

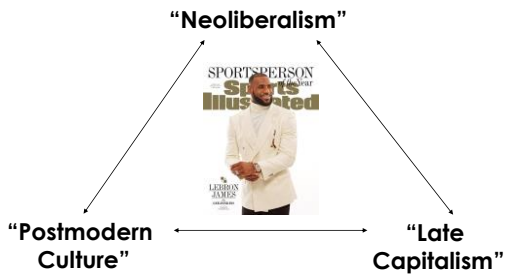
Lecture 4, Part Two: Sport Celebrities

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REVIEW: Lecture 4: The Cultural Economy of Sport 'Celebrity'



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(Sporting) Celebrity as “Imaged Identity”

The social identities of celebrities – based on social class, race/ethnicity, gender, etc. – are most often expressed through a ‘manufactured’ persona, an *“imaged identity”* of particular symbols, signs and images/experiences.



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Diversity of Sport Celebrity 'Types'

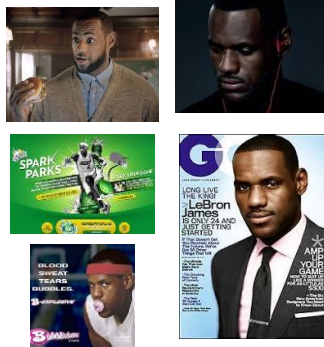
In the promotional and marketing strategies of sporting celebrities, *athletes often (but not always) represent one of three 'types' that correspond with a particular consumer group or 'market segment':*

Celebrity Type	Market Segment
"Dominant" Celebrity	'Mass/Mainstream' Market
"Residual" Celebrity	'Nostalgia' Market
"Oppositional" Celebrity	'Alternative' Market

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"Dominant" Celebrity - 'Mass/Mainstream' Market

Other examples?



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"Residual" Celebrity - 'Nostalgia' Market



2012 'Orioles Legends Celebration Series at Camden Yards'

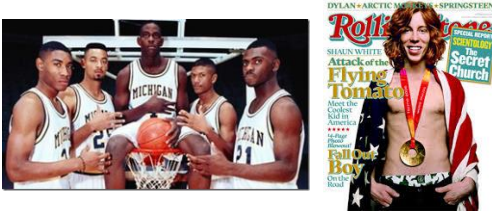


Other examples?



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"Oppositional" Celebrity - 'Alternative' Market



Other
examples?



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(Sporting) Celebrity and Signification

The process of 'signification' helps us understand how an 'imagined identity' is created for a particular athlete/celebrity (that is, how a specific persona and identity is developed and marketed to *increase the athlete's cultural and economic value, or their 'symbolic' value*).



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(Sporting) Celebrity and Signification

Here, 'signification' refers to how celebrities, as 'embodied brands' and commodity-signs with their own value, are frequently deployed through marketing to co-promote other types of commodity-signs (products, experiences, spectacles, etc.). We can call this "mutual promotion."



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(Sporting) Celebrity, Signification and 'Mutual Promotion'



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Sport Celebrity and Social Identity: Gender and Embodied Brands

In contemporary American culture, the realities of a sporting celebrity are *different depending on the social identity of the individual*.

For example, female athletes continue to deal with issues of '*trivialization*' (diminishing an athlete's skills and abilities) and '*sexualization*' (focusing on the aesthetic appearance of the athlete).



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Sport Celebrity and Social Identity: Gender and Embodied Brands

Sexualization is fueled by the hegemonic notion that 'sex sells' for corporations, the media and athletes.

The media representations of female athletes (and women in the sport industry in general) *remains an ethical and moral issue.*



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Sport Celebrity and Social Identity: Gender and Embodied Brands

"It's frustrating for female golfers," said Stacy Lewis, two time major winner. "It's kind of the state of where we've always been. *We don't get respect for being the golfers that we are.* Obviously, Golf Digest is trying to sell magazines. But at the same time you'd like to see a little respect for the women's game."

Editor in chief Jerry Tarde defended the choice to feature Gretzky, a model who rose to fame mainly because of her Instagram account. "Sports figures, celebrities and models have appeared on Golf Digest covers since the magazine's beginning," she said.

"Paulina ranks at the high end of the golf celebrity scene today, and she has a compelling story to tell. She also might get some new people interested in the game."



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Sport Celebrity and Social Identity: Gender and Embodied Brands



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(Sporting) Celebrity and Signification

In other words, the process of 'signification,' a key part to the manufacturing of a celebrity's 'imaged identity,' is often constructed through cultural meaning related to the social identity of the individual.