

Excerpts from sample student analysis of a secondary source

Sample Student Final Paper

WRT 205

Real Consequences: Masculinity on the Gridiron

In "Machines, Missiles, and Men: Images of the Male Body on ABC's *Monday Night Football*," Nick Trujillo analyzes how the athletes' male bodies are represented in the Monday Night Football TV broadcasts during the 1993-1994 NFL season. His aim is to show how the male body in the NFL and the commentary by the broadcast team work together to reinforce and normalize the stereotypical views of masculinity as strong, tough, violent, and aggressive. He establishes what it means to be a man on the football field by watching the broadcasts from that season. The football players subject their bodies to violent injuries that lead to various health problems. The consequences of hegemonic masculinity are not limited to the men on the field. Women are also affected. Trujillo briefly discusses the subordination of women in the world of televised sports. Although he touches on the effects that masculinity has on men and women, Trujillo fails to go into an in depth analysis of these consequences. It is significant to recognize how real these consequences are and how they extend beyond the lines of the football field. By examining the masculinity produced by football players' bodies and the television broadcast, Trujillo exposes three common images that perpetuate stereotypes about gender. These images work to reveal the consequences of the normalization of violence and gender relations on the televised football broadcast. This piece provides a strong foundation for my own research into the relationship between football and gender stereotypes with a focus on how they negatively affect both men and women. I will use this article to show how televised NFL broadcasts affect culture, and then expand into a more detailed analysis of the consequences that Trujillo briefly mentions.

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Along with writing an article in a timely and urgent manner, Trujillo's paper is composed well to allow the reader to understand and consider his argument. To expose the issues discussed above in a successful manner, Trujillo uses all three of the rhetorical appeals – logos, ethos, and pathos. He uses these rhetorical appeals to create a paper that requires the reader to think about what they are seeing when watching a televised NFL broadcast.

Logos deals with the argument being made and the reasoning an author uses to get their point across. Trujillo uses logos to make his argument that the images and commentary in the broadcast convey hegemonic masculinity. He starts each subsection with quotes from experts that fit in with each topic. This immediately offers credibility to his analysis. He then makes his claims about the players' bodies portraying the three key images (tool, weapon, and object of gaze) by offering specific evidence taken from game broadcasts. He uses direct quotes from players and the commentary between the broadcasters to strengthen his argument. The viewer watches the game through the lens of the broadcasters, so it is significant to record how they contribute to the football players' performance of gender during the broadcast. By starting with experts and then moving down to the broadcasters' commentary, Trujillo creates a logically written argument that will allow the reader to understand how each image perpetuates hegemonic masculinity and its consequences. This is significant because it takes the football game out of its normal entertainment context, as Trujillo creates a critical, academic viewpoint. It forces the reader to seriously think about what they are seeing rather than just taking it in as entertainment. They are forced to confront questions like: Should it really be normal for a game to be compared to war? And, what does the portrayal of women as cheerleaders for strong, tough men mean for American society?

Along with having a well thought out argument, it is significant that Trujillo is accepted as an authority on the subject. The author's own reliability and trustworthiness is known as ethos. Trujillo definitely makes his own credibility known. Although he does not specifically discuss his merits for discussing this subject in the article, it is clear that he is very knowledgeable on the topic. This paper was published in the *Sociology of Sport Journal*, and it is noted on the first page that Trujillo is with the Department of Communication Studies at California State University. It is a well-written, professionally formatted article; the reader will respect his views and opinions, regardless of whether he or she agrees with him. That respect is important to have when trying to make a good argument, especially within academic circles.

Building on the logic and respect of logos and ethos, Trujillo also appeals to the readers' emotions, which is known as pathos. Trujillo's main tool to move the reader is the discussions between

and descriptions made by the commentators. They describe the action and make insights about the players. Trujillo writes, "During the season, players were described as 'weapons,' 'missiles,' 'shields,' 'rockets,' 'hitting machines,' and other instruments of violence" (411). He also lists a number of words used to describe how the players used their bodies as weapons, including attack, blow away, cripple, decimate, hammer, smoke, shred, wound, and wreck (Trujillo 411). By using this type of descriptive and graphic language, Trujillo transports people into that moment. The readers can imagine seeing what is being written, and they can react to what is being said by the broadcast team. By describing the game broadcast with specific images and quotes, Trujillo taps into the readers' emotions, so they have to think about what they are reading and imagining. In doing so, the strangeness of certain images and conversations between broadcasters is exposed.

Although Trujillo's use of the rhetorical appeals makes readers think about televised NFL games in a different way, it is not readily available to the average NFL fan. The average fan does not read scholarly journals, so this article has a limited reach. It is a scholarly publication, so Trujillo's audience is mainly comprised of other academics in similar fields. It was published in the *Sociology of Sport Journal*. After looking at a few different issues, it is clear that gender in sports is a regularly researched topic in this journal. While the *Sociology of Sport Journal* regularly publishes articles that deal with gender, it still has a rather narrow audience within academe. According to their website, the journal is concerned with a wide range of issues that relate to the sociology of sport. Gender and body culture both fall under their interests, but the field is limited to those academics with an interest in sports. This group would mainly include sports sociologists, sports psychologists, and coaches. It may not easily reach a general gender studies academic, which limits the overall effectiveness of Trujillo's article. Various academic writers (about forty) have cited it. Many of them deal with similar topics focusing on body and gender performance. Although it may not be as effective as it could be if it were available to a broader audience, it was clearly valuable to academics in similar fields.