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"Locating" the Nation: Football Game Day and American Dreams in Central Ohio

This article suggests how abstract ideas like "nation" are lived and situated by examining recurring features of American football as it is experienced by spectators in central Ohio. Football—an institutionalized drama formed by its inventors to address questions of national identity and social relations—is embedded within the generically complex event known as "game day" and is framed by ongoing social practices that stem from the sport's competitive structure. As a multifaceted event grounded in both historical contexts and live performances, this spectator sport provides an ideal case for highlighting connections among form, ideology, and identity. This article argues that as a celebratory complex, Ohio State University football enacts aspects of national identity (including tropes of competitive opportunity, mechanized teamwork, and homeland defense) in terms of shared experiences and expressions grounded in local affiliations. In particular, the much-anticipated and ritually structured performances of the OSU Marching Band guide fans in endorsing "America" and its attendant ideologies while simultaneously emphasizing local difference.

On Sunday, November 22, 1998, the *Columbus (OH) Dispatch* carried articles about rioting in Indonesia, North Korea's arms race, and the assassination of a Russian Parliament deputy. Yet the paper led with news of the previous day's Ohio State–Michigan football game: "So Much for That Michigan Monkey: OSU Thumps Wolves to Claim Share of Title." In the Sports section, no less than fourteen follow-up articles and fifteen full-color photos contributed to local rejoicing over the win, which broke a three-year Ohio State losing streak in the university's annual rivalry with its Ann Arbor counterpart. At the time, OSU linebacker Jerry Rudzinski remarked, "I grew up in central Ohio . . . and this is what you dream to do—to beat Michigan. So finally, finally" (Stein 1998a:2A).

In the late nineteenth century, British anthropologist E. B. Tylor argued that collective expressions were dying out and that new traditions were merely "feeble" and "spiritless [imitations], like our attempts to invent new myths or new nursery rhymes" (1889:90). Even as Tylor was writing *Primitive Culture*, however, a potent and enduring cultural enactment was being formulated in the United States: American football[1]

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emerged on the playing fields of colleges around the nation. What might account for the creation and continued popularity of this game? And why does sixty minutes of "play" in central Ohio merit such intense local commentary and personal engagement?

If contemporary scholars of culture have been more willing than Tylor to take new traditions seriously in terms of their social import,[2] public sporting events are still often evaluated as "feeble" when compared to other kinds of cultural performances, especially those of the historical past or "traditional" present. Approached with the ironic distance made famous by Horace Miner's essay on the curious Nacirema (1956) and adopted at times by Desmond Morris in *The Soccer Tribe* (1981), modern sports become grounds for amused revelations that "we" share cultural features with anthropological Others—though regrettably only in shallower, less creative, or less robust forms.[3] Thus, drama scholar Gerald Weales pronounced Homecoming Day at Georgia Tech a "genuine ritual" in the manner of the ancient Greeks while lamenting that this "cult of the Yellow Jacket" and its central performance by the "local priesthood" (the football team) "have reached a state of sophistication, which may be symptomatic of decay" (1957:104, 106). He cited the marching band's halftime routine as a case in point. Only the Wreck Parade, made up of "carefully mutilated old automobiles," retained the event's "pure and primitive form" (108) and its proper ecstatic focus on the day's "deity": School Spirit.

Anthropologist Charles D. Laughlin has also juxtaposed sport in the contemporary United States with combinations of play and ritual in other cultures, though he is less concerned with entertaining his readers in the process. Instead, he observes that the "crucial difference" between games in "traditional cosmological" societies and those in "modern Euro-American" life is that the latter "arise in an interpretive vacuum. That is, the experiences are interpreted only within the cycle of meaning of the game itself, or athletics in general. There is little interpretive articulation between the experiences that arise during the game and either the rest of the life-world or the total world view of the society" (1993:95, 98).

Laughlin's assertion fails to consider the larger discourse that surrounds today's sporting events, messages about social relations and values that are communicated through verbal and customary form, official and unofficial commentary, and participatory activities (see Stoeltje 1993). While Ohio State football may not induce a metaphysical "cosmic epiphany" (Laughlin 1993:99) in game-day participants—a claim sure to be contested by some Buckeyes—neither does it occur in an "interpretive vacuum." Rather, the football celebratory complex articulates, enacts, and invites conversation about subjectivity and political and economic worldviews; consequently, it deserves more than satiric or cursory attention, and it requires scholarship that takes into account actors from beyond the playing field.

My purpose here is to demonstrate a situated negotiation between the national and the local by examining recurring features of Buckeye football as it is experienced by spectators.[4] If a nation can be represented by concrete bodies (such as militaries) or symbols (such as flags), it can also be imagined in terms of ideals that emerge from narrative. As a public enactment, football game day involves each of these signifying modes. I argue that football in central Ohio performs national identity (including tropes of competitive opportunity, mechanized teamwork, and homeland defense)

in terms of shared experiences and expressions grounded in *local* affiliations.[5] In particular, the much-anticipated and ritually structured performances of The Ohio State University Marching Band guide fans in endorsing efficient skill, physical strength, inventive achievement, and coordinated effort—aspects of national ideologies that are expressed both in football play and in this band's image and actions. However, these representations of "nation" are always juxtaposed with or layered upon local interventions and signifying practices. Thus, the entire game-day complex "locates" the nation within a regional performance of identity (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Flags flown from tailgating tents suggest multiple loyalties in central Ohio. Photo Credit: William R. French.

Football's Narratives: Cultural Meaning in "Named and Framed Activities-in-Common"

The subject of national identity formation is, by now, well-trodden territory. Some have identified print media as a primary carrier of national consciousness. Richard Slotkin, for example, has characterized print as "the most important vehicle of myth in America" (1973:19; see also Anderson [1983] 1991 and Warner 1990), and Richard Weiss (1969) and Sacvan Bercovitch (1981) have demonstrated how ideas of "the American Way" have been shaped in published oratory, popular fiction, conduct-of-life literature, and philosophical essays since the eighteenth century. Others, like George Lipsitz, stress the importance of the electronic mass media, which enables its consumers to "experience a common heritage with people they have never seen" (1990:5). Nevertheless, people still take part in public, face-to-face group dramas, events made all the more potent because they so often articulate with print and electronic media.[6] To experience American football with others is to participate in a foundational (even mythic) national narrative: the official form, symbols, and performance of this contest enact ideals like innovation, perseverance, and achievement—ideals central to that structure of feeling commonly known as the American Dream.

The phrase names a story that valorizes mobility and success and locates their genesis in the merit-based possibilities ostensibly afforded by democratic society. This basic plot often frames understandings of America's history and provides a lifescript for the country's inhabitants. Yet the "ideological consensus" (Bercovitch 1981:6) implied by these well-known words is illusory: "the American Dream" actually titles several related but not identical tales about success in the United States. These narratives, which may envision means and ends very differently, have common roots in the Puritan commitment to undertaking an "errand into the wilderness" (Miller 1956). Viewed as a migration, this "errand" highlighted the importance of opportunity and legitimized acquisition; as a pilgrimage, it endorsed individual will enacted within social parameters and for community ends; and as a "summons onward" it emphasized progress and growth (Bercovitch 1981; cf. Dundes 1980b). The Puritan rhetoric of mission and ascetic duty in everyday endeavors proved particularly amenable to capitalism (Weber 1930) and encouraged the eventual linkage of personal merit and material wealth—the "rags-to-riches" story—with the idea of the American nation. In time, due to changes in the organization of labor and capital, the "entrepreneurial" success ethic that championed character and effort came to coexist with still other perceptions of and routes to success. In these latter orientations, success may be facilitated by strategic choice and image management or motivated by the pursuit of self-fulfillment (see Traube 1989). Within the loose narrative parameters of the American Dream, then, success in one's errand may become possible through self-sacrifice or self-cultivation, individual effort or teamwork, the accumulation of goods or the dispersal of them (Cawelti 1965; DeVitis and Rich 1996; Weiss 1969; Wyllie 1954). The national myth enables multiple ideological emphases.

Football, too, can engender more than one story about progress and goal achievement. Framed as something set apart from everyday life, this game and its festive contexts encourage reflexivity about both the individual and society writ large (Falassi 1987; Stoeltje 1992). In attempting to explain this oddly "American" sport, com-

mentators have read football as a metaphoric expression of territorial, sexual, or economic conquest, thus linking the game to national imperialism and war, gendered dominance, or corporate capitalism. They have also positioned football as a model of scientific efficiency and a promoter of equal opportunity and individual talent.[7] Nor is football alone in its potential for national narrative. Baseball has also been heralded as "America's national game," one thought to embody a democratic and egalitarian spirit, as well as notions such as progress, civilization, and masculinity in general (Premo 1997). During the Black Sox scandal of 1919–1920, one grand jury member argued that baseball must continue to index America's "national genius and character," epitomizing "[t]he American principle of merit and fair play" and promoting "respect for proper authority, self-confidence, fairmindedness, quick judgment, and self-control" (quoted in Guttmann 1978:96). When baseball entrepreneur A. G. Spalding argued in 1911 for the game's prominence in American hearts and minds, he reminded readers that the individual baseball player wins "distinction on the field" by possessing "patience, self-reliance and fair-mindedness," qualities that (according to the entrepreneurial ethic) inevitably lead to "pronounced success in other walks of life" (Spalding 1911:5, 537).

Spectator sports lend themselves to these varied interpretations because they are polysemic phenomena—cultural performances that involve aspects of play, ritual, and festival (see Stoeltje 1992:261). As a result, they also resist being read solely as mechanisms for either subordination or protest. Sports are commonly framed and understood as "play," as nonserious activities distinct from the concerns of "real life" and unconnected to material interests (see Huizinga [1950] 1962).[8] But football is also a particularly *organized* sport, one developed by social elites and characterized by an invariant structure and deference to authority often associated with ritual (see Rappoport 1992). Then, too, scenes surrounding the gridiron—with their food, costume, and license—impart a festive quality to football contests. In participatory gameday activities, people both embrace and recontextualize official symbols, injecting their own performances and investing their egos in the day's events. And in central Ohio, The Ohio State University Marching Band flickers between the generic poles of ritual and festival as it bridges the gridiron and the stands. Together, actions on the field, among the spectators, and by the band constitute a larger community contest, a drama that works through layers of relations and emphasizes particular narratives. What, then, might football mean in *Columbus* and its environs?

Attention to the interplay of genres and actors in these events provides one interpretive vantage point. In past decades, investigators of sport have largely focused on the norms and sanctions of games themselves (with players and coaches envisioned as the drama's primary participants) or on the discrete texts—legends, superstitions, jokes—that circulate about and help to form groups like "athletes" or "teams" (see Peterson 1983).[9] Although a growing body of work investigates sport as a social institution implicated in the reproduction of culture and social inequity,[10] scholars need to explore more fully the range and consequences of expressive behaviors that comprise sporting events in contemporary industrialized or industrializing societies. Folklorists in particular are prepared to engage sport as a complex of patterned scenes and participatory structures (Abrahams 1977): philological disciplinary roots have

attuned us to the concept of genre, while subsequent emphases on interpreting aspects of performance have foregrounded the importance of actors, processes, and situated events. And as scholars continue to call attention to the constructed and interested nature of classification systems, they note that the very ambiguities of genre boundaries are instructive. The ways that genres interact and overlap offer insight into the complexities of social life and the processes through which societies are created and contested (see Bauman 1992; Briggs and Bauman 1992; Hymes 1974).

Football game day, for instance, is just one of those "named and framed activities-in-common" (Abrahams 1977:80) that may involve elements of multiple genres, including ritual, festival, spectacle, drama, game, or ceremony. Several scholars have explored these kinds of incorporative or "secondary" genres (Bakhtin 1986:61–62), calling such events "cultural productions" (MacCannell 1976), "cultural enactments" (Abrahams 1977), "secular rituals" (Moore and Myerhoff 1977), or "celebrations" (Manning 1983). Here I want to draw attention to the juxtaposition of generic features within these multifaceted public activities (see Peterson 1983:262). Which genres are emphasized on Ohio State game day, and what expectations do they evoke? What cultural narratives are questioned or reinforced as a result?

In what follows, I share some of the tasty texts that have long interested folklorists, but I position them within a consideration of football as an institutionalized game as well as a venue for public participation. Following Kenneth Burke's tripartite approach to public enactments (1957), I first reflect on football's early history, examining the circumstances in which the game emerged and tracing how its form has been interpreted and promoted.[11] Next, I sketch the context in which football is experienced today in central Ohio, suggesting the layers of identification that emerge in prominent practices. I conclude by exploring game day at Ohio State, detailing how national symbols and American success ethics are embraced and reinterpreted as badges of local identity by Buckeyes, particularly in the form of participation guided by the band (Figure 2).

Historical Origins: Football's Form and Context

As many historians have observed, the turn of the nineteenth century was marked by a pervasive emphasis on sport and recreation in the United States. This focus on physical play was encouraged by several factors, including industrialization's sharp distinction between work and leisure (see Turner 1982) and Social Darwinists' belief that "atavistic" physical behavior could remedy the alienation and physical torpor engendered by modern working conditions. Football fit easily into an environment that glorified "regeneration through violence" on the frontier and fostered health clubs and slogans like "Weakness is a Crime" (Gilbert 1977; Higham 1965; Mrozek 1983; Slotkin 1973).[12]

In fact, football was in the vanguard of this sports enthusiasm: in 1875, teams from Harvard and Yale played the first intercollegiate football game under rugbylike rules (that is, players were permitted to carry the ball, though the forward pass was not legalized until 1906). By November 1876, Princeton was taking the field in black and orange costumes and joined Columbia and Harvard in forming the Intercollegiate

Figure 2. The Ohio State University Marching Band, flanked by spectators, makes its way toward the Horseshoe in October 2005. Photo Credit: William R. French.

Football Association (Davis 1911). In 1878, "football began to attract great crowds of spectators." Four thousand people—"an unprecedented assemblage"—watched the Princeton-Yale game that year, and though the $300 charge for the playing field "provoked severe criticism in the public and college press as a gross extravagance," by 1903 a $10,000 rental fee for Manhattan Field in New York "did not evoke the incidental notice of a line" (Davis 1911:72).

Other sports certainly garnered followers at the turn of the century: a codified form of stickball rapidly increased in popularity following the Civil War, and by 1869 the Cincinnati Red Stockings had already organized as a professional baseball club. City teams across the country quickly followed suit (Spalding 1911:135). The freshman and sophomore classes of some eastern colleges had been challenging each other to soccerlike matches since at least the early 1840s, and other vernacular ball games had long flourished (Cady 1978; Davis 1911:35–40; Weyand 1955).[13] However, American football is distinctive in its early and persistent connection to collegiate institutions, whose alumni and players literally invented the sport in a series of semiannual meetings between 1876 and 1912.[14] Collegiate play—unpaid and temporary by design—is symbolically loaded. Drawing upon elite notions of class decorum, its legislated amateurism emphasizes that college sports are pursuits, not livelihoods (Eitzen 1989; Gems 1998; Sach 1972).[15] Limitations on player eligibility also designate college athletic careers as transitional phases, ripe for symbolic elaborations of change (see Fiske [1972] 1975). Carefully constructed by associates of America's most prestigious colleges, football articulates meanings germane to the contexts of its conception.

For instance, football's emergence as a team sport can be seen as a response to changing social institutions. In the late 1800s, established (white Protestant) conceptions of American identity and class relations were threatened on several fronts: immigrants rapidly changed the composition of cities and regions, the working class unionized, women and men confronted the isolating consequences of the prevailing gender order, the United States asserted increasing global influence, religion became a sentimental preserve while science and technology championed the importance of physical bodies, and monopoly capitalism impacted traditional business practices (Mrozek 1983; Trachtenberg 1982). In this climate, confidence in existing social orders and cultural narratives eroded. Men raised primarily by women sought out models of public maleness (redefined in terms of gender, class, and race) even as women increasingly challenged norms of domesticity (Burstyn 1999; Oriard 1993). As captains of industry consolidated both wealth and the means of production and distribution, and as the organization of middle-class work became increasingly bureaucratic, workers began to lose faith that "fortitude, diligence, and frugality" alone would allow every talented individual to escape wage labor (Yellowitz 1969:4). Some even expressed fears that America had failed in its exceptionalist errand: in 1885, Woodrow Wilson remarked, "We are the first Americans . . . to entertain any serious doubts about the superiority of our own institutions as compared with the systems of Europe" ([1885] 1981:27). In short, personal and national fortitude were in question.

These conditions were ideal for fostering what Eric Hobsbawm has termed "invented" traditions: novel formalized practices meant to reinforce specific ideologies (1983; cf. Silverman 1984). Protestant culture has tended to view games not merely as play but as a means to another end (Manning 1983); consistent with this perspective, cultural leaders in the United States—including politicians and military officers, industrial magnates, scientists and educators, social elites, and public reformers—approached sport as a way to generate a distinct national identity as well as moral, economic, and political success (Mrozek 1983). Seeking to invigorate the entrepreneurial or "work" ethic, dominant voices promoted sport as a way to reinforce "traditional and proper relationships between individual effort, competition, and reward" (Gilbert 1977:67) and perhaps stave off worker revolt (Yellowitz 1969). Others saw structured physical activity as a way to reassert a palatable "muscular Christianity" (Burstyn 1999; Mrozek 1983).[16] Football was shaped in this context, elaborated within the upper echelons of America's educational system. Moreover, the new game became a site in which notions of nation, class, and the organization of work were overtly debated (Gilbert 1977).

In 1890, fifteen years after the first Harvard-Yale match, football had already diffused rapidly throughout the United States. In fact, the first Ohio State University (OSU) football game was played on May 3, 1890, before a crowd of 700 spectators (Park 1992); that same year, African American halfback and kicker George Jewett entered the University of Michigan, and Carlisle Industrial School for Indians established its successful football team (Gems 1998). The game's growing popularity was discussed in that year's Thanksgiving-week edition of *The Nation*. A feature titled "The Future of Football" remarked that the sport begun in two or three "of the leading colleges" (Harvard, Yale, and Princeton) had since infiltrated the nation's univer-

sities, preparatory schools, and athletic clubs and held a mysterious attraction for the "miscellaneous public." Attributing football's popularity to the "combination of discipline, skill, and brute strength," "splendid fierceness," and the "element of personal combat, which delights the savage instinct lingering in the breasts even of the most civilized among us," the article expressed concern about the game's future if wrested from control of the "gentleman amateur." Specifically, the author was concerned about practices that broke the rules—of rugby (1890:395).

Although rugby is the immediate predecessor of football, its American variant is a different ball game.[17] *The Nation* editorialized that recently legalized blocking ("interference"), one of football's major innovations, was a "violatio[n] of the rules" that gave too easy advantage to players (1890:395). Furthermore, in the confusion of the game—which at the time was dominated by grinding heaps of players grappling for the ball—"foul plays" were difficult to detect and then only lightly punished. Tellingly, the article correlated "underhand" play in early football games with the "spirit of the American man" who wanted to succeed at any cost: "The lack of moral scruple which pervades the struggles of the business world meets with temptations equally irresistible in the miniature contests of the football field" (395).[18]

The Nation was not the first to point out a connection between football and the means to capitalist success. Walter Camp, a former Yale player and capable businessman who is widely known as "the father of football," narrativized the game in his prolific public writings beginning in the late 1880s. For Camp, teams were industrial corporations writ small, and he argued that the "rationalization and tactical development of the game's action, driven by the object of winning, developed in young men the character and experiences essential for success in America" (Oriard 1993:37). Camp's discourse evoked the model of the self-made American entrepreneur, but his focus on coaching and strategy also bolstered an emerging bureaucratic narrative of success: entry into the new white-collar classes depended less on individual ability and choices than on the calculated management of self and others (Traube 1989).

A dominant member of the Football Rules Committee, Walter Camp was one of fewer than twelve East Coast collegians who legislated the rules of football from 1876 to 1894 (Davis 1911; Oriard 1993).[19] Early football historian Parke Davis notes that these rules emerged incrementally in response to both the unanticipated consequences of earlier rules and the "native genius of the young American for invention" on the playing field (1911:71, 76, 113), and cultural critic Michael Oriard suggests that this chain of events "seems to reveal a game that developed without intention, by simple necessity" (1993:31). But the game was certainly amended to achieve particular aims, including increased efficiency in moving toward goal, rewards for planning and individual innovation, and assurance of equal opportunity to compete—but all within certain and supervised parameters. Thus, Camp and his associates on the Rules Committee adopted features that made room for plucky, disciplined talent *and* savvy strategists, bringing the game into alignment with multiple articulations of success in America.

For instance, while in 1879 kicking was still a dominant feature of the game, players began to prefer running and (lateral) passing, because these helped retain posses-

sion of the ball; furthermore, teams designated ball carriers, discarding the practice of "blindly throwing the ball backward over one's head" and instead carefully placing the ball in the arms of an "associate" (Davis 1911:73–74). The next year, the sport's official shapers further reduced the game's uncertainty by permitting the purposeful "snapping" of the ball into play; no longer would footballers need to wait for the ball to pop randomly from a rugby scrummage. This "far more ingenious method" ensured "an orderly retention of the ball by one side, thereby making possible the use of prearranged strategy, the most distinctive and fascinating characteristic of the American game" (76)—and one that valorizes the merit-based victory of one party.

As a result of the new scrimmage rule, however, teams could maintain a monopoly on the ball if they did not kick or fumble it. In response to an outcry in college newspapers for a more agonistic and egalitarian drama, in October 1882 rule makers introduced the gridiron's yard lines and a mandatory loss of possession if a team was unable to reach a distance goal in the allotted number of tries (Davis 1911:80). Structuring the game in this way paved the way for the "narrative coherence" (Oriard 1993:85) called for by spectators: it encouraged more strategizing and chances for individual and team ingenuity.

Subsequent rule changes prompted by public demand (such as the legalization of blocking, the forward run, and the forward pass) also sought to maintain the little man's chance to match brawn with brains, labor with cunning. In 1956, sportswriter Allison Danzig heralded football as "a highly skilled game of a sweep, imagination, technique, and strategy far surpassing the elementary pastime of Rugby—a game typifying America in its speed, the physical impact of blocking and low tackling, the spectacular element of forward passing, and the imagination of originations in offense and defense" (5). Danzig's comments reveal how extensively the rhythms and tactics of competitive industry had been worked into a national narrative. The "experimentation and progress" (5) of football's elite rules committee had not only encouraged individual talent, but they also tailored football to life in industrialized society (Arens 1980).

A number of formal characteristics align the game with modern organizations of work. Rigid time constraints permeate football (Guttmann 1978): instead of merely marking a game's beginning and end, as in rugby, time clocks define the parameters within which *any* action can take place. While baseball innings can go on indefinitely until the team in the field has accomplished its defensive goals (Eitzen 1984), football play became increasingly regimented (see Davis 1911), so that today each game is exactly sixty minutes long, with internal time divisions into halves, quarters, possessions grouped by "downs" (requiring the completion of a distance goal), and individual plays (relying on split-second coordination among team members). Planning between plays is also circumscribed: it must be finished quickly or the entire team is penalized. This precise external regulation mimics both the industrial machine and the routine of industrial labor. Simultaneously, its privileging of consistent and purposeful cooperation invokes historical New England emphasis on diligent devotion to errand. As Victor Turner noted, "Organized play ('pedagogic play') better fits the Puritan tradition than unorganized children's play ('pediarchic' play) or mere dalliance, which is time wasted" (1982:39).

A division of labor is also evident in football's form; the degree of player specialization differs from that in rugby and reinforces the game's similarity to work in industrial and corporate America (Montague and Morais 1976; Riesman and Denney [1951] 1954). Teams are divided first into offensive and defensive teams, then into those playing close to the line of scrimmage and those playing more loosely in "the backfield," and then into specific, named positions. In addition, members of "special teams" such as the punting squad may employ their distinctive skills several times during the game or not at all (Figure 3).

American football history also reveals the increasing influence of external supervisors. While in English rugby, team captains judged play and directed team strategy,[20] constructors of American football gradually increased the number, responsibilities, and authority of referees and coaches. By 1894, a linesman (who kept time and marked distance gained or lost) joined a paid referee (now in charge of the position and progress of the ball) and an umpire (who regulated the players). Armed with whistles, watches, and detailed rules about the permissible actions of particular players, these men could impose penalties for everything from "throttling" to simply moving forward, and they were declared "absolute in all decisions" (Davis 1911:477, 472, 487). Elaborate coaching staffs are another example of the specialization and supervision built into the game. In fact, Walter Camp envisioned the football coach as a primary participant in a drama intended to provide "ideal training . . . for a managerial elite" (Oriard 1993:50). Modeling the stratified, team-based organization of work in America, today football head and assistant coaches form a hierarchy that trains and supervises its "employees."

In places like Columbus, Ohio, where spectators are recognized by coaches and commentators as active game day participants,[21] coaches are responsible for monitoring the conduct of the fans as well as the players on the field—for mitigating the festive license of the event.[22] For example, in 1998, a statement from then-OSU Head Coach John Cooper framed spectators as contest participants and associated "sports-like" respect for contest participants with evidence of "classy" behavior.[23] Spectators are also regulated by other officials: at Ohio Stadium, tailgaters that gather to feast and for fellowship before the game are warned against open fires, celebrating before 7 a.m., and camping in undesignated areas, while a recent Bloomington, Indiana, rule requires tailgaters without tickets to vacate university parking lots shortly after kickoff. Perhaps in response to protests like Albert Shaw's—which lamented the "disgraceful orgies" and excesses that entered college life after football became a "public spectacle" (Shaw 1909:728)—no smoking, drinking, signs, banners, or noisemakers are permitted in Ohio Stadium (Emig 1998:84).[24]

Thus, football's official form includes a carefully delineated sequence, clearly defined roles, and deference to authority—all characteristics associated not only with industrial production but also with ritual. Manning suggests that ritual is, in fact, the form of cultural enactment favored by "modernity and hierarchy"—by those who dominate the social order (1983:29). Indeed, Moore and Myerhoff argue that ceremony and ritual are used in modern secular life to "lend authority and legitimacy to the positions of particular persons, organizations, occasions, moral values, [and] views of the world." In short, ritual attempts to "structure the way people *think* about social life"

Figure 3. Opalescent art glass installed in the Ohio Stadium rotunda in August 2001 emphasizes football's division of labor; the three panels depict a victorious running back (on offense), the "Block O" symbol, and an impenetrable defensive line. Band members are some of the few that actually enter through these gates. Photo Credit: William R. French.

(1977:4). For instance, in her ethnographic study of a University of Southern California team in the early 1970s, Shirley Fiske found that football-as-ritual gives players "a coherent and perceivable bundle of values with which to identify," a gendered set of beliefs that levels out cultural heterogeneity in favor of a successful "adult"—that is, "American"—identity ([1972] 1975:67).

Ritual's form is essential to this social instruction. Moore and Myerhoff explain the highly regulated nature of many new traditions by commenting, "Since ritual is a good form for conveying a message as if it were unquestionable, it often is used to communicate those very things which are most in doubt. Thus where there is conflict, danger, or political opposition, where there is made-upness and cultural invention, ritual may carry the opposite message in form as well as in content" (1977:24). Football's "intense legality" (Riesman and Denney [1951] 1954:248), then, was a useful way to ground this recent addition to nineteenth-century American society, conveying stability and the assurance that the American Dream was no illusion: after all, the rewards of individual effort (circumscribed within regulated corporate bodies) could be observed in action on the gridiron.[25]

But even as football's form evokes the rhythms and roles of industrialized, bureaucratic society, the contest's dyadic structure champions the role of personal competitive ability in the pursuit of achievement. Parke Davis, for instance, happily remembered "the celebrated run of Henry C. Lamar, of Princeton, which converted defeat to victory at the last moment, thereby affording the spectators a pleasant and picturesque memory of a meritorious sport from which to speak its praises through the ensuing winter" (1911:85). Further, first-generation and disenfranchised Americans almost immediately sought out (or were recruited for) and excelled in the sport (Gems 1998; Riesman and Denney [1951] 1954). In this take on the American Dream, opponents are carefully construed as equal competitors so that success can be attributed to skill and merit (Peterson 1983; Spinrad 1981).

Consider, for instance, the headline of a 1996 *New York Times* article discussing an upcoming Notre Dame-Ohio State game: "South Bend Braces for a Worthy Opponent" (Moran 1996). Sometimes the effort to build up a competitor can be a bit strained, as when an OSU program rationalized, "Minnesota may be 0–2 in the Big Ten, but gave Penn State a good scare in its 27–17 loss last weekend" (Emig 1998:50). The program attempted to improve Minnesota's competitive status further by remarking on the team's two nonconference wins and its "hard-fought" recent losses (51). This construction of "worthy" opponents permits the realization of a merit-based hierarchy modeled on the Protestant success ethic.

As a cultural form, then, football can tell several overlapping tales of American "success"—that is, it suggests how to obtain (or retain) economic and political power. The originally anti-aristocratic idea of personal success through diligent and astute work quickly became a narrative that justified and protected the wealth of nineteenth-century "self-made" men, after changes in the organization of labor made their own rags-to-riches stories difficult to replicate (Wyllie 1954). Football also modeled how to be a successful member of social institutions like the factory, the corporation, the military, or the nation. Accordingly, economic and government elites—and representatives of the schools who trained them—backed football both with their rhetoric and with their pocketbooks (see Mrozek 1983).

Situated Identities: OSU Football in Local and National Contexts

Because the American Dream itself embodies a tension between individualism and organization (Cawelti 1965), it is not enough to say that football and its narratives simply promote nationalism or elite class interests. Further, football's fair-play dyads transform the game from abstract form to familiar and situated practice, delineating local identity by constructing a rival, a "constitutive outside" that defines the home team (Hall 1996b:4).[26] As Alan Dundes and Alessandro Falassi demonstrated in their investigation of the long-running *Palio*—a horse race in Siena, Italy—rivalry with a specific Other heightens a sense of agonistic drama and can create a group identity that lasts beyond the contest itself (1975).[27] In football as in the Palio, such a dyadic opposition also broadens the scope of the ritual contest, inviting public participation in a drama that extends beyond the field of play (Figure 4).

The Michigan Wolverines have been the Other to the Ohio State Buckeyes since at least 1918: the two teams have met each year since that season. The rivalry may have been partly constructed because of the boundary the two states share, or because OSU was outscored 369–21 in its first fifteen games against Michigan, or because the two teams were later billed as "equally matched" competitors whose year-end game often decided the Big Ten Conference title and a berth in the prestigious postseason Rose Bowl (Park 1992). Regardless of how the rivalry began, Buckeye and Wolverine differences are elaborated carefully; over the years, the teams and their fans have marked their symbolic boundaries through distinct discourses and practices (see Hall 1996b:4).

For example, at several midseason games I asked OSU fans if they knew any jokes about the opposing team. They did not—but they volunteered several about people from Michigan.[28] One woman (an OSU graduate) suggested the inferior earning potential of a Michigan diploma: "What's the first thing a Michigan grad says to an Ohio State grad?—'Would you like fries with that?'" Another man from Zanesville, Ohio, volunteered, "Know what they call a good-looking girl in Michigan?—A visitor." These are stock joke formulas in which the names of various schools or states can be substituted; Dundes and Falassi reported that songs of a similar nature are sung by rivals in the Palio (1975).[29]

But other jokes that reinforce the rivalry are highly specific. The following joke, told to me several years ago by a friend (and self-described rabid OSU fan), also circulates on the Internet:

> What does one idiot say?—[vacantly] "Duhhhhh."
> What do two idiots say?—"Duhhh, Duhhh."
> What do *100,000* idiots say?—"Duhhh. . .[picking up speed and becoming melodic] duh, duh, duh, duh, duh, duh, Duhhh, duh, duh, duh, duh. . . ."

This last set of "duhs"—set to the tune of Michigan's fight song, "The Victors"—implies that Wolverine fans (numerous as they may be) are mentally inferior; the joke relies on audience familiarity with the song's melody. In fact, its effectiveness hinges on knowledge of *both* the Ohio State and the Michigan fight songs, even though only the latter is explicitly referenced. This joke works because it implicitly juxtaposes the steady rhythm of "The Victors"—"Hail . . . / to / the / vic / tors / val / iant"—with the

Figure 4. Some OSU fans advertise their affiliation throughout the year by detailing trucks, vans, and SUVs with Ohio State logos and other Buckeye symbols. Photo Credit: William R. French.

syncopated (and, according to the joke's logic, more intellectually demanding) rhythm of OSU's fight song: "**Fight** / the **team** / a**cross** / the field, show **them** / O**hi** / o's **here**. . . ." Thus, while Wolverine fans might use their melody to identify themselves and show support for a favorite coach (singing "Bo . . . / Bo / Bo/ Bo / Bo / Bo / Bo . . ." during the reign of Bo Schembechler), in this joke Buckeye fans turn their opponent's song into a showcase of their *own* rhythmic and intellectual superiority.[30] The joke also calls attention to the primary place that music plays in performing an Ohio State identity, a point I will explore in more detail below.

The boundary between Buckeyes and Wolverines is marked nonverbally as well (Figure 5). An OSU fan from Germantown, Ohio, remarked, "I teach, [and] my kids go last in line at lunch if they wear Michigan [i.e., maize and blue]; they go first in line if they wear Ohio State [scarlet and gray]."[31] The split between the two identities also emerges in oblique speech: in one OSU game program, an advertisement for a cancer hospital reads, "Believe it or not, there's one opponent we want to beat even more than *that team up north*"—a euphemism that fans may recognize as being coined by legendary OSU head coach Woody Hayes (Emig 1998:31, my emphasis; see Brondfield 1974).

Although some University of Michigan fans are more concerned with intrastate rivals at Michigan State University, other Wolverines also promote the OSU-Michigan divide in personal and institutional contexts. A joke forwarded to me by a Michigan graduate in early February 1999 interprets the OSU-Michigan antipathy as intellectually based, positioning Michigan students as seekers of academic excellence (or social status?) and Ohio State students as hooligans obsessed with past visions of football glory:

> How many Big Ten students does it take to change a light bulb?—Well . . . at Michigan it takes two. One to change the bulb and one more to explain how they did it every bit as well as any Ivy Leaguer. . . . At Ohio State it takes five. One to change it, two to talk about how Woody would have done it, and two to throw the old bulb at Michigan students.[32]

In another example, the 1979 Official Transportation Road Map of the State of Michigan reportedly includes two small "towns" just inside the Ohio border: "Beatosu" and "Goblu" (Park 1992:144). Buckeye fans counter in print by spelling the name of their rival "M*ch!g@n."

Dyadic rivalry is important, then, because it creates and reinforces local identities both on and off the gridiron. Yet the strategic placing of a performed rivalry can also bolster *national* identity. Since 1935, the OSU-Michigan game has been the last one of the playing season; thus, it coincides with preparations for the Thanksgiving holiday (Park 1992:79). The calendrical placement of the game between the Buckeyes and the Wolverines follows nationwide football rivalry patterns. The 1890 article in the November 20 edition of *The Nation* was prompted by "the curious spectacle that the one absorbing question for the graduates and undergraduates of two great institutions of learning is whether eleven Yale boys can beat eleven Princeton boys at football on Thanksgiving day" (395). Yale had first played Princeton on Thanksgiving Day in 1876; in 1882, the Intercollegiate Football Association declared that the championship game

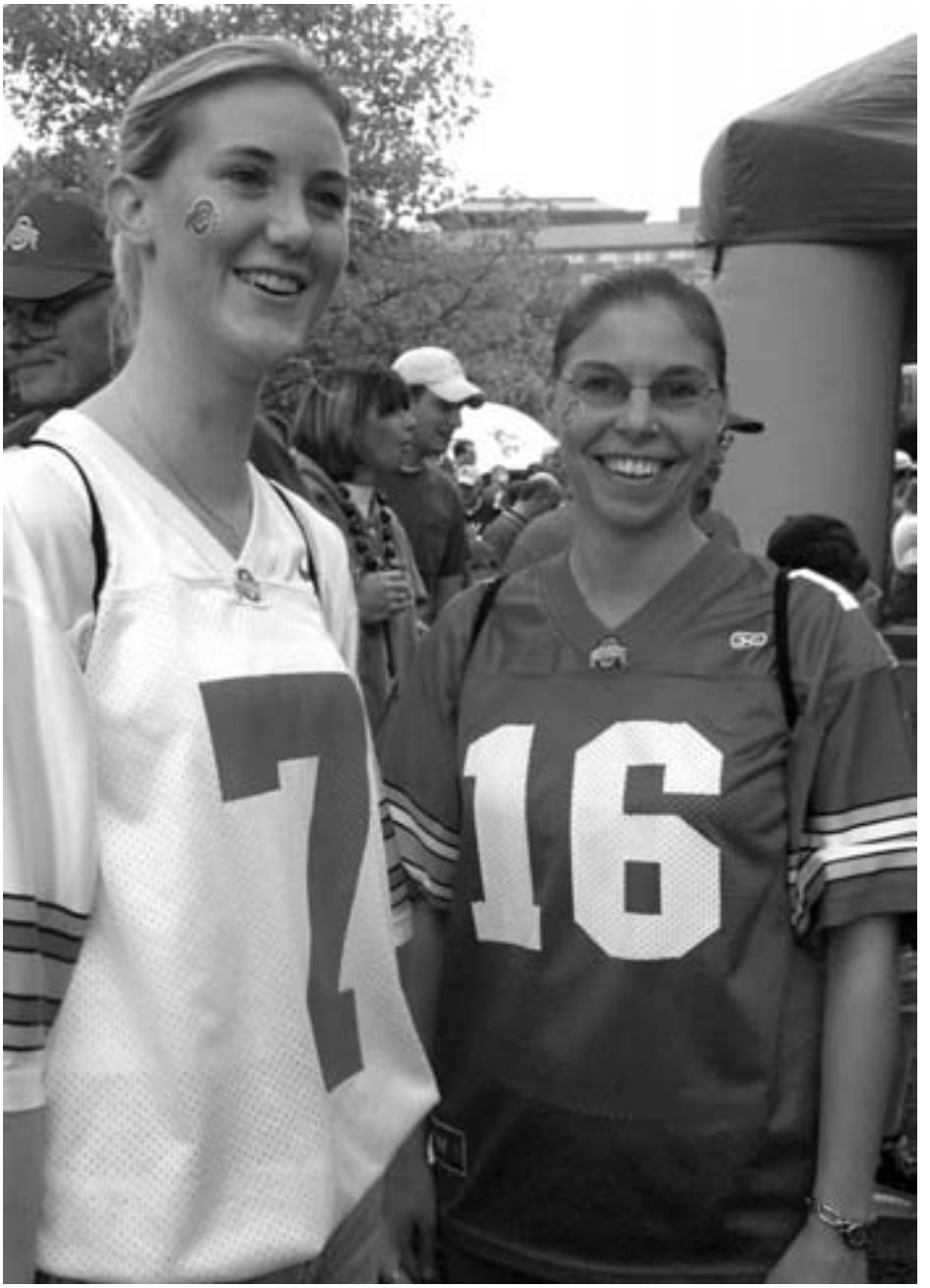

Figure 5. Ohio State fans often "suit up" in jerseys for game day, as did these women when the Buckeyes played Iowa in September 2005. Photo Credit: William R. French.

would always fall on this date (Davis 1911:469), in part because the relatively new holiday provided players and spectators time to travel to the championship field in New York. The Thanksgiving Day game and its pregame and postgame celebrations fostered extensive media coverage, which in turn drew bigger and more diverse crowds, establishing football as a true spectator sport (Oriard 1993:89–101).

But the holiday itself had important national implications. Celebrated regionally in New England since colonial times, the Thanksgiving feast became an official U.S. holiday in October 1863, as President Lincoln sought to emphasize national unity in the midst of the Civil War (Linton and Linton 1949; Santino 1994). Steven Pope writes that the Army-Navy Thanksgiving Day rivalry from the early 1900s helped cement connections between sport, national identity, and the holiday; the fusion was natural since "both football and the Pilgrim experience dramatized the importance of adaptability, discipline, cooperation, physical prowess, and a sense of corporate community" (1993b:328–29; 1993a). Thus the most important and highly symbolic game in the Ohio State football schedule also coincides with a holiday that reifies both an enduring success ethic *and* narratives of the nation's origins.

Though calendrical placement is suggestive, football and American notions of meritocracy are connected more explicitly in media discourse. A 1902 article in *Popular Science Monthly* enumerated football's "moral lessons," suggesting that the game encouraged promptness, dependability, and "self-discovery" while deterring sloth and self-indulgence (Gilbert 1977:72). Almost a century later, the same themes were emphasized by then-Indiana University President Myles Brand (later president of the National Collegiate Athletic Association). In a published letter to football spectators, he credited athletic competition with emphasizing "positive thinking, team building, persistence, the value of hard work, and the importance of staying cool under fire—all of which foster success in the classroom and in life" (Jameson and Starowitz 1998:8).

Ads in recent football game programs also continue to connect success to qualities like talent, teamwork, and courage. One 1998 paint advertisement states, "Whether you're on the football field or your own home turf, pride in performance is the key to success," while a plug for OSU's James Cancer Hospital declares, "Whether it's a challenge faced on a field or within hospital walls, victory always comes down to talent, teamwork, and a winning attitude. GO BUCKS!" (Emig 1998:23, 31). Some ads link the American Dream, football, and individual enterprise even more overtly. An OSU program ad entitled "Field of Dreams" depicts a bird's-eye view of the Ohio State offense playing on turf "painted" with the Huntington Bank's logo. The copy reads:

> Many dreams have come true on the field at the "Horse Shoe" [Ohio Stadium]. The Huntington has a long tradition of supporting our Ohio State Buckeyes and watching our athletes reach their goals through hard work and determination. Our customers have seen their dreams become reality as well. . . . We have one more dream to help come true. *Yours*. (Emig 1998:17)

And finally, in official game-day programs Honda of America, which owns several manufacturing plants in Ohio, regularly features photographs of uniformed employees holding Ohio State athletics paraphernalia. One Honda ad compares the achievement of its workers and cars with the achievement "celebrated by OSU crowds" on university playing fields. The ad continues:

> Years of training, grueling practices and overcoming challenging obstacles combined with commitment, dedication and courage have brought Ohio State a winning tra-

> dition. Honda of America Mfg. also has a winning tradition. Year after year, more than 13,000 Ohioans build award-winning cars, motorcycles and engines for customers around the world. (Emig 1998:33)

In this passage, Honda not only proclaims commitment, dedication, and courage as necessary to overcoming obstacles and achieving success, but the company also specifically equates those sports- and nation-linked values with characteristics crucial for its local workers.

Statements like these, which permeate official discourse surrounding OSU games, are largely abstract, referencing the American Dream either obliquely or explicitly. Hobsbawm suggests that this is characteristic of modern traditions, which, he argues, often invoke intangible entities like "courage" or "loyalty"—"emotionally and symbolically charged signs of club membership"—rather than entailing the "specific and strongly binding social practices" characteristic of old traditions (1983:10–11; see also MacAloon 1984:264; Stone 1981). Nevertheless, actual football performances disrupt this dichotomy between "old" and "new" traditions, between binding practices and emotional signs. Nonathletes participate in Ohio State game day by means of specific social practices, and they often speak about OSU football in terms of a unique identity they generate and affirm in the process.

Paradoxically, this pride in local ownership is precisely what permits the embrace and reinforcement of national ideology. As Manning notes, "While the *logic* of celebration is ideological and structural, the *process* of celebration is competitive and dialectical. As a public and participatory phenomenon, celebration is unusually open to conflicting claims" (1983:28, my emphasis). Like other cultural enactments, the performance of football "involves both a courtship and an argument, and often simultaneously" (Abrahams 1977:106)—a tension between ritual and festivity, society and individual, hegemony and opposition, nation and locality, tradition and innovation. Because the meaning of cultural events depends on performative as well as social and historical contexts (see La Fontaine 1985:31), I turn now to a discussion of OSU game day.

The Performance: Game Day in Columbus

The Ohio State University was founded in 1870 in Columbus, Ohio, and is now one of the largest universities in the nation, with more than fifty thousand students at its Columbus campus alone.[33] Situated in the midst of Ohio's capital city and in one of the nation's most densely populated states, Ohio Stadium ("the Horseshoe") never lacks for fans, who may come from far beyond central Ohio (Figure 6). In fall 2005, for instance, I spoke with an eighty-one-year-old woman from Canton, Ohio, who had been a season ticket–holder for thirty years; through an arrangement with her mail carrier, who also held season tickets, she had obtained extra tickets for her daughters who reside in Florida. More than a few fans are not Ohio State alumni, like the two Bowling Green State University students from Lima, Ohio, who told me that they considered themselves to be Buckeyes first and foremost.

The Horseshoe was renovated in 2001 to accommodate this widespread fan base, and home game attendance now consistently numbers more than 100,000 (Lamb

Figure 6. One spectator prepared for OSU's 2005 match against the University of Texas Longhorns by donning a buckeye necklace and a virtual helmet. Photo Credit: William R. French.

2005:58). An all-time attendance record (105,565) was set at the first-ever meeting with the Texas Longhorns in 2005 (barely beating the record 105,539 who attended the 2002 OSU-Michigan game), and thousands of OSU fans attend "away" games against even the few "lousy schools" in the Big Ten. Like football fans all over the country, Buckeyes fly team flags, listen to fight songs, and grill around the tailgates

of their vehicles. Alumni who have translated their college credentials into substantial discretionary income may even incorporate as legal entities with names like "Alumbus Ltd." or "Buckeye Whoop Ass Wagon Inc." and hold assets that include refitted party school buses or tailgating trailers (Blundo 2003). As with many teams, OSU fans also identify themselves through dress, arriving at games wearing everything from scarlet cashmere sweaters and stadium-shaped hats to nothing but buckeye-leaf-emblazoned boxer shorts (cf. Hugenberg 2002; Morris 1981; Sipe 1986; Teske 1998). But Ohio State fans also point to local rituals and symbols that define them as a unique, coherent, and even enviable group.

One is the buckeye itself—a type of chestnut that resembles the eye of a white-tailed deer and is gathered from trees (*Aesculus glabra*) that are reportedly difficult to eradicate. Although opposing teams frequently deride Ohio State for having a nut as a mascot, locals attribute power to this seemingly benign object. According to one compendium of Ohio folk belief, buckeyes have long been considered both deadly poisonous to the ignorant stranger and an emblem of good luck for the native (Puckett 1981). Thus, when I asked one OSU spectator about the connection between the buckeye and the OSU football team, he replied, "If you mess with it, you will die." A simple nut becomes a dangerous threat even to a slobbering Wolverine.

Significantly, buckeyes are thought to threaten outsiders only; for locals, buckeyes may help ensure financial prosperity, good squirrel hunting, and protection from supernatural harm. In addition, it is said, buckeyes can heal everything from colds to hemorrhoids. Traditional health cures often require the nut to be worn as an amulet around the neck or waist (Puckett 1981), a practice that may explain why many Ohio State fans, regardless of age or gender, wear strings of polished buckeyes as game-day necklaces (Figure 7). Although most fans are likely unaware of specific historical beliefs about the nut, many affirm that buckeyes are "lucky"; in addition, these necklaces immediately identify one as an OSU partisan. Before home games, women selling handcrafted necklaces of beads and buckeyes position themselves along pedestrian routes to the stadium, and tailgating and television parties also frequently include the production and consumption of "Buckeye State Candy," a peanut butter and chocolate confection that resembles a buckeye and that recasts the dangerous nut as an edible sweet. Thus, this symbol separates outsider from insider by punishing the former and benefiting the latter.

Other game-day traditions are locally sited as well. Fleeing famine and political conflict and drawn by land, canal work, and industry, many Central and Eastern European immigrants settled in Ohio during the mid-nineteenth century. By 1865, South Columbus—known as "German Village"—was a flourishing working-class neighborhood, and Columbus's overall population was one-third German (German Village Society 1999). Today the renovated area's neat brick homes, delis, and microbreweries are symbolically marked as "German," and the Village hosts an annual Oktoberfest that involves some of the many German clubs extant in the state (see D.A.CH., Inc. 2005). Game-day foods reflect the lingering influence of dominant nineteenth-century white ethnic populations: in Columbus (as in other midwestern states), the preferred tailgate grilling item is bratwurst or perhaps "Polish sausage." As Beverly Stoeltje notes, festival fare is rarely accidental; from main dishes to condi-

Figure 7. Buckeyes gathered from neighborhood yards are cleaned, sorted, and often strung with silver, red, or white beads, and then sold on game day by local vendors as $5 necklaces. Photo Credit: William R. French.

ments, the selection and presentation of food emphasizes features that are locally significant (1992:265). On the other hand, marketers have capitalized on and reproduced this regional ethnic identification: both national grocery chains and local delis like Schmidt's ("since 1886") advertise bratwurst as a tailgate commodity, and for years game day in Columbus has been marked by a party called "Heinegate," an all-day outdoor affair sponsored in part by the Heineken brewing company.[34]

Again, however, even as football invites local participation—perhaps *because* it invites local participation—it can also act as a vehicle for national identification and cultural assimilation. Pope notes that by the 1930s football was a public school activity, and immigrants could find their way in American culture by excelling at it (1993b). Midwestern football stars have long claimed blue-collar hometowns like those in northern Ohio where many European immigrants originally settled, and the surnames on OSU football rosters over the years—Marek, Horvath, Janowicz, Spielman, and Stottlemeyer—suggest lineages that do not begin at Plymouth Rock (Park 1992).[35] Thus, football in central Ohio suggests a paradox: participants can both mark the game with their own image *and* be remade and emerge as part of a national narrative.

Local practices and broader concerns also engage each other in another OSU gameday tradition: the band. German or Eastern European Americans undoubtedly influenced the evolution of "The Pride of the Buckeyes": The Ohio State University Marching Band. Known as "The Best Damn Band in the Land," or "TBDBITL" (*tə-bitl)* for short, the band is a crucial element of OSU game day: it guides audience participation and stimulates team play throughout the event.[36] The early ensemble echoed the municipal bands popular at the turn of the century, civic organizations that were heavily influenced by German, Italian, and Czech band traditions and that flourished among the Midwest's concentration of Central and Eastern European settlers. Purveyors of music marked as "ethnic" and working class, these community bands also often encouraged identification with the United States and served to demonstrate American patriotism (Greene 1992; Newsom 2000; cf. Keil, Keil, and Blau 1992).[37]

Indeed, when Gustav Bruder became OSU band director in 1896, his small group was known as the Military Band; its sponsor was the university's Military Department (*Script Ohio* 1989). Brass band music, which has often accompanied efforts at cultural and territorial expansion, carries with it a residue of martial and national or imperial associations. Greene notes that "by the mid-1700s, German military bands were clearly perceived as models, superior to any others" (1992:16), and this musical form(ation) spread alongside Prussia's powerful army. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, German and Austrian musicians and technical innovators influenced the creation and diffusion of valved instruments throughout continental Europe, the British Isles, and the United States; they were also heavily involved in band training abroad (Greene 1992; Herbert 2000; Herbert and Sarkissian 1997; U.S. Army Bands 2005).

Today, members of TBDBITL and their fans take pride in the OSU group's military overtones. When I asked a science teacher from Grantsville, Ohio, how he thought Ohio State's band compared to other marching bands, he responded, "They're definitely different—no color guard or anything like that; straight brass. I mean," he added by way of explanation, "it's a military band" (Figure 8). What began as a twelve-

Figure 8. A member of TBDBITL pauses outside St. John Arena after a 2005 skull session performance. Photo Credit: William R. French.

piece fife-and-drum corps at the end of the nineteenth century had evolved by 1934 into an all-brass ensemble (favoring British instrumentation patterns) that now numbers 225. Although early performers reportedly joined the band to escape mandatory military drilling, until 1952 undergraduates could earn ROTC credit by enrolling in the band, and for many years band members wore discarded ROTC uniforms. The group's style reflects the formative influence of Bruder, a professional musician who had served in the Army as a teen and had played the cornet in John Philip Sousa's United States Marine Band. As OSU band director until 1928, Bruder instituted lasting military analogs (*Script Ohio* 1989).

The OSU band and its spectators eschew woodwinds, majorettes, flag corps, and dance teams, favoring instead practices that include weekly "challenges" by alternates, dress inspections, and a summer "boot camp" with two-a-day training sessions. Band uniforms also evoke a masculine and military presence: a dark coat with silver buttons, red sleeve stripes, university shield, and black epaulets is worn with a white collared shirt, long dark tie, navy blue pants, white spats, white gloves, and a white cross belt. A cover (stiff cap with visor and plume) is accompanied by a red wool beret tucked into the epaulet on the right shoulder. In addition, band members' hair must be contained, off the back of the neck and above the ears, and makeup, jewelry, and facial hair are prohibited (Mills 1998).[38] Characterized by no-nonsense precision and high-stepping formations, the group is claimed as original by Buckeye fans, who find no use for other schools' bands. "If they *are* our style they're copying, and if they're not our style they're sissies," laughed one Columbus man.

Over the years the band has developed extended traditions—specifically the pregame rally called "skull session" and the subsequent stadium "ramp entrance"—that establish the "feel" of game day by preparing participants both physically and emotionally (see Stoeltje 1992:265). These performances involve driving mechanisms (Laughlin 1993:92)—rhythmic marching, chanting and singing, special costumes, and pulsating stimuli like drumming and clapping—that draw spectators bodily into the performance, perhaps joining the event's food and libations in transforming the physiological state of participants (cf. McDowell 1992). Crucial to the construction of identity, singing and "keeping together in time" creates a kind of "muscular bonding" (McNeill 1995), an "experience of simultaneity" that enables people to envision themselves as a group (Anderson [1983] 1991:145; cf. Carpenter 1996). Further, these activities transform spectators into participants: as one man from Sandusky, Ohio, remarked during a skull session, "It just gets you all pumped up. I mean, you walk out of here, and man! You're ready to jump out on that field and take on the opponent yourself!"

The Skull Session

Those able to find a seat at The Ohio State University Marching Band's skull session begin game-day festivities there, several hours before kickoff (Figure 9). In 1932, band director Eugene Weigel scheduled the session as a final pregame rehearsal of the band's memorized music. The practices attracted increasingly larger audiences, and the event was moved to St. John Arena after that venue was completed in 1956 (Mills 1998).

Figure 9. The OSU Marching Band performs for invited high school bands and thousands of other fans during the skull session on October 15, 2005. Photo by the author.

Now a pep rally with its own recognizable traditions—for instance, the band often begins by singing the "Navy Hymn" ("Eternal Father, Strong to Save")—today's free performances draw up to 10,000 audience members, who may arrive long before the event begins and leave without attending the game. Invited high school bands or a contingent from the university's Athletic Band often entertain these early devotees, and the football team has also begun making a brief appearance before players head to the locker room to dress for the game.

These skull sessions serve as a rehearsal for the crowd as well as for the band, since the musicians and audience together practice the ritual that will take place later on the field. Band members, for instance, burst into the arena much as they enter the stadium, and fans stand and clap just as they would during sections of the real ramp entrance. The event also gives individual band sections the opportunity to warm up the audience by means of playful performances that have featured, for instance, the baritones dancing the Can-Can.

Skull sessions provide a space for energizing the crowd and ribbing the opposition, yet the rehearsal's original purpose—finalizing memorized pieces—endures. One anecdote suggests that music memorization, as a manifestation of professionalism, plays a role in members' self-image. Like many college bands in the United States, the OSU marching band plays the opposing team's fight song as a goodwill "tribute" on game day. However, in skull session practice of these tributes, band members have been known to reach forward occasionally and—to the delight of the crowd—turn the imaginary page of imaginary sheet music on an imaginary lyre. Thus, as in jokes about Michigan's fight song, even as TBDBITL members perform the opposition's

symbolic resource, they can undermine it by mimicking its supposedly inferior execution by others in order to call attention to their own ostensibly superior practices.

The Ramp Entrance

It is after the skull session that the band gets into ritual high gear. Not long before kickoff, members form ranks outside the former basketball arena—perhaps singing "We Don't Give a Damn for the Whole State of Michigan"—while fans congregate on either side of the musicians and at the base of the Jesse Owens memorial that stands directly in front of the stadium's main gates. Preceded by ROTC cadets, cheerleaders, the team mascot, and support staff and guests, band members march in cadence across Woody Hayes Drive, approaching Ohio Stadium by spilling around the memorial to the cheers of bystanders who react to the rhythm of the drums and the band's chanting. Though their words—"We are the Buckeyes. We are killer nuts!"—raise smiles on the faces of spectators, members of the band are now "in character" and show little emotion as they move rapidly toward Ohio Stadium.

Once inside the stadium gates, standing beneath the enormous stained-glass windows that give the Horseshoe a religious gravity, band members break formation. As they prepare for the ramp entrance, a procedure that has occurred "virtually unchanged" (Lamb 2005:83) since it was initiated in 1928, row members gather for section-specific traditions such as row cheers. The band may also sing in unison, perhaps an a cappella version of "I Wanna Go Back (to Ohio State)." (The song's speaker longs to "hear the band, by far the finest in the land," and the chorus vows, "And when we win the game, we'll buy a keg of booze and we'll drink to old Ohio 'til we wobble in our shoes.") In effect, the marching band has created in itself a surrogate team that doubles the drama of the football contest while allowing for structured participation by "spectators."

The game's framing ritual begins when the drum section bursts onto the football field, waves of spectators stand to clap in rhythm, and the announcer proclaims, "Ladies and gentlemen, 'The Pride of the Buckeyes,' The Ohio State University Marching Band." Punctuating the air with percussive and increasing sound, the band starts to mark the stadium as a time and place apart (Falassi 1987:4). As the first wave of trumpets leaves the ramp with arm-snapping precision, the drums continue to beat. One band member reported that this is her favorite time of the day: "Standing on the ramp and hearing the crowd cheer [as soon as they see the percussion] is an awesome feeling." Anticipation builds as more than 90,000 fans clap or stomp in time while lines of band members fall into formation; when the last row arrives, the band turns in unison and begins the school's fight song, "Buckeye Battle Cry."

Members of the band adopt an energetic "high half-time step" during the song's verse, which is sung by the crowd; the uninitiated or forgetful may participate with the aid of lyrics posted on the scoreboard.[39] Meanwhile, the drum major (complete with a furry headpiece called a "busby" and a stafflike mace, or all-metal baton) strides through the band formation and performs a backbend in front of it. When the bus-

by's plume grazes stadium turf at the climax of this opening segment, the crowd roars; then the band plays the fight song's chorus as it moves rapidly across the field. After the drum major tosses his or her baton over the far end zone's goal post (a catch is a good omen), the band turns about-face and stands motionless (Mills 1998). Then the pregame show begins.

Although the precise content of this show differs from week to week, expected symbolic elements are generally worked into pregame, halftime, or postgame performances. A 2003 contest against Northwestern demonstrates how several important pieces work to mobilize audience participation. This particular Saturday, the band returns the length of the field playing Northwestern's fight song, then segues into a performance of Script Ohio, an emotionally and visually resonant piece that will be discussed in more detail below. With the ecstatic dotting of the "i" in the "Ohio" formation, silence fills the stadium and the band and crowd shift the mood by again singing the fight song, this time unaccompanied. Words emanate from the massed band and echo from the stadium stands. After a brief pause, sections of the band simulate the chimes of the campus carillon (a melody originating in London's Westminster carillon) before virtually the entire stadium sings "Carmen Ohio," OSU's alma mater. Set to the Protestant tune "Spanish Hymn" (the melody of "Come Ye Children of the Lord"), the song turns the crowd into a congregation; its singing is an invocation (see *Script Ohio* 1989:178–81).[40]

In this devotional frame of mind, the audience is geared to participate in the event's "opening" ceremony; after all, the football team itself has yet to appear. It is only after this band-directed crowd participation that individual players—led by mascot Brutus the Buckeye, male cheerleaders holding an enormous university flag, and a large mixed cheerleading squad—erupt down a lane of screaming fans and spill onto the field through columns of band members and sometimes former players. To the crowd's vocal displeasure, the opposing team soon follows.

Opening Ceremony: Team and Nation

While these pregame sequences are considered local property, it is also true that aspects of their symbolic form—the militaristic rhythms, "maneuvers," costumes, and instruments—prepare the crowd to participate in expressions of national affiliation. And, indeed, even as the football team runs onto the field, Army, Navy, and Air Force ROTC cadets raise the massive national flag in a blur of coordinated motion. The announcer bids the already-standing crowd rise "to honor America" by singing the national anthem. (It is worth noting that patriotic flag displays gained ascendancy just as football was being invented and popularized [Higham 1965]). Thus, here as at other U.S. football games, the appearance of the "home team" and its opponent coincides with the symbolic enactment of national identity. This results in a paradoxical juxtaposition of competition and solidarity—agonic and fraternal impulses—that some consider characteristic of American social and economic life in general (Cady 1978). Again, football becomes a vehicle for both local and national identification.

The opening ceremony closes with an introduction of key symbolic players in the

day's festivities—perhaps a new university president, an honored veteran, or this year's elected Homecoming "royalty." The band then marks the end to a focus on nonathletes and the nation by replaying the school fight song as it travels off the field. Later in the game, it will return to direct other types of audience involvement.[41]

The Game

After determining which direction the teams will play, the athletes take their positions on the field and, with the vocal momentum of the crowd behind it, opening kickoff occurs and the first thirty minutes of play commences. Ohio State fans build up to kickoff with a sustained and rising "O," followed by a fainter "H-I-O"; spectators elsewhere work their own traditions into technical aspects of the game. Within the larger drama occurring between fans of the opposing teams, the football players—set apart by their roles, their costumes, their face masks, their physical size, and perhaps even their special privileges (Laughlin 1993:97)—commence to enact the national dramas of synchronized teamwork, individual talent, and undaunted perseverance.

If players experience a transformed consciousness—a sense of "flow"—as a result of athletic engagement (Csikszentmihalyi 1990), spectators continue to participate in this cultural performance from the sidelines. By means of special knowledge about the game's rules and player statistics, among themselves they may situate the current contest within the larger season, as well as within past and future team and local history (Laughlin 1993:97; Spinrad 1981). As in many college traditions, Buckeye fans also participate bodily by engaging in dialogic cheers with other spectators: one side of the stadium, for instance, may yell out "O-H," simultaneously spelling the letters with arm movements, while the other side answers with "I-O"; or south, east, north, and west sections may take turns chanting one letter of the state's name: "O-H-I-O." In a spectacle increasingly common at high school and college sports events, a fan may "perform" the team's scoring efforts by means of acrobatic calisthenics—one push-up for every point, executed while balancing on the upstretched palms of other spectators. Students in Block O (the university's spirit section) dress outlandishly in wigs and capes, execute card stunts, and lead their own cheers. And members of the band circulate among the crowd, playing energetic drum cadences or snatches of Ohio State melodies.

Halftime

The band again marks a transition in the game-day schedule when it appears centerstage during the midgame break. "Halftime" may also allow some fans to participate on the field itself. For example, companies often sponsor contests in which spectators are randomly selected to perform football skills such as throwing or kicking. If the participant is skilled enough, even in circumstances that are unusually difficult, he or she has the chance to win free services or products. Here again, the structure and practices of this public occasion reinforce the ideas that skill and determination, even in the face of great odds, can yield success.

Script Ohio and "Hang on Sloopy"

Two additional participatory events are claimed as distinctly "Buckeye" traditions, and both illustrate the interplay between local/national, official/unofficial, and ritual/festival. The moving-script formation unveiled in October 1936 and known as "Script Ohio" is performed to the march "Le Régiment de Sambre et Meuse"; during the course of the piece, band members in a three-layered "Block O" unwind to write "Ohio" like a giant signature (Park 1992; *Script Ohio* 1989). The climax of the performance comes just after the tempo slows in dramatic anticipation of the final coda: at this moment, a fourth- or fifth-year sousaphone player high-steps across the field to complete the word by "dotting the 'i.'" Some musicians reportedly choose to attend Ohio State because of this opportunity to bow deeply at the waist and doff one's cover to all four quadrants of the stadium; indeed, the fortunate "i-dotter" is featured in media coverage, recognized in the skull session printed program, and receives thunderous applause even during pregame practice. Performed on everything from aircraft carriers to my own high school football field, Script Ohio is acknowledged by observers beyond central Ohio. More than one high school band in the state has attempted to recreate the performance, and Beano Cook, an ESPN college football commentator, once reportedly remarked, "I'd rather dot the 'i' before I die than be president, because I believe it's a greater honor" (quoted in Park 1992:113). The ingenuity and difficulty of the formation are seen as testaments to the prowess of the band, the team, and Buckeye fans in general. At the same time, the tradition works to conflate "Ohio"—and OSU fans—with the national overtones of the band's military image and percussive sound.

One final game-day tradition incorporates the changing tastes of fans, reinforces the sense of a unique central Ohio contribution to the nation, and reiterates a belief that nonathletes affect the football team's success. In 1965, an Ohio rock band named The McCoys recorded "Hang on Sloopy"; later that year, an OSU student arranged it for the marching band. Featuring high knees and coordinated dips of even the huge sousaphones, "Sloopy" is an athletic performance meant to invigorate physically both the crowd (including legendary dancing fans like Neutron Man) and the team. Buckeye fans in-the-know often form the letters O-H-I-O with their arms during rests in the song's melody, and "[d]uring crucial periods on the football field," says one collection of OSU music, "when the Buckeyes need that special thunderbolt of inspiration, 'Sloopy' is ready and waiting" (Gallagher, n.d.). "Coach Tressel," one band member reported, "is always saying that the team looks to us for that extra point."

But "Sloopy" also becomes a site for festive negotiation. At one time Band Director Jon Woods "imposed a [per-game] 'Sloopy' limit to avoid premature burnout," and during the 1988 OSU-Syracuse game so many fans stomped in time to the music that stadium officials banned the song for the day, expressing concern about the safety of the stadium press box (Gallagher, n.d.). In 1985, members of Ohio's General Assembly—citing the particular relevance of rock music to the Baby Boom generation—voted "Hang on Sloopy" the Official State Rock Song (Ohio Library 1997). Thus, in a bit of tongue-in-cheek legislation, the tradition was both identified as something

created by and belonging to a particular generation of locals *and* incorporated into official power structures.

Conclusions

In an effort to argue that sports fandom is less "dysfunction[al]" than other "popular culture involvements" (1981:363), sociologist William Spinrad has written that spectator sports are games in "the fullest sense" (356). Existing outside the realm of serious pursuits like politics, these contests encourage sentimental psychic identification but, according to Spinrad, involve the spectator's ego only peripherally and "have no relevance for the spectator's position in society" (356). Others, too, might argue that singing a school's fight song or joining in the crowd's roar at kickoff is a trivial thing, an unpremeditated act of enjoyment, a bit of mindless participation. And yet, as anthropologist Roy Rappoport notes, bodily involvement in shared rituals is a public act of acceptance, regardless of internal belief—it is action that forms the visible "basis for public social orders." "To *perform* a liturgical order," he observes, "which is by definition a relatively invariant sequence of acts and utterances encoded by someone other than the performers themselves, is perforce to *conform* to that order." Furthermore, "in conforming to the order that comes alive in performance," the performer—in this case, the spectator—becomes a momentary part of it. By taking part in ritual, people "accept, and indicate to themselves and others that they accept, whatever is encoded in the canons of the liturgical order they are performing" (1992:252–53).

That many central Ohio residents celebrate a highly structured and ideologically suggestive game and participate in the performances of a ritually oriented "military" band suggests that many Buckeyes also embrace American Dreams as cultural realities. Scenes on the field and among the band refer repeatedly to efficient and innovative corporate goal attainment, individual skill, and determined boundary expansion and defense, using symbols and forms that highlight the national aspects of these success narratives—even as these cultural performances are presented as distinctly local traditions. Game-day activities in Columbus, then, bind "the rights of personal ascent to the rites of social assent" (Bercovitch 1981:11).

Thus, it is shortsighted to minimize the social and political functions of spectator sport. If sports do not change directly or immediately the social status of their observers, this does not render them inconsequential. As in the Balinese cockfight, because football game day is recognized as a display set apart from everyday life, the issues it raises or espouses become that much more visible (see Geertz [1972] 1973). Far from being an empty ritual performed in an "interpretive vacuum," it is clear that football's form and discourse can advance a national identity and ideology based in structures of economic and political dominance, even as the competition itself engenders space for expression of local affiliation. Although some Buckeye fans are quick to link game-day excitement to the football team's successful performances, the experience of local identity through dress, song, and movement is also crucial. And since Buckeyes construct distinctive and enduring aspects of their identity in opposition to those of their rival Michigan, ego and social standing are very much "at stake."

Future research among spectator populations at other U.S. institutions could reveal information about participatory forms and political or social ideologies among fans in these sites. For example, Florida A&M, a historically black college, celebrates its Marching 100, a band that also incorporates military analogues and innovative performances (Darcy 2003). Game day at Stanford University—known for its "freewheeling" band— undoubtedly differs from game day at Ohio State. What kinds of football enactments evolve in places with different kinds of band and spectator involvement—for instance, in sites where festival rather than ritual is foregrounded? How do these cultural performances relate to the messages portrayed by the contest on the field and the histories resonant in local memories and experience?

A multifaceted event grounded in both historical contexts and live performances, college football game day is an ideal site for exploring connections among form, ideology, and identity. Football as a spectator sport is a complicated phenomenon, one that plays out Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony as a never-fully-realized process of negotiation between social forces (see Hall [1986] 1996a; Williams 1977). Dominant or centripetal elements rub elbows with the personal, the unofficial, and the otherwise. As in many festive events, the conclusion of Ohio State football games is more informal than the opening ceremonies and is marked by increased noise, chaos, and participation (Stoeltje 1992). After Ohio State's 1998 win over Michigan, for example, OSU fans stormed the field before the game officially ended. They tried to tear down the oiled goal posts; when that was unsuccessful, they tore up chunks of stadium sod to keep as mementos. In this way, spectators gained control of the field, the team—players remarked on the congratulatory "pummelings" they received from drunken spectators—and even the coach, as they paraded him through the crowd on their shoulders (Stein 1998b).[42] At other games, Buckeyes will linger to watch the team kneel and sing the alma mater, the crowd joining in as students link arms and sway in what amounts to a sort of campfire benediction to the day. Perhaps it is this sense of local action and investment, a confidence in the capacity "to stamp sports with their own culture" (Pope 1993b:333), that prompts OSU football fans to rejoice over Buckeye wins and mourn OSU losses.

But spectators gathering in and around the Horseshoe are also celebrating the social and economic structures that make it possible for them to purchase the tickets and paraphernalia enabling this feeling of *communitas*. In addition, these engaging cultural enactments often obscure other social conditions, such as the fact that sport itself rarely lives up to the material promises of some American Dreams: only a few players become college athletes, and only a few of these—if they remain healthy—overcome economic or participatory barriers based in structural inequalities of race, class, and gender in order to "make it big" in sports.[43] If football was invented in the nineteenth century in part to bolster prevailing narratives of America, perhaps continued interest in football over the last century—and the game's gradual attainment of "most watched" sport status within the past fifty years[44]—may be linked to more recent challenges to national identity, personal autonomy, and social mobility. Reassurances offered on game day may address factors that include globalization, changing demographics, political scandal, mounting consumer and national debt, and what are seen as increasingly porous and vulnerable borders (cf. Bercovitch 1981).

What can be said for certain is that cultural enactments not only promote reflection about self and society but also actually generate particular subjectivities. That is, these organized forms help to both articulate and maintain distinct identities. No accident of individual birth or residence, group identity is claimed by means of specific, structured interactions such as those that comprise an Ohio State game day (cf. Fine 1979). Further, football in central Ohio is more than play, festival, or ritual alone; "Buckeye Nation" practices draw on multiple genres and modes of participation to localize dominant national ideologies amid an almost religious sense of difference (see Neel 2003). The feeling is summed up nicely by a "prayer" on a needlepoint picture I remember from a neighbor's house in Columbus, my own hometown. "Thank God I'm a Buckeye," it said, "and not just some nut."

Appendix A

Joke forwarded to the author May 9, 2002, having circulated on e-mail since May 7. Subject line: Go Bucs!

An Ohio State fan, a Michigan fan and a Penn State fan were all in Saudi Arabia, sharing a smuggled crate of booze. All of a sudden the Saudi police rushed in and arrested them. The mere possession of alcohol is a severe offense in Saudi Arabia, so for the terrible crime of actually being caught consuming the booze, they were sentenced to death! However, with the help of very good lawyers, they were able to successfully appeal their sentence down to life imprisonment. By a stroke of luck, it was a Saudi national holiday the day their trial finished, and the extremely benevolent Sheik decided they could be released after receiving just 20 lashes each of the whip. As they were preparing for their punishment, the Sheik suddenly said, "It's my first wife's birthday today, and she has asked me to allow each of you one wish before your whipping."

The Penn State fan was first in line (he had drunk the least), so he thought about this for a while and then said, "Please tie a pillow to my back." This was done, but the pillow only lasted 10 lashes before the whip went through. The Penn State fan had to be carried away bleeding and crying with pain when the punishment was done.

The Michigan fan was next up (he almost finished an entire fifth by himself), and after watching the scene, said "All Right! Please fix two pillows on my back." But even two pillows could only take 15 lashes before the whip went through again, sending the Michigan fan out crying like a little girl.

The Ohio State fan was the last one up (he had finished off the crate), but before he could say anything, the Sheik turned to him and said, "You support the greatest team in the world, your alumni has some of the best and most loyal football fans in the world. For this, you may have two wishes!"

"Thanks, your most Royal highness," the Buckeye fan replies. "In recognition of your kindness, my first wish is that you give me not 20, but 100 lashes."

"Not only are you an honorable, handsome and powerful man, you are also very brave," the Sheik says with an admiring look on his face. "If 100 lashes is what you desire, then so be it. And your second wish? What is it to be?" the Sheik asks.

"Tie the Michigan fan to my back."

Appendix B

E-mail forwarded to the author February 10, 1999, by an Indiana University colleague (and University of Michigan graduate)
Subject line: Big Ten Humor
HOW MANY BIG TEN STUDENTS DOES IT TAKE TO CHANGE A LIGHT BULB?
* Well . . . At Michigan it takes two. One to change the bulb and one more to explain how they did it every bit as well as any Ivy Leaguer.
* At Northwestern it takes three. One to change the bulb, and two to phone a friend at Michigan to get instructions.
* At Michigan State it takes four. One to screw in the bulb, and three to figure out how to get high off the old one.
* At Ohio State it takes five. One to change it, two to talk about how Woody would have done it, and two to throw the old bulb at Michigan students.
* At Wisconsin it takes six. One to change it, two to mix the drinks, and three to find the perfect J. Crew outfit to wear for the occasion.
* At Illinois it takes seven, and each one gets four semester credit hours for it.
* At Indiana it takes eight. One to screw it in, and seven to discuss how much brighter it shines during basketball season.
* At Minnesota it takes nine. Two to figure out how to screw it in, seven to find an ugly enough lampshade to match their school colors.
* At Penn Sate it takes 100. One to change it, 49 to talk about how they do it better than Penn, and 50 who realize it's all a lie.
* At Purdue, it takes 12. One to change the bulb, five Asians to take pictures, four fraternity pledges to get naked and run through the fountain screaming "They changed the Bulb!", and two engineers to run a study on the whole damn thing.
*At Iowa it takes none. There's no electricity in Iowa.

Notes

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1. Hereafter, I will refer to American football as "football." Data for this article comes from participant observation at five OSU games between 1998 and 2005, as well as from interviews with a variety of game-day participants. In addition, I draw on media commentary about Ohio State athletics and on my own experiences as a Columbus resident (and some-time game attendee) between 1978 and 1992.

2. See, for instance, Abrahams 1977; Bacon-Smith 1992; Bausinger [1961] 1990; Hobsbawm 1983; Tuleja 1997.

3. Morris's treatment of Association Football—which takes soccer, its "pseudo-hunters" (players), and their "witch-doctors" and other "tribal elders" (managers, coaches, linesmen) as its focus—is on one level a detailed, self-deprecating correction to scholarly conventions that exoticize cultural Others and fail to inspect culture closer to home. Yet the book's metaphorical application of terms also suggests that

today's industrialized sports traditions—with their "razzmatazz showbiz embellishments," "pomposity," and "charade of pre-match formalities" (1981:91, 93)—are not quite to the caliber of ancient or "primitive" rites (see also Arens 1976). After all, metaphor always implies a gap in similarity; it "only pretends something is true" (Sandelands 1998:109). As scholars draw connections between modern sport and structures deemed more traditional, they often express an underlying devolutionary premise or raise the specter of cultural evolution by pointing to living cultural ancestors (Dundes 1969; Fabian 1983).

4. Although fans and spectators have often been approached by scholars as either social deviants or harmless escapists (e.g., Spinrad 1981), a growing body of work has begun to take the productions and investments of these populations more seriously. See, for example, Eastman and Riggs 1994; Fiske 1992; Grossberg 1992; Jenson 1992; and Radway [1984] 1991.

5. On "material social process[es] of signification," see Williams 1977:70. For a discussion of how relationships between national/local, work/play, and labor/capital are negotiated in another kind of large-scale public event—American rodeo—see Stoeltje 1981, 1993.

6. Just as literature and other print forms were influential in establishing the pastoral narrative of baseball (Guttmann 1978), the popular press was crucial to the development and training of an early mass audience for college football (Oriard 1993; Riesman and Denney [1951] 1954), and television is generally credited with popularizing professional football in the 1950s and 1960s (see Oriard 1993). For an ethnographic analysis of how fans may view televised sports, see Eastman and Riggs 1994; for a discussion of television, capitalism, and professional football's Super Bowl, see Santino 1994:50–55.

7. These interpretations frequently overlap. For instance, in their considerations of football, Alan Dundes (1980a) and Varda Burstyn (1999) map territorial invasion onto sexual dominance and gendered aggression. Michael Oriard notes that early football guru Walter Camp also linked football to war—not so much because the game was physically violent, but because it required scientific strategizing (1993). Thus, Camp also tied football to notions of American achievement grounded in rational experiment and efficiency (Hughes 1989; Noble 1977; see also Riesman and Denny [1951] 1954). Many, including Camp, have drawn connections between football's organization and the structure and mechanisms of corporate capitalism and American industry (e.g., Montague and Morais 1976); these in turn have been linked to economic conquest of both class and territory. Riesman and Denny, for instance, write that "[i]ndustrial, military, and football teamwork have all a common cultural frame" ([1951] 1954:255; see also Arens 1976). In this vein, Oriard demonstrates that the late-nineteenth-century newspapers that lauded individuals for their accomplishments on the football field often portrayed these players as warriors or juxtaposed them with military heroes (1993). The anecdotes, jokes, and legends that revolve around coaches and players (e.g., Beezley 1980, 1985; McGuire 1975; Wise 1977) also suggest that some football narratives valorize the individual rather than the corporate body (cf. Williams 1994). For summaries of other interpretations, see Mergen 1981.

8. As Gregory Bateson has indicated, metacommunicative frames "order and organize the perception of the viewer," focusing attention on some things to the exclusion of others and indicating how the action taking place within the frame should be evaluated (1972:187). "Play" is thus a frame particularly amenable to hegemonic interests, since it minimizes the social impact of events or at least redirects critical inquiry to other venues.

9. Item-centered reports of superstitions or belief, such as Allen (1964) and Gmelch ([1971] 1975), exist alongside numerous discussions that dwell on narratives about players and coaches, while Dundes draws on idioms and metaphors to conclude that American football is an expression of "male homosexual ritual comba[t]" (1980:209). Coffin ([1971] 1975) surveys baseball legends, superstitions, speechways, gestures, nicknames, and character types. Studies that consider games and sport in the context of social group creation and maintenance include Fine (1979), Fiske ([1972] 1975), and Teske (1998).

10. For sociology of sports perspectives, see Rowe (1998) and Sage (1998). Political scientist Varda Burstyn is one who has considered the gendered and political dimensions of sport, suggesting its role in socialization regarding sex and aggression (1999). Brian Sutton-Smith and John Roberts (1970) have discussed play as a mechanism for enculturation, while earlier, Roberts, Malcolm Arth, and Robert Bush (1959) noted that games—like other forms of vernacular expressive culture—both articulate social goals, ideals, and recurring motifs and model how these are played out in everyday life.

11. Jeremy MacClancy (1996) has argued that students of sport must account for relations of power by considering who tries to control game regulations, participation, representation, and meaning.

12. Some suggest that because the western frontier was largely "settled" by the turn of the century, psychological needs for open space and virility had to be addressed symbolically. Accordingly, the number of bicycles sold in the United States increased from one million to ten million between 1893 and 1900; nature clubs and national parks were established; picnicking became popular; and health clubs, exercise machines, and fitness gurus sought to restore the mental and physical health of the modern individual (Gilbert 1977; Higham 1965).

13. One football historian mused, "Which of us who was born upon a farm has not awaited eagerly the arrival of 'butchering day' in the fall to get the bladder to knead and roll it until pliable, then to inflate it with a quill, for rare sport across the close-cropped fields in the crackling, crisp October air?" (Davis 1911:7).

14. Parke H. Davis—former Princeton lineman, successful college coach, and member of the Intercollegiate Football Rules Committee—appended the proceedings of these meetings to his 1911 publication *Football: The American Intercollegiate Game*, an informative account of football's early development. Rule changes continued throughout the next decades, but the main contours of the game had been established by 1913, the year the forward pass gained popularity after Knute Rockne and quarterback Gus Dorais of Notre Dame used it to upset Army (the team representing the United States Military Academy at West Point) (Danzig 1956; Riesman and Denney [1951] 1954).

15. Rules committees over the years have wrangled with eligibility requirements in order to maintain the amateur status of their players (Danzig 1956; Davis 1911), even if that status is largely recognized as symbolic (Eitzen 1989; see Beezley 1985 for narratives and jokes about college recruiting practices).

16. Burstyn notes that baseball's slower pace and emphasis on the individual evoked nostalgia during this time of upheaval, providing a pastoral escape from the "violent, indeed squalid, industrialization and violent territorial expansion" of the latter 1800s. "At the same time, its team work reflected the industrial organization of labour then in the ascendance" (1999:48).

17. Rugby itself was not very old when football began to be constructed in the mid-1870s. William Webb Ellis of Rugby School (England) is hailed as the first to pick up the football and go for a goal (in 1823), but the game was not codified or institutionalized until 1871, just eight years after Association Football's (soccer's) rules were determined (Davis 1911:31).

18. This genteel sentiment mirrors that propounded by many self-help writers of the day, who lamented the grasping excess that, they felt, had shaped the Protestant ethic into something else entirely (Weiss 1969; cf. Traube 1989). More than one hundred years later, a sportsmanship notice in a college football program declared that the sport *did* support this older success ethic, teaching players "life lessons about fair play and ethical conduct" (Jameson and Starowitz 1998:10).

19. In the early 1890s, attitudes from these elite founding schools radiated to newer college football programs; Davis estimated that "no less than 45 former players of Yale, 35 of Princeton, and 24 of Harvard" were active coaches during this time (1911:93). Thus, the experiences and innovations of teams across the country were influenced by peers of the Rules Committee members, many of whom likely shared the same class position and predilections. Allen Sach (1972) argues that Yale, which dominated both football competitions and rule-making sessions in the late 1870s and 1880s, catered to the sons of industrialists and other nouveau riche who flaunted genteel tradition (prevalent at Harvard until the end of the century) by making sport less about leisure and gentility and more about work, strategy, and victory.

20. Early on, David Starr Jordan of Stanford University championed rugby as the collegiate sport of choice, since it encouraged less coaching and more individualism (Gilbert 1977).

21. After the 2002 Buckeye win over Michigan (for the Big Ten Conference title) and the team's subsequent upset of the Miami Hurricanes in the national championship game, OSU coach Jim Tressel immediately thanked the fans for creating a winning environment. (A record crowd attended the OSU-Michigan game, and television commentators noted the number of scarlet-and-gray-clad spectators at the national championship game in Tempe, Arizona. A week after the game in Tempe, flying through Phoenix on my way back to Columbus, my plane was dominated by individuals still proudly wearing Buckeye clothing and paraphernalia.)

22. A scoreboard public service announcement in 2003 attempted to curb alcohol consumption while maintaining a festive atmosphere; the spot urged students to "celebrate responsibly." It then showed a bare-chested, painted male and continued, "Dressing responsibly is another matter."

23. Cooper's statement reads: "Thanks to you, Ohio Stadium is a great football atmosphere and is one of the toughest places in the country in which our opponents play. . . . [I] hope that you continue to support us in a classy manner—the same classy manner which we expect our players to demonstrate both on and off the field. . . . [B]e considerate of your fellow fans as well as the players, coaches, and officials on the field[;]. . . . be respectful of others, their property, and the authority of those who administer the competition. Going undefeated at home this year is again one of our goals. And with your continued support it can happen. But . . . let's make sure our behavior is positive and sportslike" (Emig 1998:4). Official game programs generally contain some sort of exhortation to good behavior, as in OSU Coach Jim Tressel's similar statements, which add that responsible conduct *after* the game demonstrates to "the world that we are the class of NCAA College Football" (Lamb 2003:19, 2005:19).

24. Stoeltje notes that, "like play and creativity, festival explores and experiments with meaning, in contrast to ritual, which attempts to control meaning"(1992:262), and it is true that spectators find ways to circumvent or flout game-day regulations. Future research could delve more fully into these unofficial emendations and challenges.

25. Football's many and specific rules can also be attributed to the need for a repeatable entity that could be systematically reproduced (a necessary feature of ritual and festival) and to a nineteenth-century belief that competition and violence need to be constrained. David Riesman and Reuel Denney ([1951] 1954) also contend that rules were more important in the United States than in Britain: American play was developing along intercollegiate lines, so local variations were less acceptable; further, Americans were less concerned with the self-regulating displays of compliance characteristic of societies with long-standing upper classes, authoritative team captains, and sports in which tacit rules had been developed through experience. A link between social class and manners was remarked upon by "gentlemen" who wrote for national periodicals and expressed a fear that when professionalism (and thus the general public) entered football, the game would further degenerate into "a competition of underhand play and of 'slugging'" ("The Future of Football," 1890:395). Boxing and football actually rose in popularity at the same time (Higham 1965), but Steven Pope notes that boxing "affirmed working-class virtues of prowess, bravery, honor, and physical culture" and retained working class control. Although boxing also "represented a battleground for the definition of meritocratic values central to the national identity" (Pope 1993b:330), ideas regarding achievement and individual opportunity were increasingly associated with the more bourgeois football—not least because state statutes repeatedly outlawed prize fighting.

26. Identification is an ongoing process fundamentally based on contact with—and in opposition to—others, enacted by demarcating boundaries of difference (e.g., Barth 1969; Bauman [1972] 2000; Thomas 1992).

27. Sydel Silverman has also argued that the Palio competition, now regarded as apolitical, was initiated by the Medicis in order to enact a cultural autonomy that was no longer actually possessed by the Sienese. The *contrada* organization, sustained by the Palio competition, implicitly discouraged class-based alliances and explicitly bolstered the status quo by using symbols that could celebrate "the Sienese soul, civic liberty, resistance to the Florentines, democracy and popular initiative, law and order, familism, love of country, or any number of ideals emphasized by different political programs" (1984:98, 100).

28. Fans appear to create expressive routines primarily about those who are credible threats to OSU's success. Nevertheless, thousands of OSU faithful travel to nearby games against opponents construed as less impressive, and they sometimes appear to outnumber the home crowd. Buckeye spectators at a recent contest against Indiana University said the four-hour drive to Bloomington was worth the chance to participate: home-game tickets are difficult to come by unless one has current university status, long-standing season tickets, and/or deep pockets. Some OSU fans had driven to the game all the way from Atlanta, Georgia.

29. Other stock jokes include, "How do you get a _____ graduate off your porch? Pay him for the pizza." Like the "fries" joke, this one reinforces a relationship between university credentials and socioeconomic possibilities in the United States.

30. The multivocal nature of symbols (see Turner 1973) leads to interesting possibilities for identity assertion. For instance, a symbol explicitly elaborated to define one group becomes available for pejorative use by others (cf. Bauman 1972 [2000]). This kind of negative appropriation may involve more than simple parody or insulting taunts; rather, adherents to one identity can reference the symbolic practices of a rival in order to invoke implicit comparison to, and positive evaluation of, their own competing

traditions. Consider another narrative joke: "A diehard Michigan fan and a diehard Ohio State fan are standing in front of a firing squad. The executioner asks the Wolverine fan, 'What's your last request?' He thinks for a minute, then says, 'Let me hear the Wolverine fight song one last time.' 'OK,' says the executioner. He turns to the OSU fan and asks the same question: 'What's *your* last request?' Without hesitation the Buckeye answers, 'Shoot me first.'"

While the "duh" joke cited earlier derides formal characteristics of "Michigan" music in order to imply Buckeye superiority, this joke references "The Victors" as an entire symbolic complex. Here again, Ohio State's reputed supremacy turns on the reference and rejection of another's symbolic resource—even on pain of death.

A joke circulated by e-mail in early May 2002 sets up another "firing squad" scenario. It recognizes a "national" context for interpretation by commenting on perceived Saudi Arabian culture (perhaps in response to recent post–September 11 Saudi public relations efforts); at the same time, the joke negotiates the local identities of Ohio State fans and their opponents ("rival" Michigan and "interloper" Penn State, admitted not long ago as the eleventh member of the Big Ten Conference). For the full text of this joke, see Appendix A. For the full text of the Michigan fight song and for more on Schembechler, who graduated from Ohio State and even coached there for a time, see Falls 1973.

31. As this teacher's comment indicates, socialization as a Buckeye fan starts early in central Ohio; my own elementary school (fifteen minutes from campus) held an "OSU-Michigan Day" every year. Our principal, a Michigan graduate, encouraged students to come to school wearing the identity of their choice. In dress as in music, one's own position can be strengthened by deriding the symbols of others: "Why did University of Tennessee officials pick orange as their school colors?—So their fans could wear the same clothes to the game on Saturday, hunting on Sunday and then pick trash up off the side of the road on Monday without ever changing clothes!" (circulated by e-mail, July 24, 2001). This joke once again associates social position with college affiliation. If football bodily trains participants to reproduce corporate capitalism and celebrate ideologies of equal opportunity and upward mobility, discourse surrounding college athletics suggests that some participants in the college scene are "more equal" than others.

32. Woody Hayes, a hot-tempered coach who oversaw Ohio State football from 1951–1978, has achieved legendary status in central Ohio. For instance, at OSU's 2005 homecoming pep rally, three architecture students wore jointed puppets more than double their own height, which they had constructed with the help of colleagues. Affixed to the students' backs with shoulder straps, their giant arms manipulated by long poles, the painted cardboard figures represented Hayes as well as Heisman Trophy winners Archie Griffin and Eddie George. As the light bulb joke demonstrates, Hayes has been incorporated as part of a Buckeye identity that is recognized by both insiders and outsiders. See Appendix B for the joke's full text.

33. Figures for Autumn 2005 (The Ohio State University 2005).

34. A recent game-day program advertisement presented packages of Bob Evans bratwurst and Italian sausage as "about the only thing fans of the scarlet and gray and the good folks from Michigan can agree on" (Lamb 2005:56). Inside the stadium, concessions are less regional, including such "American" favorites as hot dogs, popcorn, pizza, and hamburgers.

35. Recalling his childhood in Follansbee, "a small steel town" in West Virginia's northern panhandle, Bob Barnett observed that this working-class area was "genuine football territory" and noted that "for the sons of Italian and Polish mill workers a spot on the football team also signaled acceptance into the mainstream of American life" (1991:55–56). Midwestern towns that grew up around steel mills or other forms of industry have lost many jobs in the past decades, but not their passion for football. Daniel Sipe's 1986 documentary *Tigertown*, for instance, reveals the football mania of Massillon, Ohio, where parents see strong high school football and band traditions as the ticket to their children's success and the town's survival as a community. More recently, the film *Friday Night Lights* (Berg 2004), based on the book by H. G. Bissinger, dramatized how football scholarships and professional possibilities hold out the promise of economic escape from working-class towns like Odessa, Texas. Today many of these small towns or industrial communities have large black populations, and the Ohio State football team and staff rosters also boast a strong African American presence; nevertheless, stadium spectators and game-day traditions in Columbus project a pervasive European American image and influence (cf. Hugenberg 2002).

36. As I remember it, OSU Coach Tressel accepted the 2002 national championship trophy by declaring, "Everyone knows we've got The Best Damn Band in the Land—now we've got the best damn team in the land!" The band's influence is also affirmed by TV montages preceding OSU games that inevitably

intersperse shots of the band with clips of recent OSU football action and by televised games that often begin with coverage of the band's ramp entrance and/or performance of Script Ohio.

37. Brass bands have also had a strong presence in the British Isles since the mid-nineteenth century, where they were often affiliated with organized industry. Colliery, mill, and foundry "works" bands were often named after the companies that enabled and encouraged the purchase of brass instruments by their working-class employees (Herbert 2000; Herbert and Sarkissian 1997). Municipal bands generally may also have roots in government-sponsored "town piper" traditions dating from medieval times, including the Town Waits in England and Stadtpfeiffer or Stadspijper in central Europe (see International Guild of Town Pipers 2005).

38. The band was an all-male entity until 1973, when the national Title IX ruling forced a change in admission requirements (*Script Ohio* 1989). In 2005, 28 percent of band members were women (Spencer 2005:1D).

39. The text of "Buckeye Battle Cry" affirms local pride using military tropes that call to mind both kingdoms and nation-states:

> In old Ohio there's a team that's known throughout the land;
> Eleven warriors, brave and bold, whose fame will ever stand.
> So when the ball goes over, our cheers will reach the sky;
> Ohio Field will hear again the Buckeye Battle Cry—
> "Drive! Drive on down the field, men of the scarlet and gray;
> Don't let them through that line, we have to win this game today! (Come on Ohio!)
> Smash through to victory; we cheer you as you go:
> Our honor defend, so we'll fight to the end for O-hi-o."

40. For several essays that position football enactments as fundamentally sacred or religious phenomena, see Price 2001.

41. Band members have their share of escapades off the field; in the early 1900s, for instance, they were known for "nightshirt parades" through town and across theater stages, interrupting plays in midperformance (*Script Ohio* 1988). Internet sites produced and maintained by OSU band members or alumni today detail the activities and histories of specific band rows, which one site compares to fraternities (e.g., Bitzel 2005; for links to other sites, see The Ohio State University Marching Band 2006).

42. In 1994, The Ohio State University installed $25,000 steel goalposts known as "super-posts." Weighing 1,650 pounds each, these posts were designed to thwart revelers' consistent attempts to destroy them after the game; so far, the uprights have stayed intact (Stephens 2002). At the same time, postgame gatherings have grown increasingly violent. In 1995, forty-seven people were arrested during riots that erupted after OSU defeated Notre Dame, fifty-two were arrested in 1996 after a game with Penn State, and "couch-burning" has become a regular postgame occurrence outside student residences near campus. After the 2002 win over Michigan, an "alcohol-fueled melee" broke out in which more than twenty parked cars were overturned and nine were burned. Police arrested fifty-seven people; eighteen were students and at least eight were women (Brinkley-Rogers 2002; Cadwallader, May, and Thomas 2002; see also Edwards, Oller, and Woods 2002).

43. See, for example, Burstyn 1999; Eitzen 2003; Gems 1998; Harris 1994; King and Springwood 1999; Nixon 1984.

44. According to a series of Gallup Polls reported in *American Enterprise* (Cultural Conservatism 1994), 39 percent of Americans polled in 1948 cited baseball as the sport they enjoyed watching most, while just 17 percent said football and 10 percent said basketball. In 1992 football and baseball had exchanged places: football was most popular with 38 percent of those polled, and baseball was the favorite of just 16 percent.

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