



Citation for published version:

Silk, M, Francombe, J & Andrews, DL 2014, 'The corporate constitution of national culture: The mythopoeia of 1966', *Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies*, vol. 28, no. 5, pp. 720-736.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10304312.2014.941326>

DOI:

[10.1080/10304312.2014.941326](https://doi.org/10.1080/10304312.2014.941326)

Publication date:

2014

Document Version

Peer reviewed version

[Link to publication](#)

This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article published by Taylor & Francis in *Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies* on [date of publication, available online:
<http://www.tandfonline.com/10.1080/10304312.2014.941326>."

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The corporate constitution of national culture: The mythopoeia of 1966

Within this discussion we explore the ubiquitous presence of the year 1966 (used with such frequency, given it is the only time England has ever won the FIFA World Cup) within English based media and corporate promotional discourseⁱ. In doing so, we engage sport as a particularly ‘lustrous’ and emotive cultural practice, through which commercially mediated renditions of nation are communicated to, and subsequently through, the popular imagination. Despite its centrality within English commercial and popular culture, the omnipresent spectre of 1966 has been the subject of but a small number of academic analyses (c.f. Clarke, 1986; Critcher, 1994; Polley, 1998a; Porter, 2009; Wagg, 1991; Young, 2007), meaning the moment lives on within popular discourse as an abstracted allusion to England’s once experienced, but now long remembered, football (and, indeed, societal) ascendancy. This nostalgic fetishization of 1966 is, in actuality, the product of a confluence of numerous interrelated factors indicative of the economic forces and conjoined cultural politics of the contemporary moment. These contextual elements include: the emergence of the St George’s cross at football matches and other sporting events involving the English national team (e.g. Abell et al. 2007); a lack of recent (football) success on a global scale; the apparent ‘void’ of Englishness as a national identity; and, shifts in understandings of ‘Englishness’ and ‘Britishness’ (see Kumar 2010).ⁱⁱ Our interest lies in explicating how spectacularized cultural products, (hi)stories and technologies of national recollection and ancillary commercialized embodiments of ‘Englishness’ become ingrained with the contemporary discourses of nation, subjectivity, regulation and consumption (Giardina 2005; Giroux 2000). In excavating the commodified sporting discourses—as public, pedagogic, political and popular cultural forms—with Prideaux (2009), our intent is to deepen understanding of how mediated and spectacularized expressions of nation are increasingly controlled by corporate interests. In so doing, we raise important questions over “the complex strategies of cultural identification and discursive address that function in the name of ‘the people’ or ‘the nation’ and make them immanent subjects and objects of a range of social and literary narratives” (Bhabba 1990: 292).

Focusing on sporting practices in the delineation of particular national sensibilities is, not in and of itself, new. There exists a sizeable amount of scholarship on the articulations between corporate

capitalism and the discursive (re)production of specific national cultures, national nostalgia and select sporting practices (e.g. Bairner, 2001; Maguire, 1999; Rowe et. al., 1998; Tomlinson & Young, 2006; Silk, 2012; Smith & Porter, 2004), such that sport has become arguably the most emotive—specifically in peacetime—vehicle for harnessing and expressing bonds of national cultural affiliation (e.g. Bairner & Molnar 2009; Bishop & Jaworski, 2003; Silk 2012). Sporting discourse is inextricably articulated with what Hall (1981) referred to as the “state of play” in cultural and power relations”: the national sporting popular reflects and reproduces social hierarchies, is often highly gendered, and, offers particular constructions of *the* character, culture and the historical trajectory of people; constructions that by their very nature are acts of inclusion and exclusion (cf. Bairner & Molnar, 2009; De Cillia, Riesgel and Wodak 1999; Hobsbawm 1990; Silk 2012). Sporting discourses, practices and experiences are thus mobilised and appropriated in the organization and discipline of daily life, in the shaping of citizens, in the service of particular corporate-political agendas, and in (re)definition of *the* ‘sanctioned’ identity (Giroux 2000; Grossberg 1992). Prior to addressing the current conjuncture, we briefly allude to what we have termed the ‘corporate nation’ (Silk & Andrews 2001; Silk, Andrews & Cole 2005) as conjured through the practices and sensibilities of cultural workers in the media/corporate industries.

The mediated constitution of the corporate nation: Pedagogies of the past

There exists a sparse amount of scholarship directed towards the seemingly ‘non-political’—as traditionally understood—interrelationships linking nationalism, popular culture, and corporate strategizing. Rather, the majority of scholarship has been directed towards ‘official’ discourses, the traditional (e.g. an anthem), material, and symbolic political rhetoric, and spectacle (e.g. national commemoration) (Edensor 2002; Prideaux 2009). Yet, as ‘cultural citizens’, we are increasingly seduced, inducted and incorporated into nationally resonant discursive systems and materialities dictated by the impulses of both state and transnational capital (Giardina 2005). Indeed, within a conjuncture within which “everything . . . has become cultural; and culture has equally become economic or commodity oriented.” (Jameson, 1998, p. 73), it is of little surprise that sport has become organized and structured around a ‘corporate sport modality’ (see Alt, 1983; Andrews, 1999; 2005; McKay & Miller, 1991)ⁱⁱⁱ. In our previous work (see Silk & Andrews 2001; Silk, Andrews & Cole 2005), we have explored the “changing”,

as opposed to the “withering,” of the nation under the logics of global corporate capitalism (Hannerz, 1996, p. 89). Despite the inexorably and seemingly irreversibly trend towards a “post-national world” (Smith, 1991, p. 143), a counter intuitive shift towards global cosmopolitanising logics of transnational corporatism has meant ‘geography still matters’ in a very real sense as local and national specificities continue to shape production and consumption processes in many sectors in different ways (Preston & Kerr, 2001). Our approach has focussed on the *context* and the *processes* through which national cultures are produced and reproduced are being transformed (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt & Peraton, 1999), arguing not that internal political forces previously responsible for harnessing and contouring national cultural identity have been rendered obsolete; rather, their position of influence is being eroded by often *external*, corporate forces. As such, we have suggested that the locus of control in influencing the manner in which the nation and national identity are represented becomes exteriorized through, and internalized within, the promotional strategies of transnational corporations. With Hardin (2014), whose work explicates the specificities of contemporary forms of neoliberalism, we are privileging the form, position, ethos, structures and sensibilities of corporations (what Hardin calls *corporism*^v) as a defining mechanism through which national identities and popular cultural products, forms and experiences—such as football—become infused, intertwined and embedded. We have termed this process, *corporate nationalisms*, as transnational organisations seek, quite literally, to capitalize upon the nation as a source of collective identification and differentiation through *negotiating* (Hall, 1991, p. 32) with the local^v. While (major) sporting events are often spaces in which there exists both physical (literally) and discursive contests between universal/cosmopolitan values and ideologies and nationalisms, such assertions have certainly been the basis for a number of recent explorations of the place of sport in discursively constituting national culture (e.g. John & Jackson 2011; Kobayashi 2011; Scherer & Jackson 2010). Indeed, and somewhat updating Hobsbawm (1983, p. 11), the “badges of membership” have been increasingly bought under the control of corporate entities who have deployed symbolic campaigns and cultural products as part of their negotiation with specific (sporting) locales. It is in this sense that we use the term *corporate nationalisms* to underscore the commercial paraphernalia circulating around the 2010 FIFA World Cup that forms the focus of this paper^{vi}.

Given the relative importance of the manipulation of the past—more accurately addressed as

heritage and as an economic resource (see Graham 2002)—these corporate *auteurs* have deployed myths, memories, symbols, and traditions in the reconstitution and persistence of nation as a market segment. This is perhaps of little surprise, as Lee (2011) argues, given nostalgia (in this case, a popular and populist nostalgia for 1966) is a powerful trend within the cultural industries, often deployed as ‘glocal’ (see Robertson, 1996) sentiments of nation (see Boym, 2001). Yet, and despite Jameson (1983; 1991) explicating the politics of nostalgia with a postmodern commodity sensibility in which cultural producers turn to the past to “design angst-assuaging representations of contemporary existence (Jameson, 1991, pp. 6, 17–18), there exists limited scholarship on such corporate renditions, especially in sporting products, practices and discourses. What happens to mythology/heritage, when the ‘modern intelligentsia’ (Smith 1999) involved in manipulation are (trans)national actors primarily invested in the profit motive? While the end ‘product’ may not be any more or less problematic than ‘official’ product/rhetoric, these are important questions as we think through how national symbols are conveyed/become taken for granted (Smith 1991) when deployed through the commercial strategizing of corporations. Indeed, the ‘politics of nostalgia’ literature has shown the relationships between power and the past, suggesting that nostalgia is a powerful political tool given it is often co-opted into various political agendas, and, given its affective quality is often an emotional antidote to politics (see Boym, 2001; Lee, 2011). In this regard, the political impact of nostalgia—as bound within the dictates of corporate capital—can often be deeply exclusionary and atavistic (Atia & Davies, 2010), serving as an economy of affect through which power, privilege, and position are (re)produced. Our exploration of the representation and mythologizing of 1966 in the present then, points to concerns over what happens when original events are ‘lifted out of their local historical contexts and reshaped to the [corporate] relevancies established’ (Smith 1999: 185).

The process of remembering, of producing nostalgia, is also a simultaneous forgetting in which the nation can celebrate both its antiquity and its historical recency (Billig 1995). Following the classical work of Ernest Renan (1990), we explore how renditions of 1966 conjure up a ‘collective amnesia’ in which national ‘forgetting’ is a result of the carefully contoured discursive reconstitution of an ‘authorised’ past by powerful (in the sense that they possess the power to inform and shape popular views and values) corporate groups (rather than a result of absent-mindedness). In this sense, the commodified commemoration of 1966 builds upon common histories and memories—no matter how inclusionary,

exclusionary or fabricated—and links the present to the past through the strategic reconstruction of history (Hall 1994 in De Cillia et al. 1999). Following Ensink (1996, in Tileaga, 2009), the reconstitution of an ‘authorized’ past is not part of an attempt to convey historical veracity; rather it is a process of the active contestation and negotiation of the past, a representative point of view acceptable to, and expressed in the name of, nation (see also Billig, 1999). In this regard, the “analysis of the struggle over the meaning assigned to past events has to take into account the various discursive processes of representing and engendering an (almost) ‘mythical’ version of a given political and historical episode of national importance” (Tileaga, 2009, p. 362). The cultural production of nostalgia for 1966 then is a pedagogic, political and ideological process (Hodgkin & Radstone, 2003; Giroux & Giroux, 2006) which forces focus on questions about the place of the past in the present and about who is *entitled* to speak/produce that past. These are crucial questions with regard to the nature of such corporate-cultural discourses when the past becomes *manipulated in the interests of capital*, especially with respect to the political and pedagogic dimensions of myth: whose / which version of the past forms the essence of such discourse, who has the relative power to control historical knowledge and disseminate such knowledge, whose past is silenced or marginalized, what is ‘authentic,’ and to whose past does it bear resemblance (Bell, 2003; Chhabra et al., 2003; De Cillia et al., 1999; Porter, 2009)?

‘All those years of hurt’: The cultural politics of the corporate nation

The ‘real’ World Cup in 1966 was itself of course far more than a sporting event. Alabarces et. al. (2001), for example, discuss the game between England and Argentina which was underscored by accusations over a FIFA conspiracy to keep the home team in the tournament.^{vii} Further, the British media framed the final game between England and Germany in relation to the First and Second World Wars, with one paper suggesting that if the Germans win, we can “take comfort that twice we have beaten them at theirs” (in Maguire, 1993, p. 296), while another popular newspaper attempted to fly a WWII spitfire over the German training camp (see Polley, 1998b). Despite these xenophobic and militaristic referents, Young (2007) suggested that through the 1970s allusions to the 1966 World Cup final were largely apolitical (Young 2007). Yet, by the early 1980s, and into the 1990s, as the Falklands war anointed Thatcher as *the* embodiment of an age of national decline, and in which there emerged a reassertion of

suspicion over former enemies and the reinvigoration of a 'glorious past' (see Cannadine 2002 in Young 2007), discourses of 1966 began to take on decidedly jingoistic and singular overtones (Young 2007). This reached its epitome in English media coverage of the 1996 European Championships that exhumed past-hostilities between England and Germany, and, both wilfully and nostalgically recollected national glories from a bygone era (cf. Carrington 1998; Maguire, Poulton and Possamai 1999). Penned to commemorate England hosting the 1996 European Championships, the *Three Lions* football anthem composed by Ian Broudie of the Lightning Seeds, with words by comedians David Baddiel and Frank Skinner, offers the most popular invocation of 1966. The lyrics, emblematic of the 'new laddism' of the 1990s (Carrington 1998), evoked nostalgia for 1966, as well as self-reflexively commentating upon England's subsequent failures (as a football team/nation). Collapsing distinct temporal moments, and disrupting the linear chronology of the past, the song harks back to the 'halcyon' date in which England lifted the Jules Rimet trophy and the hurt that has since ensued. For Carrington (1998), 'Three Lions' was part of a reassertion of a narrow and closed white male 'new-lad' identity; the song part of a colonial and ethnocentric nostalgic/political discourse, an attempt to reconstruct an imperial Britain that posits that England lost its way and its world position and that now, after '30 years of hurt', football is returning to its 'rightful' place (the national psyche of England). The video accompanying the song reconstructs the great moments of the 1966 world cup, yet, as Carrington (1998: 113) points out, depicts both a past and present England (in terms of players, supporters, children emulating the past) as completely homogenous in its whiteness and maleness; black faces being 'completely absent'.

In various contingent iterations the song has formed part of every major football tournament in which England has been present since 1996. In the 2010 version,^{viii} '30 years of hurt' lyric was replaced with 'All these years of hurt' and promoted as a (re)membering of the 'soul' of the nation, its heroic past, its great men and its great glory. Following Renan (1990), the song stands as part of the very social capital / (corporatized) fabric upon which a national idea is based through calling upon a common will in the performance of *great deeds together* in the interests of performing still more. Although far from teleological fault lines, 1966 and 1996 appear as two instructive dates. For if 1966 is mythologised as a time of unabashed national glory and confidence, 1996 acted as the catalyst for the popularised consumption of football.^{ix} Fully bound with the 'logics' of the market, football has become further entrenched as a

popularised space for an array of popular (commodified) practices and technologies (advertising, marketing, consumption, television, gaming and so on). Thus, and within the economic and political trajectories of market-led neoliberalism, the commodification of football acts as yet another resource for the shaping of civility and for the assemblage, or indeed display, of the normalized, regulated, (corporo-)national subject (Rose 2000).

Appearing as hollowed out and empty signifiers, detached and distant from their original moorings, our literal and metaphorical “badges of membership” (Hobsbawm 1983) of 1966 were, in the build up to the 2010 World Cup, emblazoned on an array of cultural goods and products. In this sense, the mythologizing of 1966 was an inescapable, yet revocable, past that was ubiquitous in the present^x. In Billig’s (1995) parlance, the signifiers of 1966 became implicit, symbolic, repetitive, and habitual domains; discourses and practices of nationalism during a time of hot (as opposed to banal) nationalism that catalyse around such events. Embodied, waved, worn, displayed and performed, watched, heard and sung, signifiers of 1966 form part of the ethopolitics (Rose 2000) of the past-present: informed, fashion conscious, consumers proudly displaying the symbolic and iconic. The (re)appropriation, (re)telling and (re)constructing of 1966 mythology has taken multiple forms and alludes to multiple (corporatised) stylisations of the self. These ideologies of consumption have propelled 1966 *onto* the bodies of the national team (England’s 2010 World Cup kit was modelled on the ’66 attire) and the torsos of the general population (the high street offers a plethora of fashion garments, namely *New Look*, *Sainsbury’s* and *Umbro’s* ’66 clothing ranges, *French Connection’s* 66 series [FCUK 66], *Next’s* Ecu Booby Moore t-shirts or *Marks & Spencer* who launched a new menswear campaign utilising stars from the 2010 and 1966 World Cup squads). The year was thrust *into* our bodies by *McDonalds* offering 1966 for consumption in the form of twisty fries through a campaign that re-wrote the dramatic conclusion to the 1966 World Cup final. Further, *Carlsberg* corroborated its status as the official beer of the England team through a campaign that centres on sporting legends and valorises certain English histories, including the Crusades—most notably England 1966 World Cup winning captain, Bobby Moore who leads out the current team into ‘battle’—giving (in line with its brand proposition tagline) ‘probably the best team talk in the world’. *The Sun* newspaper offered its apparent ‘random cannibalisation’ (Jameson, 1991) of 1966 through drawing allusions to the ‘amazing coincidences’ between 1966 and the last World Cup campaign in 2010 in South

Africa. *The Sun's* 'Maybe, Just Maybe' promotion for example highlighted: both 1966 and 2010 were election years; both years saw a new *Dr Who*; captain Rio Ferdinand began his career at West Ham United just like 1966 captain Bobby Moore; musical Sweet Charity opened in London in both years; Parliament was first televised in 1966, and 2010 saw the first TV debate between Prime Ministerial candidates, and; in 1966 the white 'architect of apartheid' Hendrick Verwoerd was knifed to death while in 2010 'white supremacist, Eugene Terreblanche was also knifed to death in South Africa. Television coverage during the 2010 World Cup was dominated by 1966: half-time shows gave us, for example, an overview of the 1966 World Cup campaign, a segment on a 1966 *Routemaster* bus that had been given a makeover to look like a St. George's cross, and ramblings from 1966 'national legend' Alan Ball. Advertisements during the coverage offered no reprise, with prominent positioning going to Terry Venables' *Sun* newspaper's campaign with his rendition of Elvis' 'If I Can Dream': a country dreaming of two stars [World Cup wins] when all could be like before. Nostalgia produced around 1966 infused our leisure time (in the form of Paul Weiland's 2006 film *Sixty Six*), our *practices* of charitable giving (*Cancer Research's* number 6 Booby Moore: World Cup campaign) and of friendship (people finding website 192.com reuniting fans from the 1966 World Cup victory). Somewhat more playfully, 1966 also found its way into our bedrooms. *Ann Summers* enticed it's (fe)male consumers to 'get into the spirit of the summer season of football' and support their country by wearing their exclusive England outfit—"be patriotic and look drop dead sexy in this low cut fitted-t-shirt and hot-pants." Further, the retailer launched a campaign that utilised the iconic image of Bobby Moore hoisted on the shoulders of teammates holding the Jules Rimet trophy; Moore's teammates are replaced by three women, while Moore's head is replaced by that of a rabbit, denoting one of the companies best selling products, the Rampant Rabbit vibrator).^{xi}

Alongside the panoply of 1966 commercial paraphernalia sit an array of banal products based on the St George's cross^{xii}. In the lead up to the 2010 World Cup no visit to the petrol station, the supermarket, the vet, the doctor, the garden centre, the bank, the local festival was seemingly complete without the 'opportunity' to purchase a teddy bear, flag, car-set, sticker, pencil case, condom case, hat, ball, towel, mug, confectionary, bottle opener, lighters, flip flops, pillow, wig, tea-towel, bunting, pens, wallets, commemorative medal, drink, a four year football bond (offered in 2010 by then national team sponsor, *Nationwide*) or an inflatable hand that depicted the St George's cross (a far from exhaustive list)^{xiii}.

Of course, the (re-)articulation of the flag to the England football team is a subject of intense contestation given symbolic associations with racism, far right groups, historical allusions to Empire, the Crusades, and debates over devolution (see e.g. Abell et. al. 2007; Brown et. al., 2014). These products, these (un)waved flags, do not depict an innocent, redundant discourse; rather the omnipresent utilisation of the St George's cross works to 'flag' the nationhood 'unflaggingly' (Billig 1995: 41) and are suggestive of the articulations between the past and present power relations, and of the tensions invoked by corporatized nationalistic nostalgia.

The ubiquitous and repetitious corporate inspired display (the empty and singular), signifiers of 1966, and of the marked (albeit contested and transgressional) appropriation of the flag of St George, anchor the present to the past. 1966 is, effectively, a powerful self-sustaining mythos that has been wired into the nation's collective consciousness: it is a visceral event readily recalled by those who were not there or indeed yet to be born (Porter 2009). Yet, crucial questions remain to be asked with regard the cultural politics of nation when the past becomes *manipulated in the interests of capital* (Chhabra et. al., 2003; Waitt 2000)? As a name-date (Redfield 2008), 1966 serves to both inscribe and efface, such that it speaks to a singular imposition of knowledge (remembering) and amnesia. Connoting more than football, the mythopoesis of 1966 is a somewhat artificial, powerful myth-making mnemonic. It is a historically situated toponym that conjures up the supremacy of England on the international stage and the acceptance of, enactment of, and acquiescence to, mythical English 'values'. More specifically, and as we outline below, the 1966 name-date amongst other things, acted as a powerful discursive mnemonic pertaining to the collective exertion of men, personal and familial cognizance, and the national narratives of post-war Britain; a 'Kennedy' moment and "a myth of national superiority based on the projection of past glories into the present, a gentlemanly brand of masculinity and a submerged reference to class that reflects the roots of the game in the British working class" (Young 2007: 3-4; cf. Critcher 1994; Mason 2006). 1966 can be read as a metonym for a mythical English past, providing a sense of national purpose and belonging and a reminder of when 'England was great' and united (Garland & Rowe 1999; Maguire, Poulton & Possamai 1999; Porter 2009). As commercial paraphernalia, 1966 thus "serves as a negotiation between continuity and discontinuity: it insists on the bond between our present selves and a certain fragment of the past, but also on the force of our separation from what we have lost" (Atia & Davies,

2010, 183). Through the recourse to invented and palatable versions of the past (Carrington 1998), 1966 works precisely because it acts as an affective antidote to the politics of the present (Boym, 2001); a present in which there exist grave anxieties over the reinvention of ‘England’ and ‘Englishness’ (Kumar 2010). Recognising the political and pedagogical potency of questions of such nostalgic cultural discourse (e.g. Giroux & Giroux 2006; Hall 1997)—and given the popularly mythologised spectacularization of the ‘beautiful game’ of 1966 and the reassertion of the ‘flagged’ nation as a (corporatized) response to a cumulative yearning for something simpler in more complex and challenged times—however, leads us to ask important questions over its ‘atavistic’ and ‘exclusionary’ (Atia & Davies, 2010) nature.

The ‘foci imaginarii’ of 1966

In this section, we discuss how 1996—real and imagined—has been reconfigured and colonised ‘by obliging it to conform to present configurations’ (Hutton 1988: 311). We suggest that the atavistic presence of 1966 in the present speaks more to the corporate appropriation of history than with the conveyance of historical veracity. Following Bell (2003: 75), we read the discursive mythscape of 1966 as one that “simplifies, dramatizes and selectively narrates the story of a nation’s past and its place in the world, its historical eschatology: a story that elucidates its contemporary meaning through (re)constructing its past.” The discursive (re)constitution of 1966 mythology acts as a *foci imaginarii* (Bauman 1991) which centres on a nation at ease with itself, an implicitly white, simple, stable, safe and purified ‘eternal England’—no matter that 1966 for many, especially Black-Britons, was a period of struggle for recognition, public persecution, discriminatory immigration laws and racial violence (Carrington 1998). In this sense, these corporatized discourses are partial in their patterns of inclusion and omission: “it is not so much that the past is censored [by corporate actors], but that the past is being recruited, indeed created, to serve present purposes” (Billig 1999: 170): in a historically fraught, uncertain and anxious England/Englishness in the present moment, the past is exorcized to enable consumers/citizens to come to terms with that present.

Importantly, these spectacularized past mythologies are contextualised within a discourse of neo- or multi-ethnic Britishness, one in which ‘minority groups’ may not only be ‘let in’, but redefined as ‘integral’ to the nation—exemplary embodiments of multicultural Britain, the perfect rejoinder to assertions of

ethnic essentialism, racism and intolerance (Fortier 2005: 561; cf. Back, Sinha and Bryan 2012; Kundani 2012; Macdonald 2011). Certainly, such narratives have circulated within sporting spheres, forming the essence of the London 2012 Olympic Bid and production of Britishness (see Silk 2011) and have been part of the strategizing of English football authorities, especially the Football Association's efforts to 'sanitise' English football fandom (Crabbe 2004; Hughson and Poulton 2008). Following 7/7, with diversity once again reassessed as disruptive (Kundani 2007; Vertovec 2007), the appeal was to a national foundational unity that asked us to recover a lost moment of harmony (Stephens 2007). In such a context, there emerged a new emphasis on integrating minorities to British values, part of an *exceptional* need to restrict 'normal' democratic expressions of difference by assimilation to 'required' shared values (Kundani 2012). Of course, such attempts to create a "culturally neutral British identity based on the idea of political citizenship assume a *utopian abstraction of the nation*; in this imagined community of shared allegiance, 'differences' are transcended at the level of action" (Yousuf 2007: 363, authors' emphasis). Given the contextual complexities of the multi-ethnic nation, the rampant corporate mythologizing of 1966 and the re-appropriation of the St George's cross appear as an *authentic* national (English not British) resource, a cultural sensibility which 'others' (however defined) have little to do with. The 'English' are given the opportunity to commemorate a version of nation—to recover national greatness *in the imagination* (Gilroy 1992)—one that does not require dealing with, for example: 'inadequate' integration (as per the tabloid media coverage of the 7/7 bombings); sweeping far right politics; intensified hostility towards British Muslims since the commencement of the 'war on terror'; feelings of disillusionment and resentment; 'Islamophobia', urban segregation; disproportionate levels of unemployment, health, and poverty; and differential immigration statuses and the concomitant restrictions of rights (Meer & Modood 2009; Vertovec 2007).^{xiv}

Moreover, corporate nationalisms perform an "aesthetic of selective silence" (Kane 2004: 583), offering a platform to induce nostalgia and identification beyond our own selves while offering a powerful historical teleology. Multi-ethnic Britain in such narratives has no past: differential legitimating discourses, histories, belongings and identities are simply absent or silenced (Macdonald 2011). With no common history, no opportunity to travel through history together, multi-ethnic Englishness requires acquiescence—commonality—with selected past/present histories, making it all the easier, with a subtle

slight of hand, to reassert a utopic abstraction of nation and assimilation to core national values. Subsequently, and following Carrington (1998), these corporatized narratives of 1966 do not denote the diversity of contemporary Englishness; rather they offer a fixed, closed and racially homogenous sense of national cultural identity that excludes Black, Asian and ‘other’ representations from the national imaginary—unless that is, there is acquiescence with core values. 1966—as with the discursive reimagining of the Blitz—serves as a ‘nationally defining’ moment evoking resilience, unity, spirit, and whiteness (Pitcher 2009). It provides a model of commonality, of Englishness at its best, to which the nation *should* aspire: the dominant trope through which to understand contemporary national ‘struggle’ (Gilroy 2004). Thus, following Stephens (2007) discussion of the post 7/7 invocations of the Blitz during World War II, the mythologizing of 1966 offers a similar, albeit corporatised, point of origin (no matter how arbitrary). Through nostalgia for a simpler past it offers us a ‘preferred’ sense of place (Grossberg 1996) by asserting a common community (travelling through history together) in which whiteness disappears as it becomes normalised as Englishness (Carrington 1998).

Allusions to the Blitz evoke further parallels to sporting discourse; a set of interrelated narratives of war, masculinity, heroism, and, unity in standing against and ultimately beating a ‘common enemy.’ Again, as with the Blitz, the mythologizing of 1966 centres on ‘ordinary’ men (Ball, Hurst, Charlton, Law, Moore) (see e.g. Porter 2009), who display a work ethic and a willingness to push the male body to almost unimaginable extremes. Unlike the ‘spoilt’ and ‘pampered’ (feminised) stars of contemporary hyper-commercial sporting structures, stories prevail of the ‘ordinariness’ of 66 World Cup ‘heroes’: eating egg and chips with family and friends at a service station, catching the bus home the day following World Cup victory (Porter 2009). Indeed, given the assertions that sport fosters a hyper-masculine warrior mentality, puts ‘real men’ in touch with primal instincts for competition and violence, provides homo-social bonding that aids in overcoming fear, pain, and fatigue (Giroux 2001), ‘ordinary men’ are those who are hard-bodied, tough, and probably perform such an identity through playing football—just like the ‘boys of 66’. Yet, this hard boiled, white, tough image definition of masculinity has been disturbed; a rampant culture of consumption and a loss of manufacturing and middle-management jobs presents white males with an identity crisis of unparalleled proportions—the male body has been transformed from an agent of

production to a *receptacle for consumption*, the neoliberal everyman exists as an emasculated, repressed corporate drone whose life is simply an extension of consumerism (Bhabba 1995; Giroux 2001).

In this regard, ‘all these years of hurt’ speak as much to the loss of the ‘right to be a man’ as it does to a relative lack of success on the football pitch; the mythology of 1966 in the present providing a sanctioned space for the reassertion of the cultural centrality of ‘real white men.’ This sanctioning of traditional (some may posit, regressive) understandings of white masculinity derives from the machinations of corporatized cultural discourse. Ironically, we thus see the mobilization of a highly gendered corporatized nostalgia that invites supporters/citizens to consume/embody a masculinity whose very being seemingly refutes the very seductions of a feminized and feminizing consumerism (domestication, passivity, softness and emasculation) upon which today’s promotional culture is founded (Giroux 2001; Moor, 2007; Wernick 1991). These masculinist nostalgic referents and national symbols are polysemic, and their meaning will be necessarily contextual and almost unavoidably ephemeral (see Brown et. al., 2014). Nevertheless, they do raise questions over how such discourses, products and practices attempt to “‘interpellate’, speak or hail us into place as the social subjects of particular discourses” (Hall, 1996, 5-6). With Hall (1996), the panoply of corporate nostalgia/projects raises questions about the points of (temporary) attachments to the subject positions that these products/discourses construct for us.

We are of course attuned to Walkerdine’s (2003) warnings about generalised and universalised class discourses; class is always and an already constituted moral category. Yet, with the white working class most readily associated with, and positioned relational to, these symbols and products (see e.g. Kenny, 2012; Parker & Lyle, 2008; Millward, 2008), these are questions about how social class, and specifically white working class, subjectivities are reconstituted through commercial discourse and are subsequently ‘read’ onto/into the body. This is of course not to deny that there are multiple stylisations and corporate renditions of nostalgic discourses of 1966 and of the St. Georges Cross / Union Jack (on designer cushions, clothing ranges, on cakes at coffee shops, on die cast models of mini cooper cars, in a range of products from noted retailers such as Harrods, Marks & Spencer’s or Selfridges) that are targeted towards consumers of a more middle-class disposition. There are also what we might term corporate national multiculturalisms that proffer performative representations of hyphenated persons and culture(s) who occupy leading spaces in certain campaigns—the *Umbro* ‘Tailored by England’ advert is emblematic, a

campaign that produced the national anthem ‘God Save the Queen’ sung by a range of representative from different ethnicities within diverse spaces^{xv}. Following hooks (1990) and Giardina (2003), while these may well appear as positive and progressive artifacts subverting the status quo (certainly more so than our discussion of *Three Lions* above), such iterations often *efface* the harsh realities witnessed in the everyday interactions of a diverse population, screen out confrontation with structural inequalities and differential immigration statuses, sources of greatest conflict, and silence competing discourses, histories and pasts (see e.g. Macdonald 2011; Modood 2007; Pitcher 2009; Rehman 2007; Silk, in press; Stephens 2007; Vertovec 2007). That is, they often deliver a ‘boutique multiculturalism’ (Fish 1997): a thin veneer obscuring a (social) structure, that essentializes and stereotypes difference and ignores the historically entrenched ‘race’-based inequalities responsible for (masked) social divisions (Troyna and Carrington 1990). Both these new bourgeois corporate nationalisms and multiculturalisms are, however, we would argue, perceived at least as being morally and culturally superior^{xvi} to those that ‘hail’ the lower working classes, even though they are, arguably, similarly rooted in a regressive, cultural politics. In this sense, we end up with a dual celebration of nation on the one hand, and on the other, a loathing of certain (lower working class) celebrants and forms of celebration—there exists a middle England/class moral judgement about certain consumption/displays/embodiments of the past/flag which deemed to be rather less crass or excessive (and indeed a *de rigueur* for any self-respecting middle Englander) when expressed in bourgeois terms. In this regard bourgeois and multicultural corporate nationalisms are culturally, morally and socially perceived as different when positioned in relation to the pernicious (mediated) stigmatization of certain elements of the lower classes: the supposed disaffected, work shy popularly termed the white English/British ‘chav’ figure (see e.g. Lawler 2005a,b) ^{xvii}.

Conspicuous consumption forms a central aspect of the enactment/embodiment of a (hyper)masculine and heterosexist ‘chav’ (Parker and Lyle 2008)—a rendition that has become an increasingly prevalent signifier of a self-loathing Englishness or, perhaps more accurately, a loathing for what Englishness is perceived to have become. This particularised conceptualisation of the ‘chav’ is precisely the problematic monolithic signifier of the working class that has been mobilised through the pages of tabloid newspapers such as *The Sun* and *The Daily Mail* and popular television broadcasts such as *The Jeremy Kyle Show*. This further serves to discursively position ‘the chav’ and their cultural practices,

especially with relation to the conflation with football rhetoric/consumption practices. Such politically inspired discourses paint the working class—or more accurately the ‘chav’ as ‘representative’ of the entire working class populous—as those most disenfranchised from neoliberalism’s competitive consumptive individualism, and from a multi-ethnic Britain. Simultaneously, it is the white English ‘chav’ who becomes most enfranchised (and pathologised) by such corporatized national pedagogic discourse by being caricatured as embodying, displaying, waving and performing corporatized renditions of nation; as depicted through populist representations of nationalistic signifiers—adorning lower working-class (council-house) neighbourhoods, white working class bodies, ‘white-vans,’ ‘pimped’ cars^{xviii} and, public houses positioned as “lower end” due to being deemed ‘chavvy’—that proliferate within the popular and commercial media (see also Brown et. al., 2014 for a discussion of the tensions between carnival/violence in these spaces)^{xix}. In this sense, it is the white-lower classes, those who are positioned as ‘hurting’ the most—mourning the loss of masculinity, the lower class origins of football, of nation, of Empire, of white ‘exclusivity’—whose subjectivities are perhaps *most susceptible to*, mobilised by, and ‘hailed’ by the corporatized logics of be(long)ing to a nostalgic sense of Englishness. Such corporatized nationalist ‘belongings’, however ephemeral, rarely question exactly ‘whose nation’ is normalised; which bodies ‘belong’; and, how monolithic conceptualisations of class articulate with contemporary issues of Englishness/nation, multiculturalism, and masculinities? In the current formulations of 1966 revisited, we are left with a distinctive celebration of a past Englishness that does little more than act as a powerful, and extremely public, exclusionary discursive device that associates ‘authentic’ Englishness—and provides opportunity for display, performance and embodiment—with a historically grounded, white, working class primordial nationalism (Carrington 1998; Crabbe 2004), that is commercially celebrated as it is, simultaneously, culturally demeaned.

Concluding comments

Our interests in this article are in understanding more about which (and whose) versions of nation become ‘legitimate’ or ‘authentic’ when national commemoration becomes deployed through the commercial strategizing of corporations. With an unquestioned adherence to the tenets of corporate capitalism and a concomitant emergence of a commercially motivated, essentially superficial, and

politically neutered historicism (with the bland re-animation of historical sporting signifiers) (Andrews, 2005), the corporatized nostalgic discourses of 1966 speak to social reproduction, cultural production, and moral and political regulation within the organising force of a neoliberal ideology. Through recalling *the* past, *the* sanitized nation was sanctioned; one which (re)membered existential values, meanings, and an ‘authorized’, collectively held past and simultaneously forgot, essentialized and incorporated difference. This has thus raised important questions related to identity and belonging, and hierarchies of inclusion and exclusion, within a ‘post-colonial heterophilic’ England (Back, Sinha & Bryan 2012). The role of such (ephemeral) corporatized national imaginings are thereby important when considering questions over the anxieties and void of Englishness; what Aughey (2010) calls a nothingness, a crippling cultural absence. Are these the discourses of nation that will ‘fill the void’, how do they fit alongside ‘official’ commemorations of nation, and what does this tell us about the relationship with other parts of the United Kingdom and beyond, the relationships between Englishness and Britishness, and with self-understanding over what constitutes ‘Englishness’ (cf. Aughey 2010; Bond et al. 2010; Kumar 2010)? For us, this points to two compelling points of departure. First, it appears that sporting discourse—as mediated, corporatized and eminently cultural and political—serves as a key space within which to examine the cultural nation. Indeed, it points to the centrality of corporatized sport—as a popular cultural form/product—to understanding the complexities, historical uncertainties of, and hierarchies and power differentials within, English and British national identities. During the ‘sporting’ summer^{xx} of 2012 retailers, street-parties, corporations, home owners, tenants, supermarkets, and cars were adorned in both the St Georges cross and the Union Jack—often simultaneously—suggestive of floating and ephemeral significations, identifications and corporatized discourses of be(long)ing^{xxi}. Second, we are drawn to the important—yet under-researched (see Prideaux 2009)—role of corporatized (popular) cultural discourses in the constitution of the cultural nation. For, we argue, commercial imperatives seem to bastardize, or cannibalize the hot nationalism (Billig 1995) of the moment; pointing to the banalization and normalisation of such discourses. This cooling off—the rendering of a ‘hot’, spectacularized and corporatized rhetoric as a normalized form of banal nationalism—is precisely the reason why the atavistic presence of 1966 is significant far more than in a sporting sense; for it is here, corporate discourses operate at their most insidious level, slipping coolly under the radar of popular, academic and political

consciousness and critique.

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Notes

ⁱ Our observations centre explicitly on the build up to the 2010 world cup in South Africa, although our argument is dependent on reference to previous campaigns and the prominence of sporting commodities during the 'sporting summer of 2012' and in the early build up to the 2014 FIFA world cup in Brazil.

ⁱⁱ Both Fenton (2007) and Kumar (2010) warn of the fluid nature of national sentiments. Kumar (2010) for example discusses whether this is the 'real thing' with regard to the longevity, attachment, and resonance of 'ninety-minute nationalism'.

ⁱⁱⁱ Andrews (2005) explicates sport as a corporately structured and commercially compelled cultural arena. He suggests this normalized, and indeed normalizing blueprint is based on the following structural and processual elements: profit-driven executive control and management hierarchies; cartelized ownership and franchised organizational structures; rational (re)location of teams and venues; the entertainment-driven mass mediation of sporting spectacles; the reconfiguring of sport spectacles and spaces as sponsorship vehicles for advancing corporate visibility; the cultural management of the sport entity as a network of merchandizable brands and embodied sub-brands; the differentiation of sport-related revenue streams and consumption opportunities; and, the advancement of marketing and promotional strategies aimed at both consolidating core, and expanding new, sport consumer constituencies.

^{iv} Hardin (2014) discusses *corporism* as the mechanism whereby the ethos/structures/sensibilities of the corporation become infused within all aspects of life, ranging from institutional forms to the logic of understanding the individual as a micro corporation.

^v In our previous work (see Silk & Andrews, 2001) we have suggested that it is possible to discern both indifferent and enthusiastic engagements with nation/national identity by transnational corporations. In this regard, and as pointed out by both anonymous reviewers, there are times when nation-based nostalgia do not serve the logics of profit, and instead more cosmopolitan strategies are deployed. Previously we discussed these are multivocal transnationalisms often centered on global anthems (at times incorporating multiple, and often highly superficial, local sensibilities) that seek to engage a multitude of markets at one and the same time. For sure, a feature of major sporting tournaments is their cosmopolitanism and the often competing discourses between nation and world (or more accurately, cosmopolitan or universal 'values'). In this essay though we focus on the corporate inspired constitution of nation through nostalgic reference to 1966.

^{vi} We would like to thank one of the anonymous reviewers for pointing out that one of the most significant corporations involved with the World Cup, at least in the UK, is the BBC. Our focus in this paper is located in the

ways in which the signifiers of 66—as commercial symbols/products—circulated within an increasingly corporatized cultural nation during this ephemeral moment.

^{vii} In this game, Argentina's captain Rattin was sent-off, remonstrated with the referee, and tore a Union Jack flag from a spectator which he scrunched in his hand. England manager, Alf Ramsey, called the Argentinians 'animals' and intervened at the final whistle to stop players exchanging shirts (Albarcres et. al., 2001).

^{viii} In this reincarnation, titled 3 Lions 2010, the song features soprano Olivia Safe, (ex-)Take That solo artist and English 'icon' Robbie Williams, and, 'outrageous comedian' Russell Brand

^{ix} For sure, such processes were well underway, and were in part based on the increased regulation and commodification of the game as part of the Taylor report, the creation of the Premier League, and, the impact of Rupert Murdoch (in the guise of BSkyB).

^x We are referring here to the time period under consideration in this article, the build up to the 2010 world cup.

^{xi} The parodic intent of the player 69 insignia on the shorts (the second six turned asunder), over the knee socks and back of the t-shirt is not lost as *Ann Summers* equates being patriotic and looking 'drop dead sexy'. In case one did not understand the subtle reference to the vibrator, the poster was designed in the style of an old 'sports card' and depicts the name 'Rampant Rabbit'.

^{xiii} According to Brown (2014), 10 million St George Cross flag were sold during the 2006 World Cup, see also <http://www.unionjackwear.co.uk/>

^{xiii} Most recently, in October 2012, the new national football centre of excellence for the England national team, 'St George's Park.'

^{xiv} Of course, such narratives are perhaps at one and the same time reinforced and disrupted by high-profile debates circulating around racism within the game, and exemplified in both the Louis Suarez & John Terry racism allegations and charges.

^{xv} According to the Umbro campaign team, the intention was "simply to show the many faces and ethnicities making up today's multicultural England. The image is an inspiring picture of England early in this new century; proudly multicultural and fascinatingly diverse" (Hall, 2009). All too predictable responses from white nationalists, represented at the online community 'Stormfront', suggested that advert was extremely offensive, induced physical sickness, and was full of 'foreigners' wearing English shirts. There were also comments that decried the loss of grandfathers who had 'fought for 'this' and links back to the 1966 world cup winning team who were 'all white' (see <http://www.stormfront.org/forum/t715124/>).

^{xvi} Take, for example, the regular 'chav' nights in which the lower working class are parodied and pathologised at a number of middle-/upper-class higher education institutions. For one example, see: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1324886/Oxford-University-lacrosse-team-dress-babies-chavs-initiation-ceremony.html>

^{xvii} We appreciate that discussion of the British male 'chav' is suggestive of a partial picture of class segregation and subordination (e.g. Ginsburgh, 2012; Hanley, 2011; Kenny, 2012). 'Chav' is, as Ginsburgh points out in her review of Owen Jones book 'Chav', a representation that does not encompass the realities or diversity of the working class, let alone its articulation with multi-ethnicities.

^{xviii} As but one example, see <http://www.yourcarisshit.com/>

^{xix} There are many other groups who could be interpellated by these corporo-cultural discourses, including for example, political parties such as UKIP whom would likely garner some sort of symbolic capital from the display of the St George's cross and utilize this in reframing 'policy' issues as related to immigration and multiculturalism (which, could be argued, conveniently ensures the invisibility of 'race' or racisms).

^{xx} The 'sporting summer of 2012' encompassed the London 2012 Olympic Games, British victories in the Tour De France (cycling), the US Open (tennis), and the English national team's involvement in the Euro 2012 football tournament. The moment of 'hot' nationalism was exacerbated given the celebrations for the Queen's Jubilee celebrations which also took place during the summer of 2012

^{xxi} A seemingly endless list of commercially produced official and unofficial souvineers to differing degrees depicted tradition, the past, the flag, national signifiers, London monuments and so on to capitalize on (ephemeral) attachments to nation during the 'sporting summer' of 2012; from companies as diverse as *Anne Summers*, *Fairy Liquid*, *Macleans*, *Tampax*, *British Petroleum*, *PG Tips*, and *Pampers*, to name merely a few.