive schemes. The guard position is usually occupied by less athletic players as they do not require the footwork, speed and agility of tackles who must operate on their own far more and have to execute their assignments in space, rather than in a crowd which can hide athletic shortcomings. Rather, the guard spot is one of intelligence and brute strength. As *Lindy's* (2007) magazine writes:

being a guard can be a thankless job, and it's traditionally one of the lowest-paid positions in the NFL. But that doesn't mean scouts don't have a specific idea of what they're seeking. Elite guards play with a nasty streak, and drive off the ball with good leg strength and a desire to dominate their assignments. Quick footwork is also key in the ability to get out in front on pulls and traps and work through the mayhem of big bodies in the trenches" (44).

The guard position has many of the same traits and stereotypes of the offensive line attached to it as the tackle position.

The guard position reveals very similar codes as the tackle position. Black players are discussed in terms of favourable "natural" athleticism more often than for their mental abilities at the guard position. White guards are more frequently praised for their smart and aggressive play, and their heart and passion, while black guards are often criticized for poor conditioning and lack of desire. Merely looking at *The Sporting News* section on guards reveals that, almost to a man, the first thing mentioned about a black player is some kind of physical description while the first thing said about almost every single white guard is a description of how "tough" or "competitive" the athlete is.

The Sporting News (2007), describes black guards thus: Justin Blalock is seen as having "natural power...relies too much on natural strength...is an outstanding athlete who needs to work on his fundamentals" (56); Ben Grubbs "needs to get into better shape and be more aggressive" (57); Kurt Quarterman "has the quickness and footwork" but

“does not compete hard on every snap and can get stood up at point of attack...Quarterman is lackadaisical. If he does not get into better shape and become more aggressive, he will be out of the league quickly” (58); and Reuben Riley “lacks aggressiveness and toughness...an underachiever” (58, 60). Conversely, white guards such as Mike Jones are “tough and competitive. Plays smart” though “a lack of athleticism will hurt Jones on the draft board” (57); Erik Robertson “is tough and competitive. Consistently finds ways to finish blocks through effort and hustle” but “is limited athletically” and “is a better football player than athlete” (58); Scott Smith “is a tough guy who works hard on every snap” (ibid); Brian Daniels “is strong and tough and works hard” and “is smart and shows good instincts” though he “is a limited athlete” (ibid); Stephen Parker “is smart and aware” but “despite his intangibles, Parker lacks the athleticism” (60); Kyle Cook is “smart and instinctive, plays above his athleticism...Cook is limited athletically,” however “he is tough and hard-nosed, which are qualities that will win over coaches” (ibid); Bob Morton “is competitive and efficient but lacks the athleticism” (61); Steve Vallos “is hard-nosed and always works to the whistle”; Kasey Studdard “is tough, competitive” (ibid); and Steve Rissler “lacks the athleticism and strength to play in the NFL, but he is smart and works hard” (ibid). Here again we see this extension of the knowledge that black players are athletically gifted and mentally weak, while white players are mentally superior with limited athletic capacities.

ESPN (2007) depicts the white guards similarly. Marshal Yanda (listed in *ESPN* as a guard rather than a tackle) is an “athletic, tough drive-blocker who never stops working” (72); Andy Alleman “plays with intensity and awareness” (ibid); Dan Santucci’s greatest attribute is his “work ethic” and he “gives tremendous effort as run-

blocker and plays with a mean streak" (73); Mike Jones is a "savvy blue-collar type with experience," he "fights to finish...he's a vocal leader with solid work ethic" and his greatest assets are his "intangibles" (ibid). *Intangibles* is another one of those codes that denotes "whiteness", be it the colour of the skin or the reinstalled nobleness of a black player earned through good "intangibles." *Intangibles* is a term that describes those "white " characteristics mentioned earlier; heart, desire, leadership, intelligence, maturity and so forth. Intangibles is a code that can either mean white player, or a black player that has been accepted into the sanitary normative (Barrett, 1997) of the coaches and scouts. White guard Kasey Studdard's greatest asset is his "desire" and he is described as a "classic overachiever. A fighter who doesn't quit and always looks to throw a block downfield" (ESPN, 2007, 73); Again, the "classic overachiever" tag is only bestowed to white players. It comes to mean that even though the white player has naturally inferior athletic abilities he works so hard and uses his mind so well that he can compete with the animalistic black men. This stereotype acts in concert with the notion of black physical superiority and in turn reifies white power. As, McCarthy and Jones (1997) demonstrate in their study, by constantly representing the black player as physically advantaged and superior and the white athlete as physically less-capable, the white athlete is competing on unfair grounds without the natural ability of the black athlete and, "thus, in a bizarre way, the covert suggestion is made that the White athlete still is superior" (357). White guard T.J. Downing is a "fierce competitor" with "limited range and athleticism" but whose greatest asset is his "discipline" (ESPN, 2007, 74); white guard Roman Fry is "a weight-room monster who's feisty, tough and aggressive" (75); white guard Brian

Daniels' strength are his "intangibles" and he is described as "tough, intelligent and hardworking" (ibid); and white guard Corey Niblock "works hard to improve" (ibid).

Conversely, black guard Ben Grubbs' best asset is his "athleticism" (ESPN, 2007, 72); Aaron Sears is criticized for his stamina and wearing down late in games (ibid); and Mansfield Wrotto's strengths are his quickness, but his technique is flawed (73).

In *Lindy's* (2007), the evaluations were not nearly as polar and obvious. Instead, both black and white players were described as "natural athletes" (44) and "tireless workers" (45). Black guards Ben Grubbs and Aaron Sears are described as "savvy" (44) and a "quiet leader and a self-starter with a good work ethic who takes well to hard coaching" (45) respectively. In addition, Justin Blalock is described as "not a vocal type, preferring to lead by example, but will not hesitate to take teammates to task. He works hard to finish and loves the physical and mental aspect of playing guard" (44) and Beekman is called a "dedicated film room student" who "plays with a high motor and wears his emotions on his sleeve" (45). These are important markers that are not usually dispensed so freely to black players as they are traditionally understood to be markers of whiteness in the game of football. However, *Lindy's* does mark a couple of the white players with the familiar characteristics of their race. Dan Santucci is described as "scrappy, aggressive" and "a quick study" (46), and Kasey Studdard is evaluated with the most glaring signifier of whiteness in football discourse. Kasey is "durable, tough blue-collar type who plays with true aggression" (ibid). The evaluations in *Lindy's* only underscore how racially informed the other magazines' evaluations are. The same guards are judged completely differently in one magazine, while the others seem to rely on a repository of stock, paint-by-numbers evaluations that fit the race and size of the athlete.

Street and Smith's (2007) evaluation of the guards of the 2007 class is also not so glaringly racialized. However, there are still many indicators that point to a legacy of racist knowledge of black and white bodies and minds. Black guard Aaron Sears is described as a player who "understands angles and positioning...is hungry to finish every play" (90); black player Justin Blalock is an "intelligent technician" and "is very serious on the field and does not let up" (ibid); black Josh Beekman is an "excellent run blocker who has the toughness, intelligence and love of the game to be a successful player at the next level" (91); and black Tim Duckworth "understands angles and positioning...works hard to sustain and finish...he's all business and wants to get better...he's not the best athlete so he pushes himself harder than most at the position" (93).

Despite these glowing descriptions, the white athlete is still clearly demarcated as different and this shines through in the evaluations of the white guards in the 2007 draft class. For instance, Mike Jones is an "intelligent technician...understands angles and positioning...hard worker. Team player and vocal leader. Takes the game seriously... a hard-working guy who will have to get by on his technical skills and determination because he lacks the athleticism of the top players at the position," one AFC scout called him "a tough guy with a great attitude, but a limited athlete" (*Street and Smith's*, 2007, 91); white player Nathan Bennet "understands positioning...good blitz awareness and recognition...not content to just get in the way; he wants to knock his man down and finish him...you have to like his attitude and his aggressiveness...once he proves himself at the next level, he has the personality to become a leader" (92). The descriptions of white athletes mental skills, desire and leadership abilities seem to be significantly greater than their black counterparts.

We see in the *Pro Football Weekly* draft guide (2007), qualifications that denote the difference in white and black guards. Aaron Sears has good “*football intelligence*” (66), Justin Blalock is “very intelligent and learns quickly...works hard and takes the game seriously...does everything he is asked and takes care of his responsibilities...A pro’s pro...voted team captain” (67), Joshua Beekman has a “good work ethic” (68) and Tim Duckworth is “tough, hard-working and takes the game very seriously. Very competitive, gives great effort and shows the ability to finish” (70), but again when contrasted with the evaluations of white guards it is clear that there is an almost different tone and language to discuss the white guards’ talents. These brief acknowledgments of superior black guards’ mental capacities pale in comparison to the consistent exaltation of almost every single white guard evaluated in the magazine. Marshal Yanda is “tough and aggressive and competes very hard...tries to bury defenders into the ground and will consistently show traces of a mean streak...very workman-like. Takes the game seriously and will do all he can to improve...great character...a tough, blue-collar overachieving country boy who, when he sets out to accomplish a goal, finds a way to get the job done” (67); Andy Alleman “will get after defenders and keep working to finish” (68); Dan Santucci is “tough, physical and competitive—plays to the whistle. Flashes a nasty streak...very steady, dependable and smart...an overachiever in every sense. Santucci is smart and consistent, and his brightest future in the pros might be at center...has the football temperament and mental attitude to make it in the pros” (69); Robert Turner is “very, very tough—has a pro mental makeup. A man’s man. Does not back down. Is nasty and really competes hard. Scraps and fights and plays above his ability. Imposes his will on opponents...has a passion for the game, and it

shows on the tape. Good finisher...in a league where there are not enough tough guys, he will make it and despite his physical limitations, he could take a starting job away from a player who does not want it as badly as he does" (70).

Appendix 4 shows the total number of white and black offensive guards in all five magazines and the number of positive comments made regarding their intellect and work ethic, leadership and character as identified by distinct signifiers. Though the number of black and white guards is almost equal, the instances of positive comments are incredibly slanted toward the white guards, nearly double the black guards in both categories.

Similarly, Appendix 5 shows the total number of white and black offensive guards in all five magazines and the number of negative comments made regarding their intellect and work ethic, leadership and character as identified by distinct signifiers. Despite the equity in numbers of black and white guards, the instances of negative comments are heavily skewed towards the black guards, more than double in the work ethic category.

We see how the traits of zoological representation are re-articulated through the discourses of these draft magazines. However, compared to many of the other positions, the guard spot seems to offer a far greater deal of parity in terms of positive evaluations of black mental skills. As mentioned earlier, the position is one that demands a great deal of intellect and "character" and other traditionally "white" traits, consequently, the African American players who play there have already been imbued with some kind of characterization in terms of their ability to adhere to the normative conventions of "white" football positions. Perhaps this could account for the elevated levels of praise for the mental abilities of the African American guards who are evaluated in these magazines.

Defensive End

In *the Sporting News* (2007), the defensive end section describes both black and white defensive ends as “tough” (68), “smart” (ibid), “competitive” (69) and “hardworking” (ibid). Yet, there still seems to be codes used to differentiate the shade of skin colour from one athlete to the next. For instance, every white player evaluated is described as tough and competitive. In addition, the six white defensive ends are all praised for their “intangibles.” As we have seen, intangibles is often a stand in for whiteness. So, while black player Charles Johnson is praised for his “effort and drive” (67) Black Victor Abiamiri can be “very competitive” (68) and black LaMarr Woodley can pressure the quarterback through “effort and determination” (ibid), white defensive end Jay Moore is “a tough, playmaking starter who raises the effort and intensity levels of his teammates” (69), white Daniel Bazuin “has the intensity, work ethic and intangibles to raise the play of teammates” (ibid).

In *ESPN* (2007), we look at the evaluation of the defensive end prototype; coveted are instincts, strength, agility, pass rushing, run stopping, and durability (89). A white athlete, Aaron Kampman occupies the spot as the prototype for instincts, while black athletes make up the ideal for the rest of the prototype spots. However, the rest of *ESPN*’s analysis of defensive end prospects does not seem to indicate any really tangible racial codes, as both black players and white players are described positively and negatively with seemingly no bias to the colour of their skin. Interestingly enough, a black player, Marquies Gunn is described as a “blue collar player who works to the whistle” (94) which, in almost every instance, is an overwhelmingly white evaluation.

Lindy's (2007) evaluations seem to mirror those found in ESPN, as both white players and black players are described as tough and competitive and having a good work ethic. While it was interesting to hear black players praised for their "work ethic" (54), it was also interesting to read a couple of the white players described as "natural pass rushers" (ibid). Although there are still clear demarcations of the ways in which black and white bodies are viewed. White defensive end Adam Carriker is not a "classic" (51) passrusher and not the "flashiest" (ibid) passrusher and white Chase Pittman "works hard" but may be "maxed-out athletically" (54). Conversely, black Victor DeGrate, who runs the same time in the 40-yard dash as white Adam Carriker, is a "natural pass rusher with good initial quickness" (55) and black Charles Johnson, "shows frustration when his initial move fails...lacks the sand in his pants to anchor versus double teams" and "lacks a mean streak and needs to show more of a refuse-to-lose-attitude" (51). Pass rushing is traditionally the area of black players, while white players are often viewed as run stuffers; pass rushing being the more finesse and athletic skill, while run stuffing requiring more "toughness" and "grit." We see even here the roles of players *at the same position* have a racialized knowledge that is articulated through the discourse and is embodied by their roles on the team.

Street and Smith (2007) also reveals dominant hegemonic articulations through the excessive praise of white mental prowess and black physical prowess. While black players such as Jamaal Anderson, Charles Johnson and Ray McDonald "work extremely hard and play through the whistle" (96), are "disciplined and plays within the scheme" (97), and have a "great attitude and a nonstop motor" (100) a white defensive end such as Adam Carriker is a "hardworking player with outstanding size and strength. Plays as if

every snap will be his last and refuses to accept defeat...knowledgeable, hard-working and a real tough guy" (97) and white Jay Moore is "disciplined; plays within the scheme. Durable and will play hurt. Hard worker. Competitive. Team leader...Moore has excellent intangibles. He's an overachiever and that could catch up with him at this level" (100). Again, we see the definition of white bodies as plagued by sub par athletic skills that are overcome through determination, toughness and "intangibles." This is contrasted by the black body that is chronically defined as physically gifted, yet unworthy of trust. The black Baraka Atkins is "not the hardest worker and that's a trait that may haunt him on draft day" (101); Quentin Moses is "more of an athlete than a warrior" (99) a clear code that is often used to describe black football players which maintains the black athlete as naturally endowed with physical gifts of speed, strength agility and so forth, but lacking in toughness, desire and dedication.

Pro Football Weekly raises concerns over black defensive end Gaines Adams' character: "played harder as a senior when he was chasing money, than he did early in his career, and intrinsic motivation needs to be evaluated closely...teams that dig into his character will have concerns about investing an eight figure signing bonus" (76). The black Jarvin Moss "was suspended for a game late in the season for violating team rules" (77); black Victor Abiamari "is chiseled exactly how the football gods would draw it up a defensive end with very good size and natural strength" however he "looks like Tarzan but plays too often like Jane and disappears for big stretches in games" (78). On the other hand, white Adam Carriker "plays hard and gives great effort...is very tough and will play through injuries. Very hardworking. Treats his body like a temple. Outstanding football character. Takes the game seriously. Football junkie. Married...big, smart, competitive

and passionate football player. A proven three-year starter who will bring no surprises” (77); white Dan Bazuin is “not a great athlete”, but “gives great effort. Motor does not stop...tough and will play through injuries” (80); white Jay Moore is “smart. Competitive. Good work habits. Is considered a leader. Can contribute on special teams. Tough and played through a shoulder injury as a senior” (ibid). We see the difference between the black athletes that are described as physically gifted, yet untrustworthy and the white athletes who are dependable and hardworking despite physical limitations.

Outside Linbacker

In the *Sporting News* evaluation of the 2007 outside linebacker class, every single white prospect, except for Dallas Sartz, is described positively for his mental attributes or emotional character. Stewart Bradley is “smart, gets in good position and shows proper technique” (84); Zach Catanese “is tough and competitive” (85); Sabby Piscitelli “shows good instincts” (ibid); Tim Shaw shows “good instincts; reads plays and reacts quickly...shows good knowledge of fundamentals and is a solid tackler” (86); Cameron Siskowic “is tough and competitive. Shows solid instincts in reading plays” (ibid); Jeremy Jones “is tough and competitive” (87); Will Herring is “smart and consistently reads and reacts to plays” (ibid); and Matt Couch is “intense and fearless” (ibid). On the contrary, only Stephen Nicholas, Prescott Burgess, KaMichael Hall, and Marques Murrell are described as “smart”, “tough”, “instinctive” or “hard working” (86). Instead, black outside linebacker Juwan Simpson is “a character concern. Before last season, entered a court-ordered drug program after his arrest on charges of marijuana possession and

carrying a handgun without a license” (84); Rory Johnson “has had off-field problems and has a questionable work ethic” (ibid); Nate Harris “has the talent to play in the NFL but makes few impact plays...if the light goes on, he could become a starter” (ibid); Sam Olajubutu “is a great athlete” but “at first glance, [he] appears to lack the toughness and production to make the NFL jump, but it is clear he has the athletic ability” (85); KaMichael Hall is “a better athlete than a football player” (86); and Monte Smith “is a good athlete” but “is not aggressive; seems content to let plays come to him. Lacks solid instincts” (87).

ESPN (2007) magazine presents a few interesting contradictions from the usual representation of black and white NFL prospects in other magazines. In fact, there is quite a significant amount of glowing praise for the mental capabilities, toughness and desire of black outside linebackers. For instance, Jon Beason “plays with a nonstop motor and sacrifices body to make plays. Extremely reliable” (104); Juwan Simpson is praised for his effort and is described as a “tough, aggressive WLB, and throws his body around” (105); Justin Durant “works to whistle” (ibid); Michael Okwo’s greatest positive is his effort and “plays with a mean streak and doesn’t shy away from taking on much bigger blockers” (ibid); Stephen Nicholas’ greatest asset is his instincts and he “gives max effort” (106); Sam Olajubutu has a “nonstop motor. Reliable open-field tackler” (107); Quincy Black is a “high-motor player who rarely makes mistakes. Strong instincts, reads keys and rarely gets out of position” (107); and Jarvis Jackson is a “high-effort player with motor and quickness to provide LB depth” (ibid). Clearly, the black player is not essentialized as lazy and mentally inferior in *ESPN*. However, there are still signs that reinforce the legacy of black physical prowess and white mental superiority.

These come in the form of unfounded doubts about the white athletes' athletic abilities and a disproportionate amount of praise for the mental attributes of white players. For instance, despite having elite speed for the position, the introductory paragraph to the outside linebacker section states that Penn State's white linebacker Paul Posluszny's draft stock is falling due to concerns over his athleticism (102). This is an example of a common trend in NFL football evaluations where the first instinct of many scouts seems to assume sub-par athleticism and speed from white athletes, much in the same way that scouts are quick to assume that black players have more character issues and are less coachable. These delineations between white and black capabilities are underscored by the description of white Penn State linebacker Tim Shaw. While we have seen the positive descriptions of black outside linebackers, the description of Shaw carries many indicators of whiteness that maintain the separation of roles and skill sets; Tim Shaw's best attribute is his "toughness" and he is described as a "blue-collar overachiever. Uses instincts, quick reactions and toughness to match up one-on-one vs. RBs and TEs. Relentless pass-rusher. Quick learner with great work ethic" (105). We see here, the common codes of "overachiever" and "blue collar" to indicate the essential differences between whites and blacks. Overachiever and blue collar come to signify all that is white, as *underachiever* and *character flaws* come to signify all that is essentially black.

In *Lindy's* (2007) draft guide too, historical racial knowledges become articulated through the characterization of black players as naturally gifted physically and white players as mentally strong. While *Lindy's* does not fail to acknowledge the work ethic, leadership and desire of many of the black players, for instance, describing Lawrence Timmons as a "high-energy type" (67), Rufus Alexander "plays hard and is a respected

leader of the defense” (ibid), Earl Everett a “hard worker in the weight room and coaches rave about his leadership qualities” (ibid), Jon Beason is a “team leader who motivates and directs teammates” (ibid), and so forth, many of the black players are described as “naturally” athletic (68). Nate Harris has “natural athleticism” (68), Juwon Simpson has “uncoachable athleticism” (ibid); and Quincy Black has “natural cover skills...natural tools...is a better athlete than football player” (69). The “better athlete than a football player” tag, much like the overachiever tag for white players, is an overwhelmingly black signifier. It asserts that though this player is fast, strong and tests extremely well, he may not be trustworthy, mature or smart enough to hone his physical prowess and realize the potential bestowed upon him by his natural gifts (Douglas, 2003).

Conversely, white players such as Paul Posluszny is described thus, “character and intelligence is even more impressive than his physical gifts...renowned for his leadership, intelligence and dedication” (66); Stewart Bradley, a player who no other magazine described positively for his smarts, is described as a “smart, instinctive player who reads schemes well and is alert to play-action and misdirection” (68); and again Tim Shaw has a “blue-collar work ethic, and will do whatever the coaching staff asks” (ibid).

Street and Smith's (2007) draft guide seems to yield very little discourses that support racial articulations that draw on a history of racist knowledge about black and white bodies. Both black and white players are praised for their toughness, dedication, physical skills and mental capabilities as well as criticized for their lack of athleticism and character. One of the only notable exerts from the discourse is the extreme praise of Paul Posluszny as “intelligent...good anticipation and timing. Disciplined, plays within the scheme. Will play hurt. Versatile; outstanding effort. Competitive. Team player.

Quality person. Team leader...a guy with a nonstop motor who will give everything he has on every play. Makes those around him much better...a leader and a playmaker...this is a well-schooled football player who is as honest as they come" (112).

Pro Football Weekly's (2007) evaluation of the outside linebacker prospects reveals several of the characteristics of zoological cinema through its exaltation of the white players' mental superiority and toughness. Black player Lawrence Timmons "does not have great instincts and is still very raw, inexperienced and learning the game" (95); black linebacker Earl Everett is "not a quick study and can be somewhat slow to process and react to the ball" (96); and black linebacker Quincy Black is "too inconsistent. Not very tough. Does not play very physical and misses too many tackles" (97). Conversely, white linebacker Paul Posluszny has "outstanding intangibles. Is very smart and knows how to line up a defense...commands respect. Very instinctive. Very aggressive scraping and flowing to the ball. Physical drive-through tackler. Great football character and personal character. Very mentally tough and will play through pain" (95); white Stewart Bradley has "nice instincts. Has good motor and plays hard...is smart, understands the game and plays with passion. Good football character and work habits" (96); and white Tim Shaw "competes extremely hard...good motor...smart and instinctive. Football is very important to him" (ibid).

At outside linebacker, a particular version of blackness and whiteness is being advanced by at least three of the five magazines. It is a logic that maintains the representation of black men in zoological cinema and that relies on a "regime of truth" (Foucault, 1975) that is rooted in a racist ideology. Consequently, the discursive effects rearticulate new signs into the regime of truth and extend the reach of that particular,

highly-naturalized, yet unnatural way of knowing. Codes such as “blue collar” and “good football character” maintain the position of white athletes as succeeding through mental and ethical superiority, while codes such as “natural athleticism” and “better athlete than a football player” reinforce centuries-old notions of the black body as naturally physical and, thus, able to succeed in football without much effort. These codes represent modern *articulations* of historically formed ideologies.

Conclusion

Having read football draft magazines for years and years, this research has been a way for me to academically explore a phenomenon that I had perceived ever since I picked up my first copy of *The Sporting News Draft Guide*. Without any intense training on white supremacist ideology or the nature of covert racism, I could tell there was something wrong with these descriptions; it was way far too easy to discern the race of the player being described without the aid of a photograph. All one had to do was to read whether the player in question was an “overachiever” or an “underachiever” and you could tell if they were describing a hardworking, though athletically-hindered white player or a lazy, athletically-gifted black player. Hence, the impetus for this project was to explore and identify these disparities in representation that I perceived to exist in the football evaluative world. By exploring the discourses in these magazines, this project was meant to identify codes that are racially specific and locate where the meaning of these codes is produced and where this meaning fits into a history of racism.

What became clear from my research is that my initial impressions of the football magazines were confirmed. The football world, though it employs and promotes a diverse group of people from a plethora of backgrounds and cultures, seems to be rife with a commonsense racism that maintains a white racial privileged perspective. Black athletes are overwhelmingly described as naturally athletic, immature, lazy, mentally inferior and unfit for leadership. On the other hand, white athletes are consistently represented as physically inferior, yet intelligent, naturally fit for leadership, hardworking, trustworthy and dependable. Examining these five magazines reveals many of the codes used to divide and classify these athletes, the terms *blue collar*, *grit*,

underachiever, and *character* stand in for racial categories that no one would dare utter.

Through language such as this, black players and white players are divided and their differences are essentialized and maintained.

Though the majority of the discourse positions black football players within a history of racist representation, I did find that there were some contrary depictions of black athletes and they were less essentialized than I thought they would be. I found examples of black quarterbacks described as good leaders, black linebackers praised for their hustle and black guard Justin Blalock consistently commended for his intelligence, rigorous preparation and work ethic, and his cerebral approach to the game. Although black players appeared to be more diversely represented than I had thought, representations of black athletes overwhelmingly suffered from the classic characteristics of zoological representation. These categories of wild animal, servant, untrustworthy, were rearticulated and replicated in the language of football evaluation. These codes serve to maintain a historic knowledge of black and white players, dating back to the days of slavery, in contemporary language. So, while the categories in languages have changed, black Americans are still understood through a framework of ideology that views their bodies as capital. Then, it was manual labour for no pay, today it is the “work horse” running back using his freakish physical gifts to carry the ball and fill the stadium. As the Appendixes show, white athletes are praised for their mental attributes far greater than their black counterparts.

I found that these discourses, which rely on a racist knowledge of dark and light-skinned bodies, operate within a certain *episteme* of knowledge. Indeed, these representations are only possible because they are produced history of racialized

knowledge of what black people are capable of and what white people are capable of. Hence, the natural black athlete and overachieving white athlete find a welcoming home in the imaginary of readers who were raised within the same ideological frontiers. Therefore, while scouts and coaches may not be overtly or even consciously racist, their views are filtered and understood through a framework of commonsense racism. The web of ideology through which we all pass through creates positions and evaluations that seem authentic and original, but rely on historical knowledges of the black body as animal and untrustworthy and the white body as intelligent and intellectually superior. The analysis of these texts reveals that some of these racialized ways of knowing are replicated over and over again so frequently that they achieve status as truth by a football community that is well-stocked with historical knowledge that confirms classic racist views of black and white players.

As the CRT literature emphasizes, colour blind solutions are not the answer. Without acknowledgement of the ideologies that are so heavily imbued into us, NFL talent evaluations, and football spectatorship in general, will suffer from a white-privileged position and reproduce this history of commonsense racism. Thus, any coach, fan, scout or player attempting to make honest and progressive evaluations of athletic talent must take a critical approach to his or her own experiences and ideological influences. Without acknowledging a history of racism that informs our positions, football discourse is doomed to replicate the same hegemonic knowledge of white and black bodies and maintain a destructive commonsense racism.

Despite the evidence I have found and the value I believe it has in identifying contemporary articulations of racism, this research is limited in a number of ways.

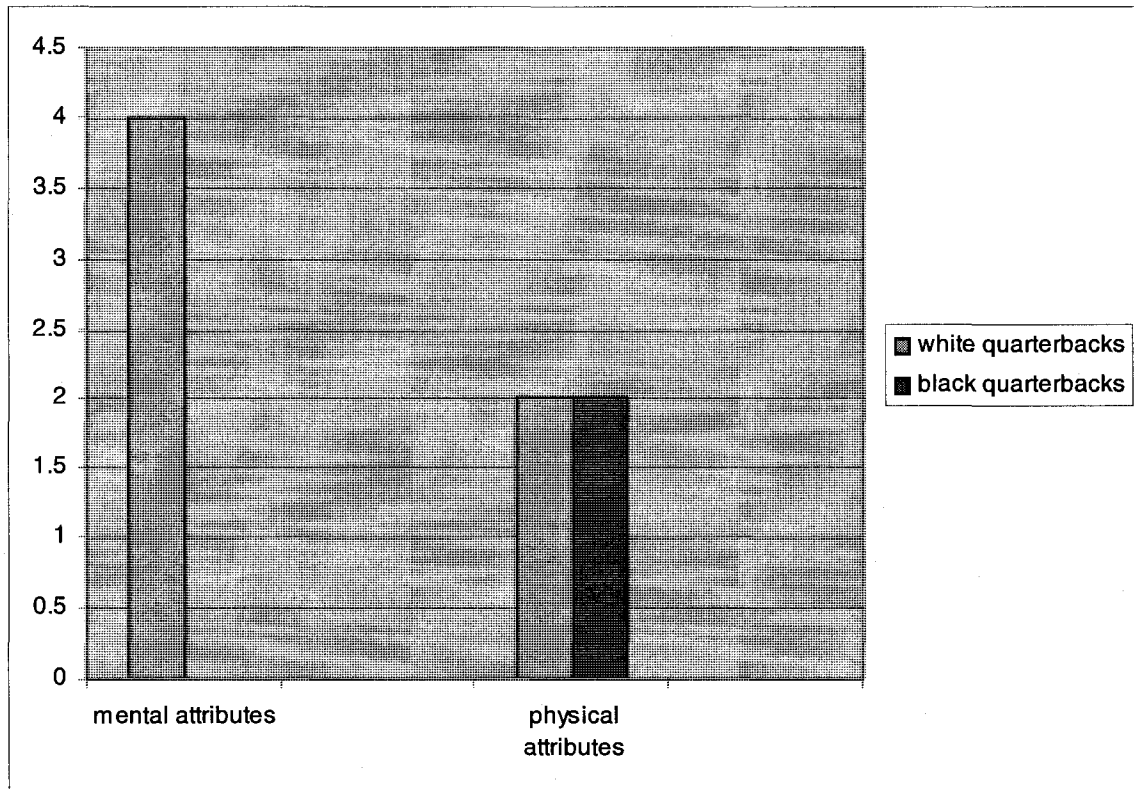
Primarily, as it is only a content analysis we cannot determine what the players and coaches themselves think and how they actually interpret and understand these, seemingly, racially-charged statements or the knowledge they have of past evaluations and the history of race in America. Furthermore, because this was a primarily qualitative examination of certain racial themes in the texts, I was looking for statements that replicated past racist articulations and, thus, this influenced my examination of these texts.

Future research in this area should include interviews with people involved in the football industry in order to determine their level of recognition of the ideologies that appear to rule their world and how, if at all, they challenge these dominant ways of thinking and representations. Furthermore, this research only spans a one year time-frame and, consequently, future research could benefit from drawing magazines from a broader scope. This study is valuable as an insight into the articulation of racist ideology through the medium of NFL Draft magazines within the year 2007.

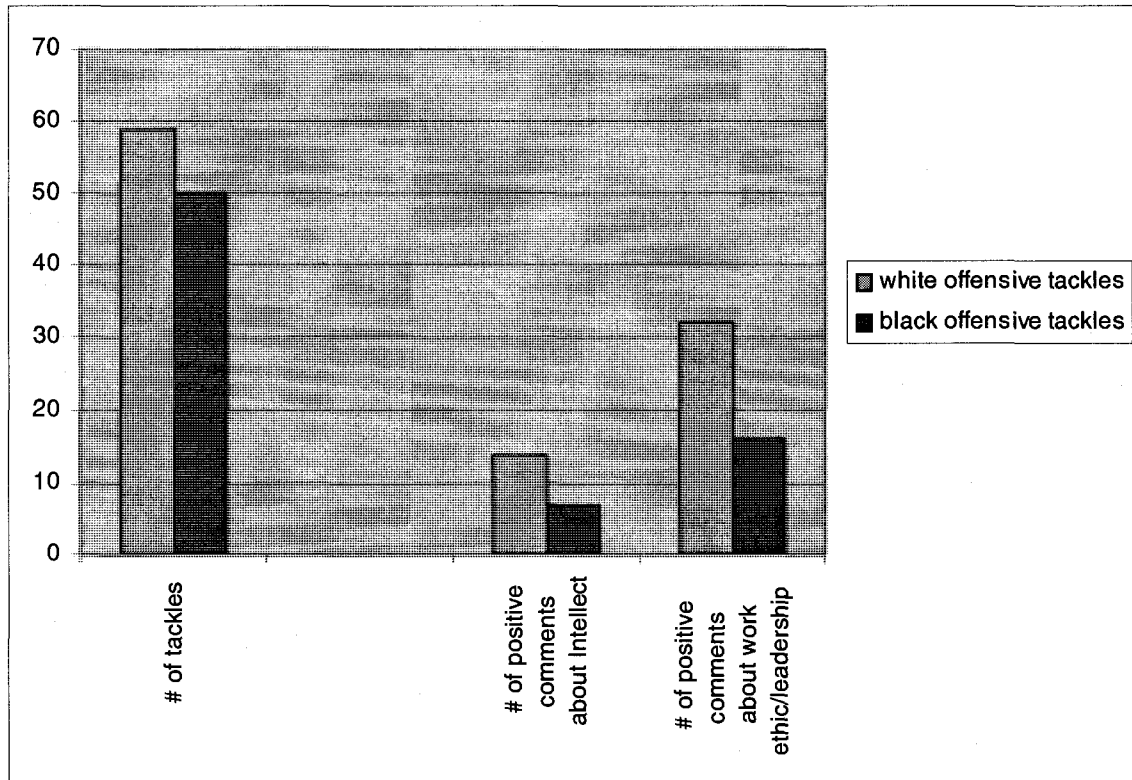
Appendix 1

Magazine	# of QBs	# of WQB	# of positive comments for QBs			# of positive comments for WQB		
			Intelligence	Work Ethic	Leadership	Intelligence	Work Ethic	Leadership
the Sporting News	7	13	0	1	1	4	4	2
Lindy's	4	13	1	2	3	4	16	5
Street and Smith's	4	11	1	3	2	8	14	10
Pro Football Weekly	4	11	0	6	0	11	21	4
ESPN	7	19	1	3	2	2	14	9

Appendix 1 shows the number of positive comments in all five magazines for black and white quarterbacks based on leadership, work ethic and intelligence.

Appendix 2

Appendix 2 shows how the attributes of the ideal quarterback are represented in terms of the race of the ideal prototype to which they are ascribed in *ESPN's* draft magazine.

Appendix 3

Appendix 3 shows the total number of black and white offensive tackles evaluated in all five magazines and the number of positive comments about their intellect and their work ethic and leadership based on a number of easily identifiable signifiers.

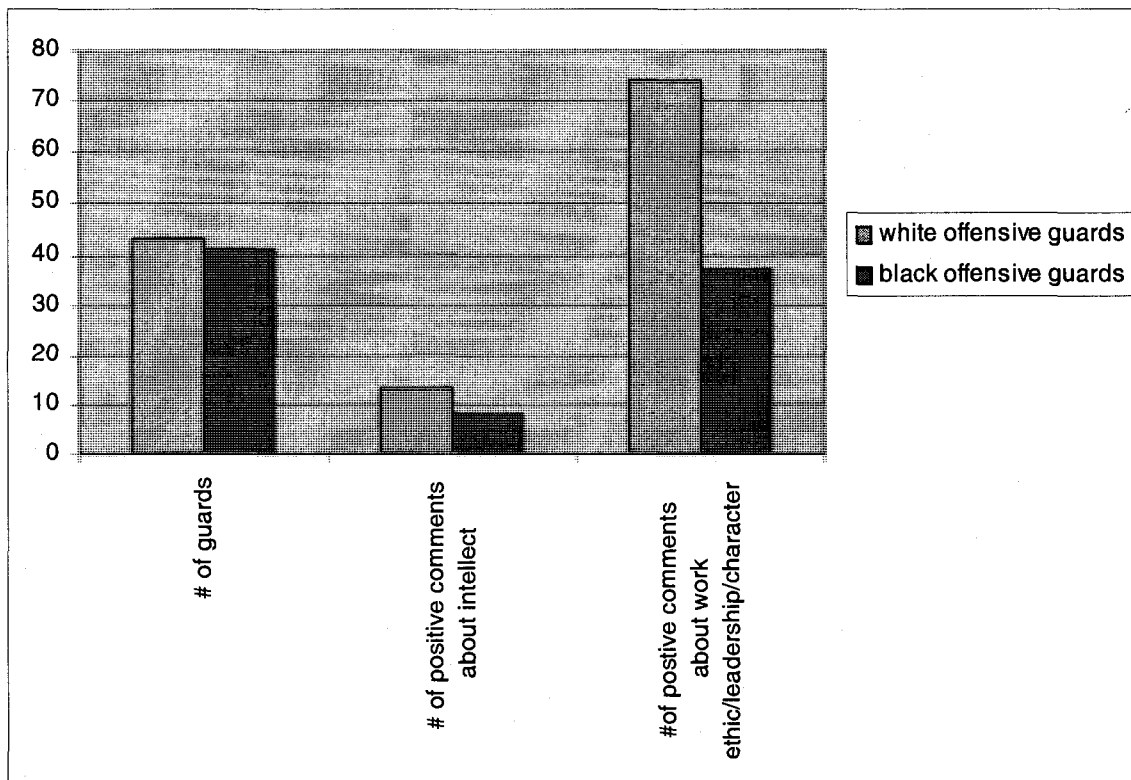
Appendix 4

Figure 1.4 shows the total number of white and black offensive guards in all five magazines and the number of positive comments made regarding their intellect and work ethic, leadership and character as identified by distinct signifiers.

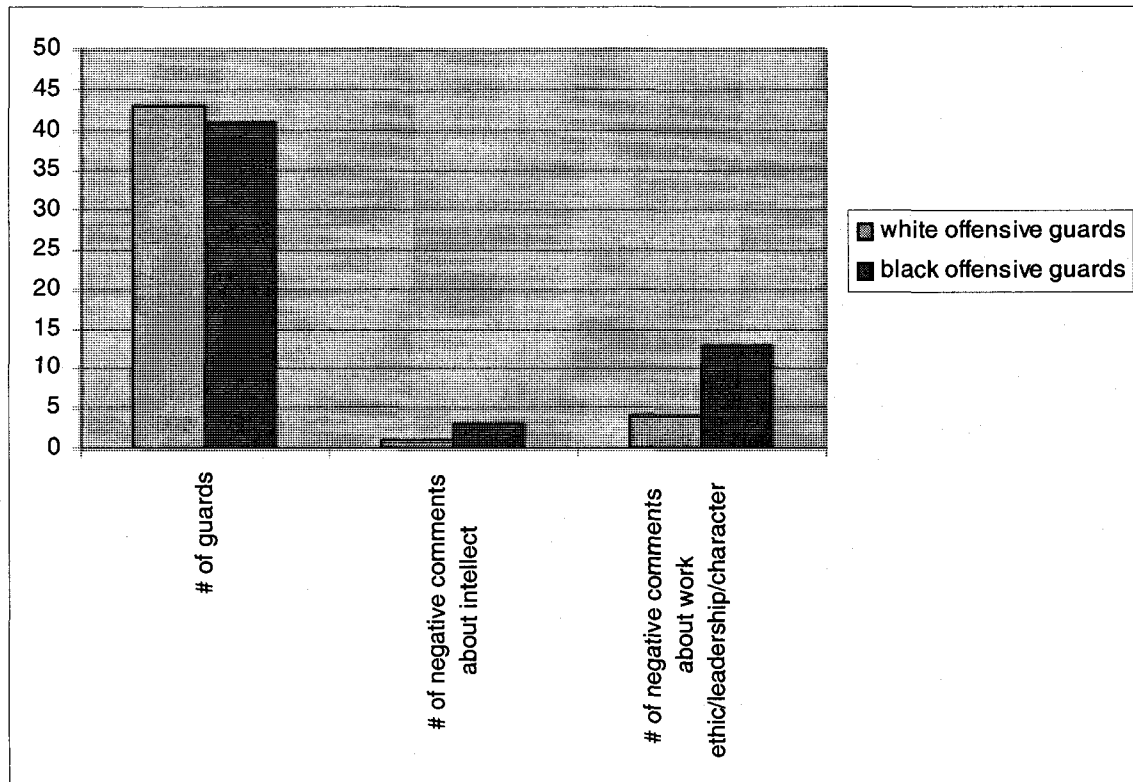
Appendix 5

Figure 1.5 shows the total number of white and black offensive guards in all five magazines and the number of negative comments made regarding their intellect and work ethic, leadership and character as identified by distinct signifiers.

Glossary of Terms

Assignment-the task that a player has to accomplish on a particular play.

Better athlete than football player – used to describe a player who is very athletic; be it fast, strong, agile, etc, but who underachieves on the field despite all of his athletic abilities.

Better football player than athlete-a player who may be limited by his physical abilities, but makes up for it in some way to perform at a very high level on the football field.

Blue-collar-usually used to describe players with a combination of work ethic, toughness, character and mental toughness.

Character-is usually used to indicate whether a player could be trouble or not; this means whether or not he gets into trouble off the field, whether he causes trouble in the locker room and divides players, and his whether he is coachable or not.

Gym rat-someone with a good work ethic who is extremely dedicated to off-season training.

Intangibles-usually refers to a player's character, work ethic, leadership ability, ability to respect, implement and understand coaching.

Mental toughness-playing with discipline and focus.

Motor-refers to how enthusiastically and "to the whistle" a player plays. Meant to indicate that the player is not lazy and will constantly and enthusiastically playing from whistle to whistle.

Nasty – a tough player who completes his assignment as violently and enthusiastically as possible.

Off-field issues-usually refers to legal troubles that players may get into in their personal lives.

Overachiever – see "better football player than athlete."

Pass blocker-an offensive player trying to protect his quarterback from the opposing team's defensive players.

Pass rusher-a defensive player who is trying to tackle the opposing team's quarterback.

Playing to the whistle-is usually used to describe an offensive lineman that is looking to perform at the highest level from the moment the play starts until the play is stopped (when the referee blows the whistle). It is used to describe hard-working players and is meant to denote that the player in question is not lazy.

Reach-length of a player's arms.

Run blocking-when an offensive player attempts to displace a defensive player so that his team's runners have room to run the ball past the defense.

Run stopper-a defensive player who is attempting to stop the opposing team from running the ball.

Study film-watching practice film or film of the opposing teams in order to better prepare oneself.

Taking plays off-indicates a player who will get lazy at times during the game and not try to perform his assignment to the highest level at all times.

Technique-the ability of a player to perform his duties according to the ideal ways in which that position is coached. To perform his assignments using the conventional and accepted methods of that position.

Throwback-an old-fashioned player, who conjures up nostalgia for the days before huge salaries, prima Donna players, agents and huge endorsement deals. Supposed to indicate a player who is tough and blue collar.

Toughness-willingness to work hard, play physically and sacrifice body for the success of the team.

Trash Talk-confident, disparaging remarks made to opposing players.

'Tweener-this is used to describe a player that is in-between two different positions ideals. For instance, a running back who is too slow to be a running back, but not big and physical enough for full back.

Underachiever-see "better athlete than football player."

Work ethic-practicing hard, working out and training the body outside of mandatory team practices, studying film and playbook.

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