ANALYZING “THE PAUL FINEBAUM SHOW”: SPORT MEDIA AND REPRESENTATIONS OF THE AMERICAN SOUTH

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ABSTRACT

The American South has been, historically, a region that is most sharply at odds with the rest of the United States (Grantham, 1994). Stereotypical representations of the South paint the region as backward, racist, unintelligent, lazy, and violent (Jansson, 2003 & 2005). These representations are created and fostered by many representational devices, including sport. Sports in the South, particularly college football and NASCAR, and the representations they create have been studied by many (Newman, 2005; Newman & Giardina, 2008; White, 2010) to reveal that sport and sport media aid in creating these stereotyped images of the American South. With this in mind, this study seeks to examine the critical roles of sport media in representing the American South through Southern football culture. Using Critical Discourse Analysis, it examines the discursive constructions of The Paul Finebaum Show, which is a nationally syndicated radio show that broadcasts daily on ESPN Radio and the SEC Network. Specifically, the theoretical framework of Orientalism (Said, 1978) is employed, and re-adapted in the form of internal Orientalism (Jansson, 2003 & 2005) to investigate the representations of college football fandom of the American South. The purpose is to reveal and critique sport media as a part of contemporary popular culture which participates in the knowledge construction of boundary, identity and culture, producing complex power relationships and stereotypes. This understanding of internal Orientalism is used to explore how Paul Finebaum and his radio show aid in creating an Other of the American South through the radio show’s representational power. In particular, three research questions are proposed:

1) What discursive knowledge about the southern college football culture is produced from the Paul Finebaum Show?
2) What specific discursive practices, techniques, and strategies are employed by Paul Finebaum to represent the southern college football culture?

3) Through the representations, how has *The Paul Finebaum Show* contributed to delineate an internalized Other of the American South in the sport media discourse?
INTRODUCTION

The sport of college football in the American South has become so ingrained in their society that it is almost a fantasy for those who hail from the region, a romanticized way for them to escape from reality. Almost all aspects of life, such as weddings and family events, are planned and scheduled around football in the South and those who do not run the risk of disapproval from guests and even absence of them so that they can watch football (Gumprecht, 2003). Some have even referenced football in the South as something that resembles a church, as Gibbs (2010) states this about tailgates at Auburn University, “Auburn sometimes does a better job of being the church than the church does. . . . At tailgates we welcome and feed strangers, something that almost sounds biblical” (p. 61-62). A strong sense of community and personal pride has been identified as being part of the Southern psyche, and football, at any level, is a major source of pride for communities (Dunn & Preston, 1991; Zelinsky, 2001). Football became such a religion in the South because it reflected regional pride and served as an antidote to negative publicity about the region being backward, dumb and uneducated (Weiss, 1990). As Flynn (2004) notes, college football in Alabama is of the utmost importance:

As a fiercely proud people who perpetually found themselves at or near the bottom of many quality-of-life lists, Alabamians found one measure where they often ranked at or near the top: the final college football poll. This conservative population would begrudge every cent levied on their property for education but would spend lavishly to finish in the top 10. This Bible-believing citizenry would mobilize politically to pulverize advocates of a state lottery for education but would blithely ignore coaches and alumni who broke NCAA rules. (p. 408-409).
These representations that have been formed, produced and acknowledge about the South gain their power through a variety of devices such as film, literature and mass media.

With this in mind, Orientalism, specifically internal Orientalism, is adopted as the theoretical framework for this study. At its core, Orientalism is the discourse in which western European cultures (i.e. the Occident) are able to manage and produce the Orient (i.e. Middle and Far East) in its contrasting image, personality and experience (Said, 1978; Jansson, 2003). Therefore, Orientalism is an imperialist epistemology that proposes that the West carries moral West carries moral, intellectual and cultural superiority over non-Western civilizations, and that the Orient and the Occident are fundamentally different (Hung, 2003; Jansson, 2003). The representational practice of Orientalism, Othering, is the process through which Orientalism is created and circulated. Through Othering, one is able to form a sense of self through “the symbolic and unconscious relations which the young child forges with a significant ‘Other’ which is outside – i.e. different from – itself” (Hall, 1997). In the Orientalist discourse, the East is constructed as an Other in opposition to the West; if the West is culturally, politically and economically speaking at the center of the world, the East is undeniably positioned at the periphery (Chang & Holt 1991; Wang 1997). Thus, the practices of Othering produce a violent and hostile agenda (Hall, 1997).

Internal Orientalism is rooted in the overarching framework of Orientalism and has been discussed by many (Jansson, 2003, 2005, 2010; Schein, 1997; Eriksson, 2010; Johnson & Coleman, 2012; Winders, 2005; Yan & Santos, 2009). According to Jansson (2003) internal Orientalism involves “the othering of a (relatively) weak region by a more powerful region (or regions) within the state” (p. 296). Therefore, the main characteristic
of internal Orientalism is that it operates within the boundaries of a state and differs from the geographic denotations of Said’s Orientalism. Internal Orientalism is first and foremost grounded in the material domination of the strong regions over the weak region (Jansson, 2003; Hechter, 1975). While internal Orientalism has been studied in many contexts in different areas of the world (Richardson, 2008; Eriksson, 2010; Johnson & Coleman, 2012; Dickie, 1999), the American South has been a major focus of the internal Orientalist discourse in cultural studies (Jansson, 2003, 2005, 2010; Sharpe, 1995; Wilson, 1981; Doty, 1996; Nayak & Malone, 2009; Newman, 2007; Winders, 2005). For instance, the Other of the American South contains an “emotionally loaded geographic idea” (p. 203) where, for centuries, the imagined space of “the South” has “embodied the antithesis of what it means to be American” (Jansson, 2010, p. 203). Typical representations of the South paint the region as racist, backward, poor, uneducated, intolerant and premodern. These representations of the South are founded in the practices of Othering, which are embedded in, created by, and circulated by representations in various forms, including sport media.

In this study, internal Orientalism is used to examine The Paul Finebaum Show, a nationally syndicated radio show, produced by ESPN, which broadcasts every afternoon across the network’s radio airwaves and even has its own television slot on ESPN’s Southeastern Conference (SEC) Network. The show allows for fans to call in and discuss a variety of topics with Finebaum about their respective SEC teams and controversial issues that are occurring around the conference. The show is hosted by Paul Finebaum, a University of Tennessee graduate, who got his start in journalism in 1980 as a columnist with the Birmingham Gazette before making the switch to radio in 2001 with the launch
of the Paul Finebaum Radio Network (The Paul Finebaum Show, 2014). Since then, Finebaum’s show helped launch the SEC Network in August of 2014 and was vital in the continued success of the network. According to Charlie Hussey, an associate commissioner for the SEC, *The Paul Finebaum Show* along with *SEC Nation* and *SEC Now* are the main reasons for the network’s huge success in its first nine months (Pierre, 2015). The main topic of discussion on Finebaum’s show centers around one thing: SEC football.

As stated earlier, college football in the South is an immensely popular event which people base their lives around. The possible reason for *The Paul Finebaum Show*’s emerging success is the variety of callers and the personalities of these callers that bring entertainment to the show and its listeners. Finebaum has a loyal band of callers and fans that call in nearly everyday, allowing him to develop relationships with them that sometimes lead to interesting conversations, but also give way for high-spirited debates and disagreements amongst him and his callers. Perhaps some of his more popular callers are those who are fans of the University of Alabama and Auburn University, a spirited, cross-state rivalry that is often talked about on the show and thoroughly enjoyed by its fans and listeners (Schlabach, 2014). While the show’s antics and heated arguments may seem like entertainment to its listeners, media outlets outside of the South and on the national stage have shown signs of mockery toward *The Paul Finebaum Show*, its callers, SEC football, and the culture of the American South. Media have continually analyzed the show and its callers to create a representation of the lifestyles and culture of the southern United States. By doing this, media outside of the South may have alienated the culture and identity of the South as a whole by representing the show, its callers and its
subject content in a light that shows stereotypical symbol of the American South. However, Paul Finebaum facilitates these representations through various practices and techniques that directly contribute to the process of Othering through the sport media discourse. Therefore, by using internal Orientalism as the theoretical framework, this paper will analyze *The Paul Finebaum Show* using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to demonstrate how the sport media discourse has aided in potentially creating an Other of the South. CDA focuses on finding an understanding of the power dynamics ingrained in social and cultural practices by analyzing the relationship between “communicative practices and the larger social contexts of power in which they are produced, circulated and consumed” (Yan & Santos, 2009, p. 300). The representations created by Paul Finebaum and his radio show have raised some interesting questions such as: how does Paul Finebaum aid in the process of creating an Other of the American South? How does the representational power of *The Paul Finebaum Show* effect the stereotypical image of an American Southerner? Through this understanding, CDA is a useful methodology to analyze *The Paul Finebaum Show*, its role in the sport media discourse, and its ability to create cultural and societal representations of the American South.

Through the examination of the sport media discourse via *The Paul Finebaum Show*, and the utilization of Critical Discourse Analysis the study seeks to make three major contributions: (a). the use of internal Orientalism enriches the sport literature by examining the representational power of sport media; (b). in terms of the methodological approach, it seeks to expand the discussion of Critical Discourse Analysis in sport through analyzing the sport media discourse; (c). in regards to *The Paul Finebaum Show*,
it serves to produce critical knowledge about the representational themes it produces about college football culture in the American South.
CHAPTER 1: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

1.1 Orientalism: Dynamics of Representation, Othering, and Power

Orientalism is “the ideological suppositions, images and fantasies about a currently important and politically urgent region of the world called the ‘Orient’” (Said, 1978). Orientalism, therefore, is an imperialist epistemology, which assumes that the differences between Western and Eastern civilizations are ontological (Said 1978). It proposes that the West carries moral, intellectual and cultural superiority over non-Western civilizations, and that the Orient and the Occident are fundamentally different (Hung, 2003; Jansson, 2003). Through Orientalism, the Orient has been used to define the West form the East in its contrasting image, personality, idea and experience through images and fantasies reproduced by the western world (Jansson, 2003).

Central to Orientalism is the representational practice of Othering, through which Orientalism is created and circulated. Hall (1997) relates the idea of the Other back to a Freudian concept, “subjectivity can only arise and a sense of ‘self’ be formed through the symbolic and unconscious relations which the young child forges with a significant ‘Other’ which is outside – i.e. different from – itself.” In the Orientalist discourse, the East is constructed as an Other in opposition to the West; if the West is culturally, politically and economically speaking at the center of the world, the East is undeniably positioned at the periphery (Chang & Holt 1991; Wang 1997). The practices of Othering thus inherently carry a hostile and violent agenda (Hall, 1997). Symbolically, the West is civilized, masculine, advanced, normative, and rational while the East is cruel, sly, backward, mysterious, exotic, and irrational (Echtner & Prasad, 2003; Said, 1978); implying that the Orient’s socio-cultural realities are truly different from the West (Said
1994). Thus, by defining the Orient, Orientalism functions as discursive practices of domination used to “justify the exploration, exploitation, colonization, and ‘civilization’ of the East” (Echtner & Prasad, 2003, p. 667). Furthermore, such binary oppositions of Occidental/Oriental are mutually defining and reflexive. That is, the idea of Othering is a part of self-inscribed knowledge where the Other is fundamental to the constitution of the self (Hall, 1997). As stated by Hall (1997), we need “difference” because we can only “construct meaning through a dialogue with the Other” (P. 329) thus, ironically, Orientalism is also the “life force of Western self-identification” (Sardar 1999, p. 13). Therefore, the emergence and practice of Orientalism has, in fact, substantially illuminated Western self-subjectivities and self-positionings in the world order.

The practices of Othering are embedded in, created by, and circulated by representations in various forms. According to Hall (1997), representation is the production of meaning through language, discourse and image in ongoing processes of media dynamics. Indeed, considering that things by themselves don’t have single, fixed or unchanging meaning, it is by the uses of things, as well as what people see, think, and feel about them – essentially, how people represent them- that people give meanings to them (Hall, 2002). Meanings embedded in the representations, as such, consist of power, ideology, values, and biases (Kellner & Durham, 2001). On one hand, representations, be they textual or visual, are conscious or unconscious tools, through the performances of which, ideological forces are endowed with specific contexts, constituents, and a public life (Kellner & Durham, 2001). On the other hand, as a result of the construction of representations, ideological subjectivities are produced contextually. In a broad sense, therefore, ideologies reproduce social domination, as they legitimate prevailing groups
over subordinate ones, and help replicate the existing inequalities and hierarchies of power upon contingent circumstances. Using this to examine the dynamics of representing the Orient, it is to construct it, invent it, and thus to eventually exercise power over it (Said, 1978). Meanwhile, various forms of media, cultural terrains, and social-economic discourses all come to serve as a part of the representational mechanism, reinforcing the meanings produced and exchanged between individuals. That is, the discourse of Orientalism must be seen as a power struggle in the “overlapping political, economic and cultural spheres” (Jansson 2005). In this process, sport must also be seen as playing a critical role in contributing to Othering.

According to Anderson (2010), practices of Othering are prevalent in sport as “sport teaches us to view the opposing team as the enemy, and it teaches us to look for differences or faults with other teams, or to create them if they do not exist” (p. 145). Therefore, sport displays an agenda where judging and creating others are prevalent. These judgments create representations of groups and potentially create different versions of an Other through sport. While sport itself is a good avenue to study Orientalism, sport media can also be effective in studying the discourse. Sport media produce representations of sport which can help in assisting the practices of Othering in sport, therefore promoting the fundamental ideals of the discourse. Kim (2012) explored how Korean women golfers were portrayed in both U.S. and Korean news media articles. In her examination of U.S. media, she discovered that Korean women golfers were “constructed as a racialized and gendered Other within the context of Orientalism” and that the knowledge production of the media helped to ensure global white supremacy. Through this representation, media was seen as creating “de-sexualized and hyper-
gendered representations” of the Korean women golfers (Kim, 2012). Richardson (2008) explained that when representing anything in a journalistic form, journalists need to be aware that they are responsible for the representation they create about any given topic. Through this, consumers of media observe the subject as an Other, thereby normalizing and legitimizing the representation of the Other (Richardson, 2008; Foucault, 1995). In this process sport media participates in Orientalism to construct representations of sport, sport media and sport imagery. However, this approach is not just isolated to a representation of Korean women golfers, but rather something that can applied to a wider realm of sport. U.S. sport media have “practical and suggestive distinctions based on binary dualisms” that are “common and frequent structures of Othering,” (Kim, 2012, p. 126). In addition, U.S. sport media also features spoken and non-spoken narratives that features the “presence of the Other that mirrors the opposite side of the other” (p. 126) that helps to construct this binary opposition between two groups of people (i.e. the United States and Korea) (Kim, 2012). Through these structures of Othering, U.S. sport media create direct representations of Orientalism.

Furthermore, it is exactly through the discursive construction of representation that meanings and knowledge are created and circulated, which become regime of truth (Hall, 1997). So to speak, through a range of rhetorical and visual construction strategies, specific socio-political views and accounts are naturalized and rendered as truthful. Such regime of truth holds power, which, as in the term of Costa (1997), in postcolonial times the act of power has increasingly taken the form of representation—the power of “‘textual attitude’” (Costa, 1997). That is, while power is understood in terms of economic exploits, as well as physical coercion, power can also be seen from broader cultural and
symbolic terms, such as having the power to represent someone or something a certain way (Hall, 1997). According to Foucault, knowledge is always a form of power, and that power is “implicated in the questions of whether and in what circumstances knowledge is to be applied or not” (Hall, 1997). Not only does “power and knowledge directly imply one another”, but also that “power constitutes and perpetuates itself through knowledge” (Foucault, 1995; Richardson, 2008). In the case of Orientalism, power participates in the dialectic process in producing new discourses, new kinds of knowledge (i.e. Orientalism), new subjects of knowledge (the Orient), and helps to shape new practices and institutions (Hall, 1997). Discourse provides “certain attitudes” about ones’ self and others, while also defining how people are classified, disciplined, and normalized in a socially constructed society (Kim 2012; Foucault, 1988). As such, the practice of Orientalism becomes “…hegemonic in western countries and seems natural and displaces other interpretations of experience,” (Jansson, 2003, p. 295). Gramsci defined the concept of hegemony in a non-totalitarian society, where some cultural forms dominate over others, as an “indispensable concept for any understanding of cultural life in the industrial West” (Said, 1978, p. 7). Through hegemony, “or rather the result of cultural hegemony at work,” is where Orientalism gains its “durability and strength” (Said. 1978, p. 7).

1.2 Internal Orientalism

Rooted within the overarching framework of Orientalism, the idea of internal Orientalism has been proposed and discussed by many (Jansson, 2003, 2005, 2010; Schein, 1997; Eriksson, 2010; Johnson & Coleman, 2012; Winders, 2005; Yan & Santos, 2009). The concept of internal Orientalism is defined by Jansson (2003) as involving “the othering of a (relatively) weak region by a more powerful region (or regions) within the
state” (p. 296). The characteristic of internal Orientalism as an ideology that operates within the boundaries of a state makes it differ from the geographic denotations of Said’s Orientalism. Indeed, there is always an inherent spatial dimension in the definitions of the Other (Paasi, 1996). A lineage of studies has explored how the variants of Orientalism practice economic, cultural and political domination by operating within varied geographic boundaries: “domestic Orientalism” (Piterberg, 1996), “Oriental Orientalism” (Gladney, 1994), “nesting Orientalisms” (Bakic’-Hayden, 1995) and “internal Orientalism” (Jansson, 2003, 2005, 2010; Schein, 1997; Winders, 2005; Zeydanlıoğlu, 2008). The content of Internally Orientalist practices profoundly involves a wide range of subjects: people, culture, economic developments, and so forth. In Jansson’s (2003) words, whereas the subordinated region would certainly be construed as different, so as to set it apart from the rest of the state, the people of the subordinate region may even be characterized as a different “race,” with distinct physical characteristics. Therefore, the process of Othering in internal Orientalism involves a “host of concomitant processes that work together to produce economically and culturally differentiated regions” (Johnson & Coleman, 2012, p. 2).

According to Jansson (2003, 2005), the internal Orientalism is first and foremost grounded in material domination of the strong regions over the weak region (Jansson, 2003; Hechter, 1975). Economic disparities and marginalization are contemporaneous and dialectical processes where binary perceptions of ‘self’ and ‘other’ arise (Johnson & Coleman, 2012). For instance, in Richardson’s (2008) analysis of Jane-Finch, a small rural town in Canada, poverty intertwined with fear for high crime rates have created an internally Orientalized other - an area that “breeds vandalism” and as a space “where
gangs rule” (Richardson, 2008). In a similar fashion, the traditionally less developed Swedish North is viewed as “different in contrast to a modern and normal ‘us.’ . . as the other is both idealized and marginalized; it is represented as more ‘authentic’ but also as less developed and sophisticated,” (Eriksson, 2010, p. 3). Those who practice Othering through internal Orientalism are able to create these identities via the daily activities of the “academy, media, political system, entertainment industry and other institutions” (Jansson, 2005, p. 270) or representations that carry power, those with dominance over the Other.

Furthermore, the practices of Internal Orientalism rely on consistent and common imagery and vocabulary that writers, artists, scholars, business leaders, and government officials all draw upon in producing their representations of the inferior region (Jansson, 2003). As in Orientalism, the image of the subordinate region as inferior to and different from the rest is produced and re-produced through texts and images as Orientalist agents (Schein, 1997, p. 77). According to Johnson and Coleman (2012), this process of making internally Orientalized representations is often rooted in an extensive historical context – ‘othering’ experiences extend across both space and time. Indeed, as Paasi (2002) argues, Orientalism as a post-colonial discourse is based upon historically contingent practices and discourses where values have been given to both material and symbolic worlds. In their study of Italy, it is revealed that stigmatized beliefs about Sicily – its backwardness, clientelistic style of politics, organized crime - can be traced back to mid nineteenth century (Johnson & Coleman, 2012). In a continued process of cultural construction to this day, southern Italy has been rendered as a place of “untamed alterity” compared to
other regions in Italy (Dickie, 1999, p.63), that “Italy will have difficulty rising about the backwardness of its South” (Johnson & Coleman, 2012, p. 17).

A dialectic relationship emerges in the practices of internal Orientalism. That is, when those in power project internal Orientalism, those “inwards” the “native” immediately become an Other that are targets of “projects of modernity and progress” (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2008, p. 3). As in Jansson’s (2003) words, “the latter [representations] would also be viewed as an object for study, as rational, scientific methods and techniques are applied to study the region’s problems with the hopes of bringing it into line with the national standard” (p.297). On the other hand, scholars have also noted the relevance of internal Others in developing a national sense of Self (Jewitt 1995; Yiftachel 1998; MacLaughlin 1999; Agnew 2000; Knippenberg 2002). That is, an “internal solidarity or cultural commonality” is also based upon simultaneously on the contrasts created in relation to others. Through this process, certain regions become “repositories for undesirable national traits as part of a dialectical process of nation- and region-building” (Johnson & Coleman, 2012, p. 3). In addition, the researchers add that the cultural and economic marginalizations of a subordinate region are “contemporaneous and dialectical processes” (p. 16). This national sense of self can also solidify the potential of unmasking the uneven distribution of political and economic power between the nation and the Othered region (Eriksson, 2010). In relation to the dialectic relationship between the American North and South, Grant (2000) explains that scholars have come to accept that “the North = good” and “the South = bad” while neglecting the idea of why the North became good in the first place. Because of this, the Other could feel a sense of belonging to both the Othered region and the national state, causing the
relationship between the two to be more complex (Jansson, 2003; Kaplan & Herb, 1999). This could also cause state fragmentation, as the residents of the Othered region come to resent the identities that have been placed upon them, causing them to assemble around secessionist movements (Jansson, 2003).

The American South has been a major focus of the internal Orientalist discourse in cultural studies (Jansson, 2003, 2005, 2010; Sharpe, 1995; Wilson, 1981; Doty, 1996; Nayak & Malone, 2009; Newman, 2007; Winders, 2005). In the United States, “the South” is and has been positioned as an archetypal “internal spatial Other” by creating a privileged identity for those who practice the Othering through space and representations (Jansson, 2003, p. 298). “The South” in popular depictions of the region contains an “emotionally loaded geographic idea” (p. 203) where, for centuries, the imagined space of “the South” has “embodied the antithesis of what it means to be American” (Jansson, 2010, p. 203). Stereotypical representations of the South have portrayed the region as racist, backward, poor, uneducated, intolerant and premodern. In a binary fashion, this depiction of white “Southerners” as racist, intolerant, poor and xenophobic help to produce an identity for “the North” of being tolerant, progressive, enlightened and prosperous (Zinn, 1964; Van Woodward, 1971; Griffin, 1995). In addition, the region has also been seen as “provincial, conservative, fundamentalist, nativist, violent, conformist, [and] militarist” (Zinn 1964, p. 217). While internal Orientalism may be applied to other geographic scopes in the United States, “the South has been the region most sharply at odds with the rest of the nation. No other part of the United States has projected such a clear-cut sectional image” (Grantham, 1994, p. xv) and the South has served the role of
the internal other most conveniently and effectively (Shapiro, 1978; Batteau &

To begin with, representations of race constitute an important facet. According
Niemeyer (2005), the region “maintains a tainted history . . . one filled with racially-
motivated violence and oppression, a heritage of hatred” (p. 2, quoted in Newman 2007,
p. 335). Jansson (2005) discusses the movie *Mississippi Burning* and shows how the
American South is viewed through a racist lens and created as an Other via popular
media (i.e. film). According to him, the film has “admitted African Americans into the
idea of the South mainly as a collective prop to be used or abused by white Southerners
depending on the degree to which the latter group has achieved some measure of
analyzes that the South is represented as “a landscape of violence and death, intolerance
and hatred, corruption and complicity” (p. 272). Here we see the power that media,
through film, can have in creating an Other for a region of the world and have
specifically done so in creating this view of the American South. These representations of
the South as a racist region help to show the dialectic relationship with the North, as
Peach (2011) questions the “cultural construction of blackness as an ‘other,’” and
suggests that “whiteness itself subsequently became a creation of this ‘othering’” (p. 242)
in the Southern United States. Through this, the South is deeply rooted in a racialized
past that is continuously reinforced through media and its representations.

Furthermore, the Othering has also been practiced through representing the South
as culturally backward and economically inferior. Winders (2005) examined how
Northern writers in the 19th century viewed the South and explained that writers tended to
view the South as “a backward decadent” while viewing the North as a “progressive active” (p. 396). These writings portrayed lifestyle in the South as backward and efforts to civilize the region did not come about until the emancipation of the slaves following the Civil War. This caused states of civilization (the North) and backwardness (the South) to be established which entangled “the mutually defining opposition that is supposed to set them apart” (Young, 1995, p. 32). Through this understanding, the modernity of the North looked forward, while the backwardness of the South looked to never improve (Jansson, 2003). Furthermore, past research has shown perceptions of the American South as being uneducated and unintelligent (Clark, et. al., 2011; Campbell-Kibler, 2007; Reed, 1974). Rurality in the American South has been referred to as a “hillbilly” lifestyle by representing them as dumb and backward (DeKeseredy & Schwarz, 2009). With this hillbilly culture, scholars have studied how the South has been viewed as a culture where the majority of people are “illiterate and ignorant, with the intelligence of morons” (Harkins, 2003, p. 35). In a study about NASCAR and its effect on the American South, Newman and Giardina (2008) explain how NASCAR fans in the South use language on products such as shirts to project their values. Some of this language included, “I love the flag and car racin’,” “We may be politically incorrect, but we vote too,” and “Hey ya’ll, remember, racin’ is a Southern sport.” In doing so, it reveals the South’s lack of intelligence through improper grammar and Southern slang. This echoes what Campbell-Kibler (2007) examines when she discovers that American South accents often fell into the domain of uneducated and sloppy. In Jansson’s (2003) analysis of W.J. Cash’s *The Mind of the South* he lists the characteristics that are used to describe the American South.
throughout the book which included adjectives such as simple-minded, lazy and immobile, while the North are described as ingenious, energetic and mobile.

Finally, from an economic perspective the American South represents a “poor, rural” lifestyle (Jansson, 2003; Winders, 2005; Harkins, 2003). According to Smith (1998), the South’s agriculture economy was unable to compete with the North economically and the two regions “by virtue of their social, economic, and political differences, were placed on conflicting trajectories that made the Civil War ‘irreplaceable’” (p. 17; Genovese, 1989, p. 8). Through this, southerners seek an “alternate route to modernity” by rejecting capitalist internalization and embracing their economic tendencies (Genovese, 1992, p. 5; Smith, 1998, p. 23). This economic perception of the South was also penetrated in literary writings, as poor white Southerners were labeled as “degenerates” and “white trash” which further helped the Northern writers to express to their readers that this kind of behavior was not prevalent in the North (Winders, 2005). White southerners seem to be a popular depiction of a poor southern lifestyle as they were also described as “the weakest elements of the old backcountry population” (Cash, 1954, p. 36; Jansson, 2003). Furthermore, Stocking (1994) defines a mid-nineteenth century South as an area where there was a “correlation between color and civilization” (p. 14). However, poor white Southerners were out of place because at least Southern blacks “matched a civilizing mission and facilitated an understanding of the South” (Winders, 2005, p. 404; Stocking, 1994). An excerpt from Harkins (2003) demonstrates how the South was viewed inferior via the interconnectedness of their economic status in relation to other Southern characteristics:
… “poor whites” were the “laziest two-legged animals that walk erect on the face of the earth . . . [and exhibited] a natural stupidity or dullness of intellect that almost surpasses belief.” To abolitionists and proslavery ideologues alike, social propriety, and honor, the essential ingredients for political and spatial equality and thus should not be trusted with political decision-making. (p. 42).

These representations reinforce the different identities that are present within the United States. In fact, these direct representations are founded upon “summational statements” or generalizations about the region (i.e. South) that “paint all its residents with one brush” (Said, 1979, p. 255). The internal Orientalist discourse is also saturated with “declarations that encapsulate the whole through an analysis of one of its parts” (Jansson, 2003, p. 300). Therefore, through internal Orientalism, generalizations of the South are made by those in power (i.e. those outside of the Southern United States/dominant figures) about the Other (i.e. the American South) and that these representations (i.e. media, images, etc.) make it possible to view all those in the “Othered” region as the same with no unique identity. The region has long been considered the most distinctive in the country (Vance 1935; Woodward 1993; Frank 1999). As Agnew (1987, p. 89) notes, “the North” has traditionally been considered the mainstream of America, whereas “the South” has been isolated for its distinctiveness, and many argue that the region has maintained its distinctiveness in the present (Grantham 1995; Webster and Leib 2001). Through this understanding, practicing internal Orientalism in the United States involves constructing “the South” as a region where violence, racism, intolerance, poverty and other negative characteristics are dominant (Jansson, 2005).
Much like Orientalism, an important aspect of internal Orientalism is the creation of regional stereotypes. The stereotypes about the American South are often represented in our everyday lives and inscribe differences within the nation-state such that the Othered region is “constructed as different, a difference that tends to convey inferiority” (Morgan, 2001, p. 337; Jansson 2005, p. 268). Through these representations of the South, those who practice Othering (i.e. those outside of the Southern U.S.) are able to form perceptions about the American South that view them as inferior. So, by viewing themselves in power, those outside of the South are easily able to construct the South as fundamentally different and apart from themselves. Through these representational practices, internal Orientalism is consisted of a deeply embedded tradition, as well as continued representations where the South is perceived as “afflicted with various and sundry vices and defects” (Jansson, 2003, p. 297). In doing so, the complexities of the people and culture of the South are reduced into a homogenous oneness. It is important to note that “the South” is not just seen as different but also contrary to national norms (Woodward 1993; Grantham 1995), and it is this radical opposition to “American” values that expresses the structure of the internal orientalist binary. Through this process of Othering on the Southern United States it reinforces patterns of thinking about the South and allows internal Orientalism to gain its power (Jansson, 2003). This also produces an internal difference within states that is essential to the creation of a common purpose that is a defining feature of the modern state (Johnson & Coleman, 2012). Furthermore, through this process how internal Orientalism becomes “emplaced” and a penetrative reality exists in various forms of media and social imagination is critical (Schlottmann,
2003). With this understanding it is imperative to understand how sport media has contributed to the process.

**1.3 Sport Media and Practices of Othering**

Many have discussed the importance of critically analyzing sport media (McDonald & Birrell, 1999; Horne, 2006; Coakley & Pike, 2014; Jarvie, 2013), while the history and coverage of sport has been well documented and dominated by mass media (Boyle & Haynes, 2009; McChesney, 1989; Rowe, et. al., 1998). Sport and mass media have a symbiotic relationship where both benefit from each other via their successes. The increasing popularity of sport has been accompanied by a dramatic rise in the media coverage that sport has received. Each surge in the coverage of sport has taken place during a period in “which the mass media have sharply increased their penetration into the nooks and crannies of American social life” (McChesney, 1989, p. 49).

Partly due to this unique relationship, sport media has had a large influence on the way sport is consumed, discussed, and represented in society (Boyle & Haynes, 2009). Through the process of imbedding representations into the corners of American social life, sport media are reinforcing various different ideologies, such as racism, sexism, nationalism, and antagonistic symbolism, to their consumers. As stated earlier in the literature review, meanings are embedded in representations, whether they are textual or visual, and consist of power, ideology, values, and biases (Kellner & Durham, 2001). These representations created by sport media are conscious or unconscious tools, through the performances of which, ideological forces are endowed with specific contexts, constituents, and a public life (Kellner & Durham, 2001). In our social life, representations actively engage with ideological powers, which form cultural sites that
construct meanings, forming a dialectic relationship between representations and ideology (Yan, 2000). According to Stuart Hall (1997; 2002) the notion of representation is central to understanding projected cultural meanings in media content.

Boyle and Haynes (2009) explained how sport media representations helped to perceive China as a new world superpower in the coverage of the 2008 Olympics. Through Hall’s theory of representation, this perception of China would align with the ideology of nationalism and power, therefore through representations created by sport media, the effect that is reflected upon consumers is that of China as a superpower. Through this dialectic relationship between representation and ideology, this causes knowledge to be inherently reproduced about China and its domination, which has the power of sport media to become known as truth. Furthermore, research has been conducted on ways that sport media marginalizes female athletes (Daddario, 1994), the media’s role in stereotyping the construction of female athletes (Xi-Min, 2008) and how sport media potentially creates hegemonic masculinity when discussing baseball players (Trujillo, 1991). Through these representations of female athletes, sport media reinforce a sexist ideology via their power to produce knowledge and truth about the inferiority and femininity of female athletes compared to male athletes. The overarching theme in these articles is that sport media engage in ideologies that produce critical and complex knowledge about their subjects. This is the exact process that helps Orientalism to gain its power, proving sport media to be an important tool to study the discourse. These examples also constitute that sport media does play an ideological role in constructing and reproducing discourses centered on race, gender and nationality (Boyle & Haynes, 2009).
Particular to this study is how Othering is utilized and practiced in sport media. Representations created by sport media have the effect to project different ideological forces upon society, however these representations can also produce an evil and violent agenda about its subject, as such is the process of Othering. As stated earlier in the literature review, Othering is a representational practice of Orientalism, where Others are viewed as fundamentally and structurally different from themselves, in order to create an ideal representation of themselves. In particular, a study conducted by Jiwani (2008) that examined the Zinedene Zidane headbutt in the 2006 World Cup and how representations created by sport media viewed the incident through an Orientalist ideology is worth noting. The representations produced about Zidane viewed him as animal-like in order to produce an effect that linked his behavior to his violent heritage. Zidane’s parents migrated to France from Algeria before the Algerian War in 1953 and while Zidane was born and raised in France, his perception was still related to his violent ancestry and origins. Since the French-born soccer player had origins from a violent country, sport media viewed him as an “uncivilized other” and expected him to behave this way (Jiwani, 2008; Yan and Santos, 2009). For example, an excerpt from Jiwani’s paper describes Zidane following the incident:

Zinédine Zidane began life as a street footballer in La Castellane, the tough suburb of Marseille in which he grew up. He ended it last night as a street fighter in one of Europe’s most historic stadiums and in front of a worldwide audience of millions (Williams, 2006).

Through this representation it is possible to see how sport media can use Othering to create a representation of a subject that inherently harbors a particular ideological agenda.
Through this process, Othering has a representational form through sport media and knowledge about Zidane is inherently produced. This process gives Orientalism power through the media therefore having the power to assert itself as true (Hall, 1997). It is through this exact process that representations of the American South are created by *The Paul Finebaum Show*.

Similarly, a study about British newspaper coverage on the 2007 Cricket World Cup examined how the media portrayed Muslim and Islam as “pre-modern and fundamentally violent” in ways that referenced and confirmed a “narrative of absolute and systematic difference between the East and the West,” surrounding the death of Pakistan coach Bob Woolmer (Malcom et al., 2010). Through this understanding, media were able to create a fearful effect about Muslim and Islam cultures, which viewed them as violent and fundamentally different from the western world through “Orientalism and Islamaphobia” (Malcom, et. al., p. 217). This process of Othering helped to produce a knowledge structure of violence and fear about Muslim and Islam religions in a post 9/11 tragedy-ridden world where questions about the Middle East were prevalent. In addition, Malcom (2010) also discovered that Australian press coverage of the Pakistan cricket team had similar results to the representations of Muslim and Islam at the 2007 Cricket World Cup.

Sport media also actively engages in making ideological representations of the American South. In particular, representations created about NASCAR and football in the South by sport media are crucial to understanding how the region has been viewed as an internal Other. As stated earlier, the American South has been a subject of internal Orientalism by being subjected to Othering via representations that paint the region as a
place where racial hatred, violence, backwardness and poorness reign. Sport in the South not only reinforces these ideologies through representational devices, but it is also underpinned through the practice of Othering, creating a dialectic relationship between representation and ideology. To begin with, the reinforcement of a racist past constitutes a characteristic dimension of sport in the American, further creating them as a subject of Othering. For example, Newman and Giardina (2008) studied how NASCAR and the southernization of the sport were critical to the South’s identity. According to the study, the South “stands for something in contemporary NASCAR” as it symbolizes and represents “the confluence of a romanticized history of white privilege” (Newman & Giardina, 2008, p. 492). NASCAR has also helped southerners to project a new “Southern-ness” that is constituted by old power structures whereby stock car racing aids in “Old south vernacular and racialized power structures” (Newman & Giardina, 2008, p. 492; Kammen, 1993).

In addition, college football has also helped to reinforce this racist ideology as White (2010) discussed the case of the 1962 Gator Bowl, which featured the University of Florida (UF) and Pennsylvania State University (PSU). UF’s team was not yet integrated at the time and Penn State’s team featured an African-American player who was in the running for the Heisman Trophy that season. The school helped to reinforce a racialized ideology by wearing the Confederate Flag on their helmets for the game and the playing of “Dixie”, a song that represents the South’s old ideology, by the marching band. The team’s use of the Confederate Flag “visually represented the region’s reaction to desegregation” (p. 481) and the use of Confederate symbols and the game-day playing of “Dixie” allowed fraternity activities to reinforce “Old South ideology as something
inherent to the college experience” (White, 2010, p. 484). Through this example, coupled with the popularity of the flag at NASCAR races where “Confederate flags outnumber African-American fans,” (Newman & Giardina, p. 479) a nationalist ideology appears through the use of symbolism that places the South as the subject of Othering. The use of the flag and “Dixie” help sports to represent “Old South” ideals that aid in the region’s identity formation. Through this nationalist ideology, these representations of Southern sport create an effect where the American South is viewed as a region of power, whose lifestyle and concepts are separate from the rest of the United States. Meanwhile, the knowledge produced through these representations becomes internalized and subjected to the process of Othering to create an image of the South and its differentness from the rest of the country. These representations of sport in the American South, constructed by the process of Othering, directly demonstrate that racist ideological forces have the potential to be re-invoked through symbolism and nationalism.

Furthermore, SEC football culture helps to reinforce the antagonistic relationship between the North and the South. As stated by Jansson (2003, 2005) earlier, internal Orientalism is first and foremost grounded in material domination of the strong regions over the weak region (Jansson, 2003; Hechter, 1975). Therefore, because of this mentality, the South again becomes the subject of Othering through the ideological suppositions that are placed upon them and must combat against these representations. The popularization can be contributed to the sport’s violent nature and the South’s long history of violence. “The Southern tradition of violence is one key to understanding the region’s love for football” (Stand-Gravois, 2012, p. 41). In fact, Dunn and Preston (1991) stated the South’s passion for football may be acting out of “a need to express themselves
in a violent manner” (p. 198) and that football, one of America’s most violent sports, has had its greatest following in a region that has “historically embraced violence as an accepted means of self-expression” (p. 199). This history of violence in the South has resulted in Southerners feelings of persecution and insignificance, in which their worldview denies personal responsibility and views outsiders as threats, therefore justifying their need for domination in sport (Hackney, 1969). This assertion of physical dominance is directly correlated with the South’s antagonistic relationship with the North in order for them to defend their honor and defeat the North in some aspect of life. This representation of the South honoring football for its violence directly contributes to the process of Othering by placing a socially backward mentality on the South.

In addition to violence and asserting physical dominance, a strong sense of community and personal pride has been identified as being part of the Southern psyche and football in the South, whether it be high school, collegiate or professional, can be a major source of pride for communities and has major economic potential (Dunn & Preston, 1991; Zelinsky, 2001). According to Weiss (1990), southerners likely embraced the sport because it reflected regional pride and served as an antidote to negative publicity about the region. The South knew of their long-time national inferiority and needed something to ease the pain, and their dominance in football helped (Stand-Gravois, 2012; Hart, 1967). Through the representation of football dominance in the South, the region is able to antagonistically compete with the North, which, as stated earlier, is viewed as progressive, educated and economically sound, while the South is not. However, through this process, the South still becomes a subject of the Other because the ideological forces being represented paint the region with athletic
domination, as compared to the progressiveness of the North (Griffin, 1995). Therefore, through the South’s dominance in sport an emergent South has expanded and become reified through various media platforms (i.e. news media, film, television, print media, etc.) and has brought a representation upon the South that has defined “what it means to be a Southerner” (Cash, 1941/1991; Faust, 1988; Foster, 1987; Hale, 1999; Hoelscher, 2003; Hufford, 2002; T. McPherson, 2003; Williamson, 1984). As seen in the examples above, central to all of these forms of representation are the constructions of the regime of truth (Rose, 2001). Through a process of rhetorical and visual construction strategies, specific socio-political views and accounts are accustomed and are observed as truthful.

1.4 Sport Talk Radio

Sport talk radio has experienced rapid growth and popularity in the United States, where hosts and callers alike tease out race, class and gendered implications and it has become a point of discussion amongst scholars and fans alike as the format of these shows have become increasingly popular in the last decade (Nylund, 2004; Gameson, 1999). Sports talk radio legislates its “White hegemony via hypermasculine posing, forcible opinions, and loud mouth shouting,” (Goldberg, 1998). In addition, it “pontificates, moralizes, politicizes, commercializes, and commodifies – as it entertains,” (Nylund, 2004). According to Trujillo (1991), a majority of sport talk radio listeners were male and allowed an emergent rhetorical vision with a focus on physical prowess, sturdiness, and competition which revealed “hegemonic masculinity.” Hegemonic masculinity is defined as “the culturally idealized form of masculine character” emphasizing “the connecting of masculinity to toughness and competitiveness,” as well as “the subordination of women” and “the marginalization of gay men,” (Connell, 1990;
Zagacki and Grano, 2005). Through this it is possible to see how sport talk radio can reaffirm this idea of hegemonic Orientalism because it represents an atmosphere in which men are viewed in power and women are not valued. Therefore, representations produced by sport talk radio shows reinforce masculinist ideologies, which produce social domination that legitimate prevailing groups over subordinate ones (i.e. males over females), and help to replicate the existing inequalities and hierarchies of power (Yan, 2009).

However, the masculinist culture of sports talk radio is popular amongst listeners. In a study analyzing The Jim Rome Show, a popular sports talk radio show at the time of the study, Nylund (2004), found that many of the listeners found Rome’s masculinist commentary to be humorous, as the most common response to the show was, “It’s entertaining.” While perceptions of Finebaum’s show are not particularly dominated by masculinity, it is often referred to as entertaining because of the variety of callers and their often “hillbilly” attitude and tone, which can be related to perceptions of Rome’s show. In addition, Wenner (1998) found that callers to Rome’s show, who submitted to the idea of masculine hegemony, were popular amongst listeners and found their comments to constitute comical moments of the show. However, calling into the show also helped men to strive for prestige within their peer groups, which could help to create an Othered identity between males and females.

1.5 Conclusion (Aim of Study)

Through the literature presented it is simple to see why sport, in particular sport media, is important to study the discourse that is Orientalism. However, while there is literature on how Orientalism has been studied in sport and how sport media have
practiced the discourse to create an Other in different situations, there has not been any literature that displays how sport media has created an Other in the United States. Sport media studies have predominantly focused on the racial and gender relations in North America (Kim, 2012; Yoon & Wilson, 2014; Bruce, 2004) with little to no studies on sport media’s role in the division between the Northern and Southern United States. In particular, there have not been studies that have examined how sport media have used internal Orientalism to create an Other of the American South. This Other of the American South has been examined through its construction and representation by Jansson (2003 and 2005) using internal Orientalism, but has not been viewed through the agenda of sport media and its representation of the American South. In addition, there is not any literature on sport talk radio’s construction of the American South or how representations of the region have been produced through sport media. Therefore, it is imperative that sport media’s agenda be studied in how they potentially create an Other of the American South through their representations of sport culture in the South.

Observing this gap of literature, this thesis seeks to propose that the following research questions should be addressed through an analysis of *The Paul Finebaum Show*:

1) What discursive knowledge about the southern college football culture is produced from the Paul Finebaum Show?

2) What specific discursive practices, techniques, strategies, and interactions with callers have been employed by Paul Finebaum to represent the southern college football culture?
3). Through the representations, how has The Paul Finebaum Show contributed to delineate an internalized Other of the American South in the sport media discourse?

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

2.1 Philosophical Approach of Critical Discourse Analysis

For the purpose of this research, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is used to analyze *The Paul Finebaum Show*. The idea of discourse is defined by Foucault (1972) as a body of knowledge composed of particular ways of talking and seeing, forms of subjectivity, and power relations. The same idea was emphasized by Hall (1997) as - “a group of statements which provide a language for talking about – a way of representing the knowledge about – a particular topic at a particular historical moment” (Hall, 1997, p. 72). CDA takes the belief that discourses are connected together through collective symbolism, where “cultural stereotypes are handed down and used collectively” (Drews et al., 1985, p. 265; Wodak & Meyer, 2015). It is through grasp the meanings of these collective symbols that we are able to visualize a “complete picture of societal reality and/or the political landscape of society” (Wodak & Meyer, 2015, p. 35) which provide us with representations and analytical themes, in particular by the media. As such, discourses exercise power as “they transport knowledge on which the collective and individual conscious feeds” (Wodak & Meter, 2015, P. 38), while the emerging knowledge becomes the foundation of individual and collective action that shapes reality.

As such, CDA is deeply rooted in the theoretical dynamics of discourse, knowledge and power, proposing that “power relations in society are discursive; that discourse constitutes society and culture; that discourse is ideological and historical; that the link between text and society is mediated; that discourse analysis is interpretative and
explanatory” (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Yan & Santos, 2009, p. 300;). On one hand, it seeks to critically analyze the relationships between “communicative practices and the larger social contexts of power in which they are produced, circulated and consumed” (Yan & Santos, 2009, p. 300). In the literature, CDA has been used to study various forms of media, including novels, newspapers, TV images, movies, pictures, among others (Teo, 2000; Unesco, 1997; Jansson, 2003; Van Dijk, 2001). In terms of specific practices of CDA, there is no prescribed, determined procedure (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). Indeed, Hall (1980) warns the danger of “high formalism” (p.69) in doing cultural studies research. Along the lines of analytical procedures, CDA emphasizes the importance to highlight the linguistic, visual, non-verbal and discursive nature of social relations, in particular by linking collective symbolism to various structural forces (Wodak & Meyer, 2015).

2.2 The Paul Finebaum Show

The Paul Finebaum show is a nationally syndicated radio show, produced by ESPN, which broadcasts every afternoon across the network’s radio airwaves and even has its own television slot on ESPN’s Southeastern Conference (SEC) Network. The show allows for fans to call in and discuss a variety of topics with Finebaum about their respective SEC teams and controversial issues that are occurring around the conference. The show is hosted by Paul Finebaum, who was born and raised in Memphis, Tennessee. Paul is also known for his Jewish heritage with his parents originally hailing from New York (Wideman, 2012). Finebaum is a University of Tennessee graduate, who got his start in journalism in 1980 as a columnist with the Birmingham Gazette before making the switch to radio in the mid-1980’s. His radio show started on a small radio network in
Birmingham, Alabama. Some have questioned Finebaum’s candidacy for being the voice of Southern football, as he has never played a down of organized football, prefers MSNBC to ESPN and has admitted that he has a hard time listening to sports talk radio (Wideman, 2012). Because of this admission and detachment from the main subject of the show, it causes some to question his credibility and comes with criticism. However, Finebaum does have immense knowledge of the players, coaches and fans of the SEC. During his show he makes sure this is known by frequently interrupting callers to make his point, debunk theirs or totally dismiss it. In addition, Finebaum often looks deadpan into the camera, throws his hands in the air, or shakes his head to show his disgust or disapproval of his callers’ opinions. Since he is the producer, he is able to do whatever he pleases when it comes to his callers by directing their responses through his probes, reactions and disapprovals. After becoming widely popular due to the antics of his callers and his production, Finebaum launched the Paul Finebaum Radio Network in 2001 and was broadcast to syndicated affiliates across the Southeast (The Paul Finebaum Show, 2014). After successful broadcast across the Southeast, *The Paul Finebaum Show* was picked up by ESPN in 2013 and broadcast nationally. Since then, Finebaum’s show helped launch the SEC Network in August of 2014 and was vital in the continued success of the network. According to Charlie Hussey, an associate commissioner for the SEC, *The Paul Finebaum Show* along with *SEC Nation* and *SEC Now* are the main reasons for the network’s huge success in its first nine months (Pierre, 2015).

The possible reason for *The Paul Finebaum Show*’s emerging popularity is the variety of callers and the personalities of these callers that bring entertainment to the show and its listeners. Finebaum has a loyal band of callers and fans that call in nearly
everyday, allowing him to develop relationships with them that sometimes lead to interesting conversations, but also give way for high-spirited debates and disagreements amongst him and his callers. While the show is nationally syndicated on ESPN Radio, the majority of Finebaum’s callers are from the Southeast and call in the show to talk about one thing: SEC football. Callers such as Legend, Larry, Jim from Tuscaloosa and Phyllis are frequent callers and fans of the University of Alabama, one of the most dominant teams in the SEC in recent history. However, callers such as Tammy and Charles from Reeltown represent the other side of the rivalry as they are fans of Alabama’s cross-state rival, Auburn University. The frequent callers often display characteristics such as loud-mouthed shouting which can lead to inaudible sentences, deep Southern accents, illogical predictions or assumptions, and traditional Southern values. Perhaps what is even more entertaining than a loud and obnoxious caller is the way that other callers react to their opinions. Oftentimes, these callers and others will get into arguments with one another, and Finebaum gives them a national platform to carry out these arguments. The extreme antics, vernacular, and language used by these callers makes the show interesting for everyone listening, even if you’re not a fan of SEC football.

2.3 Data Collection – philosophy, procedures, context

The data for this study includes three episodes of The Paul Finebaum Show broadcast on the television channel, the SEC Network, specifically the shows occurred on November 23, 2015, November 24, 2015 and November 27, 2015. All three episodes were broadcasted during the week before the Iron Bowl, an annual rivalry game between the University of Alabama and Auburn University. The Iron Bowl is often considered one of the greatest rivalries in college football, in what is arguably the best conference in
college football, the SEC. The rivalry between Alabama and Auburn dates back to 1893, indeed this rivalry has been a heated and much discussed topic on The Paul Finebaum Show.

The rational for choosing this particular Iron Bowl and these particular episodes are out of the philosophy of a phenomenological approach. The philosophy of phenomenology seeks to “avoid all misconstructions and impositions placed on experience in advance, whether these are drawn from religious or cultural traditions, from everyday common sense, or, indeed, from science itself” (Moran, 2001, p. 4). A central question of phenomenology considers the study of nature and exploring particular “phenomena” as they are experienced and perceived (Santos & Yan, 2009). That is, as in the words of Husserl (1913), phenomenology is concerned with “experiences that are intuitively seizable and analyzable in the pure generality of their essence, not experiences empirically perceived and treated as real facts, as experiences of human or animal experience in the phenomenal world that we posit as an empirical fact” (Moran, 2001, p. 1). Therefore, it is through this process that the researcher broadens and deepens the understanding of the range of “immediate [lived] experiences” (Goulding, 2005, p. 302; Spiegelberg, 1982). Through these experiences, phenomenology also seeks to discover “inherent essences” of these lived experiences (Li, 2000, p. 85) through the promotion of notions of methodological flexibility and coresearching (Crotty, 1998; Giorgi, 1997; Valle & Mohs, 1998). In this sense, a phenomenological experience occurs frequently, but the essence of the event is able to be understood from studying and examining one particular phenomena’s core themes, conclusions and repercussions.
With this understanding, the results of a phenomenological inquiry should then be a “direct description of our experience without taking account of its psychological origin” (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. vii); creating a critical reflection on conscious experience, rather than subconscious motivation, designed to uncover the essential features, or essence, of that experience (Jopling, 1996; Goulding, 2005). As such, by analyzing a particular phenomenon, researchers are able to understand the core essence of it, deduct conclusions from the phenomenon, and understand the core of similar phenomena that will occur (Moran, 2001). Through the lived human experiences and interactions on The Paul Finebaum Show, I will seek to find the essence of the show and its discussions centered around the Iron Bowl, how does it aid in creating an Other of the South, which will then reveal the core themes and meaning of the show and how it effects the phenomenological lifeworld (Goulding, 2005). The lifeworld is defined as the world in which “we as human beings among fellow human beings, experience culture and society, take a stand with regard to their objects, are influenced by them, and act on them” (Goulding, 2005, p. 302; Schutz, 1966) and the lifeworld consists of formal structures about which we are less explicitly aware of (Gregova, 1996).

From this understanding, every year’s Iron Bowl, its discussions, representations, and fans, contribute to the phenomenological lifeworld that help to reveal the core essence of the event. The Paul Finebaum Show helps to aid in this process as a representational tool for the Iron Bowl, its fans, and its discussions to create its own unique phenomenon. Therefore, each edition of the game has its own occurrences that are worth analyzing, reflecting upon and studying. In addition, each year Finebaum’s callers, such as Larry, Jim, Phyllis, Tammy and Charles, create a unique discussion about the
game that also warrants discussion and analysis to reveal the core purpose/essence of *The Paul Finebaum Show*, the Iron Bowl and Southern football culture.

Prior to the start of the 2015 season, *Sporting News* claimed that the Iron Bowl was the top conference game to watch this year and stated, “No college football rivalry runs hotter right now because both teams are consistent players for the College Football Playoff race” (Bender, 2015). While Auburn was out of that discussion for this year’s Iron Bowl, Alabama still had an opportunity at the playoff, so the game had big implications on both sides as Alabama looked to further solidify their candidacy for a spot in the playoff and Auburn looked to play a spoiler role. Past versions of the Iron Bowl have featured upsets including 2013, where Alabama was favored by 10 points, and Auburn won on a last second field goal returned for a touchdown as time expired (Chrapowicki, 2015). With rivalry games such as this, it gives fans of the winning team bragging rights for a full calendar year, no matter how good or bad their team is, and for fans of the losing team, a reason to enact hatred on opposing fans and wait for revenge the following year. The outcomes of these rivalry games serve as an antidote for discussions and arguments until the two teams meet again (Chrapowicki, 2015; Dosh, 2014). Much of the conversation and topics from these three episodes centered around rivalry week in the SEC, the last week of the regular season when every SEC team plays their rivals, including the Iron Bowl. These discussions triggered numerous opinions, arguments and predictions about rivalry games including outlandish remarks from the fans of Alabama and Auburn.

Finebaum’s show is broadcast simultaneously on the nationally syndicated ESPN Radio Network and the SEC Television Network, Monday through Friday from 1:00
P.M. to 5:00 P.M. ET. In order to obtain the data from these broadcasts I recorded the episodes broadcast on the SEC Network on my Digital Video Recorder (DVR) at home. This allowed me to stop, pause, rewind and fast-forward through the broadcasts, making them easily accessible for analysis and transcription of data. The data from the show has been fully transcribed and the full data transcription comes to 87 pages. The transcriptions, as well as my transcription notes, are included in the appendix of this study to be considered further for reliability. In the analysis, the research will focus on the dialogue between callers and Finebaum/guests, as well as non-verbal cues or reactions from Finebaum that may indicate his epistemologies. In terms of analytical approach, the aim will be to code the text from the radio show, create concepts from the coding, and form the concepts into themes that will help to reveal what discursive practices are used by Paul Finebaum to create an internal Other of the American South.

2.4 Analytical Approach

As stated earlier, CDA is a methodology that seeks to understand the power dynamics embedded in social and cultural practices by analyzing the relationship between communicative practices and the social contexts of power in which they are produced circulated and consumed (Yan & Santos, 2009). With this in mind, this analysis of The Paul Finebaum Show will be examined through a wide discursive complexity, therefore this study will employ the tripartite method: semiotic, ideological, and contextual. From a semiotic standpoint, the reciprocity between visual and audio practices are considered by treating each visual and audio practice in Finebaum’s show as a “totality – marking the patterned relationships in its content, connecting these to [other] parallel and contrasting structures” (Albers & James, 1988, p. 147; Yan & Santos, 2009).
In this process, attention is specifically given to intertextuality, visual composition, and the use of symbols. Intertextuality is determined by how the images created by Finebaum, his callers, and his guests (both textual and visual) relate to a particular cultural image, reference, or imagination; while visual composition, the use of symbolic resonance, composes the basic structuring elements and their interrelations in the image (Rose, 2001; Yan & Santos, 2009). Therefore, every aspect of the data set of *The Paul Finebaum Show* will be analyzed and the following questions are asked: Who is the subject and how are they being represented? What is Paul Finebaum, his guests, or the caller doing? What non-verbal, visual cues is Paul Finebaum giving? What specific vernacular, slang, or tone is Paul Finebaum, his guests, or callers using? From this, the findings will be focused on looking for recurring themes in the show that consider the underlying structures that link these questions and the shows, from which will be compared and contrasted.

On an ideological level, the analysis considers the codes and themes that occur in *The Paul Finebaum Show* and give it its fundamental coherence (Van Dijk, 1993). This is done by asking how does Finebaum’s show create certain representations about the American South? How does the show persuade or produce certain “effects of truth” (Yan & Santos, 2009)? And, how does the show claim authority/power and/or naturalize its representations (Rose, 2001, p. 154)? Lastly, on a contextual level, the discursive formations that function to establish and give meaning to the discursive performance of *The Paul Finebaum Show* are considered. Therefore, while these three levels of analysis assist in the interpretive effort, each one is not discussed as separate, but with interconnections (Yan & Santos, 2009). With this interconnectedness, “the ideological is made possible by the semiotic, and both are always positioned within the contextual”
Therefore, through this interconnection of the semiotic, ideological, and contextual, *The Paul Finebaum Show* is available for critical examination.

### 2.5 Subjectivities and Epistemologies

According to Wodak and Meyer (2015), any researcher using CDA must see that with their critique they are not situated outside of the discourse they are analyzing. If not, they place their own concept of discourse analysis in doubt and can base their analysis on values, norms, laws, and rights. In addition, a researcher must not forget that these are the historical outcome of the discourse, and that their possible bias is not based on truth, but represents a position that is the result of a discursive process (Jager, 2001). The researcher is equipped with this position and is able to enter discursive contests to defend or modify their position (Wodak & Meyer, 2015). As suggested by Foucault (1972), it is necessary to consider the broader and non-discursive context of discourse in producing the analysis (Rose, 2001). In this study, the proposed questions are significantly determined by the subjective context that shapes the interrelationship between myself and Finebaum’s radio show. This study embraces a reflexive and conscious approach that recognizes the analysis as significantly co-shaped by the researcher’s subjective position, the ideological framework, as well as the projected content from the radio show. Through my own subjectivities I realize that my views, perceptions and analysis of the American South and *The Paul Finebaum Show* may not align with everyone else’s. I was born and raised in Southeast Missouri, so while I was not accustomed to a traditional Southern lifestyle, I did spend a large majority of my formative years in a rural farm town that was
embedded with traditional Southern ideals. So, while I do not identify myself as a “Southerner”, I am familiar with the lifestyles and stereotypes that surround the culture.

As far as my familiarity with college football, I have been consuming the sport since I was in middle school. However, being a fan of the University of Missouri (MU), I did not fully understand the rich cultural traditions that accompanied SEC football until MU joined the SEC in the fall of 2012. Prior to them joining the SEC, going to a football game was just an escape from everyday life, but after attending my first SEC game I realized how important football was to the people of the South. Since then I have been fully immersed into SEC football. I stay up to date with all the news from around the conference, even when MU isn’t doing well, and I root for other SEC teams in bowl games and for the conference to win the national championship. Much like SEC football culture, I had never even heard of Paul Finebaum or his radio show until MU moved to the SEC. However, when the school made the move to the conference, *The Paul Finebaum Show* began broadcasting on the local ESPN Radio affiliate in Columbia, Missouri and that is how I first became acclimated to Finebaum’s show and the characteristics of the callers on his show. At first, I could not believe that this show had the ability to become a nationally syndicated radio show due to some of the off-topic conversations that would occur, but the more I listened to the show, the more I realized that I liked it for its authenticity. It wasn’t scripted. These callers were truly passionate about their teams and SEC football. The show’s comical moments also made me laugh. Everything from Phyllis and Tammy arguing to Charles making bold claims about Auburn’s fate. I had fleeting images of what these characters looked like in my head. I imagined Tammy and Phyllis as women who were of larger stature and sat on their porch
all day smoking menthol cigarettes. In my eyes, nearly every person that called into the show just reeked of the stereotypical Southerner: loud, uneducated, backwards, lazy and all of them had a Southern dialect of some sort. I would think to myself, “Who has the time to sit around all day and listen to Finebaum for four hours? Don’t these people have jobs?”

Before immersing myself in this research, I still listened to Finebaum’s show for a laugh every now and then and to occasionally here Finebaum’s analysis on an important MU game. However, since becoming familiar with internal Orientalism and the power of sport media representation, I have seen the show through a different lens allowing me to propose this research. Finebaum’s show was indeed allowing me to practice Othering. I was painting the residents of the South with one brush and I surely can’t be the only person that has had these thoughts about the South while listening to the show. Through these understandings about The Paul Finebaum Show, SEC football and the South, I have my own subjective notions and interpretations about what occurs on the radio show that will undoubtedly have influence in my analysis. Epistemology, or the theory of knowledge, questions the nature, scope and source of knowledge (De Rose, 2002). According to Gettier (1963), one target in this quest for knowledge is analyzing knowledge as a justified true belief. Through this account, how does one justify whether or not something is known? What is the scope or extent of our knowledge about a particular topic? In a sense, what one is required to have in order to have rational beliefs and knowledge about a particular subject (Tulving & Craik, n.d.). According to Pritchard (2013) one of the quests for epistemology is to explain the value of knowledge and one way to account for this knowledge is to “note that if you know a proposition, then you
have a true belief in that proposition, and true beliefs are clearly useful, and therefore valuable” (p. 18). From this understanding my comprehension of internal Orientalism, power, and representation will be valuable in applying these frameworks to Finebaum’s radio show to analyze and discuss how its content contributes to the sport media discourse.

CHAPTER 3: ANALYSIS

3.1 Introduction

As discussed in the literature review, internal Orientalism is a framework where Othering is practiced against a “weaker” region of that state (Jansson, 2003 & 2005). In so doing, those practice Othering dominate, restructure, create, and have authority over the Other (Hodges, 2014; Said, 1979). Furthermore, discourses such as internal Orientalism are able to gain their durability and strength through the process of representational power, where sport media is a critical component. According to Johnson and Coleman (2012), internal Orientalism succors to create and institutionalize regions and is a process in which sport cultures, including sport media, participate in. In addition, the American South has been a major focus in the internal Orientalist discourse where the Southern United States is represented as a place of “difference and a repository for that which was deemed undesirable in the making of the nation” (Johnson & Coleman, p. 16; Jansson, 2003 & 2005). Following this understanding, this analysis will focus on connecting the framework of internal Orientalism and the power sport media representation to The Paul Finebaum Show and in particular Finebaum himself. In doing so, this study will explore and uncover different discursive techniques that Finebaum uses
toward his everyday callers and how these techniques are successful in extracting certain behaviors out of his callers.

Finebaum’s show has become immensely popular since it has been broadcast on national radio and received its own television slot on the SEC Network run by ESPN. The majority of this success has come from the popularity of his everyday callers, who often exhibit outlandish and extravagant behavior. Finebaum has a band of callers that will call in nearly everyday, and these callers mostly identify as fans of the University of Alabama or Auburn University. Tammy and Charles from Reeltown are the two most popular callers and fans of Auburn. Tammy has become well-known on Finebaum’s show because of her feuds with Phyllis, a fan of Alabama, and her peculiar relationship with Finebaum that often gives way to some disagreements as well as some interesting conversations. Charles from Reeltown has gained notoriety for claiming his obsessive love for Auburn and wildly predicting that Auburn will win the national championship year in and year out. On the other hand, Legend, Larry, Jim from Tuscaloosa, and Phyllis (who did not appear on this week’s show due to personal issues) identify themselves as fans of the Alabama Crimson Tide. Larry and Legend are often known for claiming that Alabama is the greatest college football team in the country while also getting into arguments with Charles and fans of other SEC schools. These fans take great pride in their teams and will do anything to make this pride known and are able to do so via *The Paul Finebaum Show*.

*The Paul Finebaum Show*, unlike strict editorial reporting, is not constrained by the ethical codes of reporting, as the show almost reads like a reality television show with characters that have gained fame for their notoriety. This analysis will focus on the
contours of the show itself and the internal orientalist frame that is deployed through the representational power of Paul Finebaum. Specifically, there are two reoccurring themes that capture the Southern football culture through various techniques used by Finebaum. The two themes are: 1) Unintelligent and Backward: Profiling the Southern Football Culture and 2) Hostile and Violent: The Southern Football Mobs. It is essential to understand that Finebaum’s techniques are not a stand-alone representation, but rather a process of interwoven strategies (i.e. using two or three techniques in the same interaction) that ultimately lead to a stereotypical image of Southern football culture.

3.2 Theme 1: Unintelligent and Backward: Profiling the Southern Football Culture

In the first theme, the Southern football fans are revealed as embodying a culture where unintelligence, irrationality, Southern vernacular and slang, lacking manners, and a non-industrial/backward lifestyle exist. Paul Finebaum employs a variety of techniques in order to create this representation such as: inducing callers with comments, asking probing questions, mocking callers, using non-verbal gestures, bringing callers on stage, interrupting/cutting off callers, and treating frequent and infrequent callers differently.

Technique 1: Inducing Through His Knowledge about his Callers

The first technique that will be discussed is ‘inducing’. Examinations of ‘inducing’ have been conducted in other studies of media representations, such as Toohey and Taylor’s (2006) research on Australian media’s representations of the September 11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center. In their examination, Toohey and Taylor believe that “inducing” is often used by media to represent an emotion that is caused by an action. For instance, in the case of the 9/11 attacks, programs and commentaries made by media outlets are frequently out of “fear-induced” (p. 9) motives. From this
understanding, “fear-inducing” effects carried the purpose of persuading more people to prescribe to the narrative that a war was necessary as a result of these terrorist attacks. Thus, by inducing fear into the lives of the American people, national media were able to push a fearful agenda upon media consumers when it came to Islamic terrorists. In this study, Finebaum’s practice of inducing is fostered from the extensive knowledge he has about his callers. Similar to fear-induced media effects of 9/11, Finebaum’s agenda of inducing is to inject his popular callers with a certain feeling or emotion, usually anger or unintelligence, based on a range of comments he uses. With each popular caller, Finebaum has particular and vital knowledge about their fandom personal lives, and vices. Thus, he often utilizes this knowledge to cause them to display responses and actions that are rude, arbitrary, unintelligent, and violent – stereotypical Southern fan behaviors that are at once entertaining, authentic, and essentialized. In the following example Finebaum engages in a dialogue with Larry, a frequent and popular caller on the show, that reveals his knowledge of Larry’s personal life and vice of drinking alcohol. With Larry being a frequent caller, Finebaum knows what to say and how to draw out this stereotypical behavior:

Larry: [inaudible] Happy Thanksgiving to you.

PF: You too Larry. Try to eat something on Thursday as opposed to drinking all day.

Larry: Thanksgiving I ain’t got a lot goin on brother. I’ll prolly eat a little chicken wing or a turkey wing. [inaudible due to deep southern accent/no annunciation; saying something about a turkey]. But hey Finebaum what does Auburn have to offer? Talk to me.

PF: I, I don’t know if they have a lot to offer, Larry. We’ll spend a lot of time on the Iron Bowl tomorrow and obviously Friday from Auburn. You’ll be down in Auburn on Friday won’t you?
Larry: Wooo! You got that right Jack! I got tickets son! You gonna be at the little set up there where you put the seat with the thing? You know like gameday?

In the above, Finebaum teases Larry by saying, “Try to eat something on Thursday as opposed to drinking all day.” This comment implies that Larry drinks all day on holidays, such as Thanksgiving, rather than spending quality time with their family. Furthermore, Larry did not rise to the bait, but he did not immediately oppose Finebaum’s comments either. To him, it seemed so natural – drinking all day and leading a backward/non-industrial lifestyle. In addition, we see an empathetic lack of annunciation revealed in Larry’s responses, by mumbling, “I ain’t got a lot going on brother,” and, “Woo! You got that right Jack! I got tickets son!” Indeed, such colloquialism constitutes a typical occurrence with most callers on Finebaum’s show that establishes a strong linguistic feature in composing their discourses. In further view, the over-representation of Southern vernacular on the show can lead to exacerbated representations and stereotypes of Southern football fans being unintelligent and lacking formal education (Hammet, 2011).

In the following, Finebaum’s technique of inducing is carried through the act of antagonizing. Specifically, by questioning one of his most popular callers, Tammy’s confidence in Auburn, and challenging her about her knowledge of the game:

[Show comes back on and Tammy is on the stage and PF is wearing her pink sunglasses]

PF: I finally got something of Tammy’s. Welcome back.

Tammy: [In a very loud and southern accent] WOOOOO! AINT HE SEXY?!?!

PF: Wearing Tammy’s sunglasses. I think I look good.

Tammy: Woo! You look hot! You look hotter than me I think! I think it’s them ears that’s holdin’ them up.
PF: So, let’s talk about tomorrow.

Tammy: We’re gonna win it!

PF: How are you and Mr. Tammy going to deal with today?

Tammy: He gon’ keep his mouth shut. If he don’t do that I’m gonna knock his teeth in.

PF: [Looking at Mr. Tammy] What was that?

Tammy: He don’t keep his mouth shut, he’ll be out that door. He’ll be out that door in a minute! Shut right in front of em.

PF: Do you watch the game together?

Tammy: Yeah we start watching it together, but he don’t keep his mouth shut he’s got to go!

PF: Do you want your sunglasses back? [Hands them back]


PF: Okay. I’ll put em back. So um…

Tammy: [Interrupting PF; on stage with him] Auburn’s gonna win, I’d say we gon’ win by at least 10.

PF: Tammy, I, uh, we’ve talked a long time and I’m not trying to put words in your mouth, actually I’m not trying to put anything in your mouth…

Tammy: WOAHHHH! It’ll be a while for that too!

PF: But…

Tammy: SAMMY! Where’d you go with them hands you got? Ohhhh! [Points at crowd]

PF: I’m not feeling the confidence from you.

Tammy: Oh yes I am! You wanna know why? Because we’re gonna stop Henry and we are gonna put pressure on your quarterback. You ain’t got nothing else. What else you got? You tell me what you got left after that? One receiver?!?!
What’s he gonna do?!? Triple coverage! That’s all we got! That’s all we gon’ need.

Finebaum first questions Tammy and her husband’s relationship, “How are you and Mr. Tammy going to deal with today?” This reduces their marriage to a simplistic rivalry between Alabama and Auburn since Mr. Tammy is an Alabama fan and Tammy is a well-known Auburn enthusiast. As a result, Tammy reveals some violent characteristics that will be discussed in the second theme. In addition, Finebaum further questions Tammy’s faith in Auburn by telling her that he doesn’t feel the confidence from her. Tammy is immediately irritated and erupts in an angry and irrational rant about how Auburn is going to stop Alabama and Derrick Henry. Her response, as well as other responses claiming that Auburn will win by 10 with no real evidence, reveals that she has no real knowledge about the game and only cares about her team winning and winning at all costs. This extreme kind of obsession with their favorite football teams makes the Southern football fan seem rude and infantile, a behavior that a rational person would not display on national television. In so doing, the complexity of sport is brutally reduced and boiled down to the binary of who wins and loses.

This example also reveals the odd relationship that Tammy and Finebaum have. Finebaum wears Tammy’s sunglasses and Tammy claims that the sunglasses make Paul “sexy.” This exhibits how Finebaum plays both sides of the coin, where he seems to have an affinity with Tammy by wearing her signature sunglasses while also antagonizing her everyday on his show and put her irrational and rude behavior under the spotlight. However, Tammy seems to play both sides of this coin as well. As much as she is frequently angry and volatile, she also seems to enjoy doing it. Additionally, Tammy also demonstrates a lack of manners as she keeps interrupting Finebaum and yelling to the
crowd behind her. Lastly, Tammy uses Southern vernacular and slang by using terms such as “gonna,” “gon’,” “WOAHHHHHH,” and, “ain’t,” numerous times throughout her responses. Just as Richard (2008) reminds us, language is never neutral and that the uses of language reveals embedded social meanings. This vernacular and embedded social meaning of language helps to create a binary of The Paul Finebaum Show and other sport media talk shows. Unlike other sport talk shows which normally create a space to articulate and formulate detailed explanations about sport, Finebaum’s show seeks to glorify crazy antics from callers.

Technique 2: Asking Probing Questions

Similar to inducing, Finebaum also employs a technique where he aims to draw specific and familiar characteristics and representations out of his frequent callers. Most things that he probes however don’t even pertain to football. This allows the show to often have diluted subject and discussion. In the following example we see that Finebaum deliberately asks Tammy about her personal life, a non-football subject and one that Tammy is not shy about:

PF: Tammy, what’s it like being Tammy? You’re famous..

Tammy: I’m not famous.

PF: You come on here, you share your personal life, it makes Sportscenter, it makes radio shows all across the country. It has to have some impact on you, or does it?

Tammy: Well to start with Paul, your show, your show has got me, your show, I’ve got a lot of friends, I wouldn’t call them fans we’re friends now, I have met so many people because of you and a love for Auburn, I’ve just met a lot of people. I’ve enjoyed every minute of it. My husband, when I met him and when he stuck his tongue down my throat, he had heard of me. He doesn’t care what I say, but that’s how I met my husband.

PF: Had you two been introduced before that?
Tammy: Yeah I think my cousin introduced us, but then he went and jerked me up and went and took me outside and stuck his tongue down my throat. THAT WAS ALL ME BABY! WOOO! [Charles laughs]

PF: [in bewilderment] That was the moment?

Tammy: That was the moment.

PF: He had you from the tongue?

Tammy: Yeah, the turd part [referencing him being an Alabama fan] came right off of him.

PF: You didn’t care that he was a Bama fan did you?

Tammy: No the tongue overruled the turd part. [PF has a shocked look on his face and shakes his head at the camera] And I’m just me all the time.

First, Finebaum simply asks Tammy what it is like to be famous which begins a conversation about her personal life. Then, Finebaum continues to ask further and further about how she met her husband. Tammy’s lack of reluctance to share her personal stories on national television is strikingly clear. By doing this, he plays with her vanity and mocks her lack of virtuousness. More importantly, Finebaum clearly knows that Tammy enjoys this attention of being a ‘celebrity’ as we see her eagerly and willingly discussing her lewd life in grotesque and almost scandalous ways, typified by her expression of “sticking his tongue down her throat.” In so doing, Tammy’s personal life has become a spectacle, while the narrative space of Finebaum’s show has turned into a reality show. Tammy indeed produces numerous instances of scandalous gossips, when she is on the show, often having references to her sexual life. According to Lull and Hinerman, most scandals shown in the media occur when “private acts that disgrace or offend the idealized…. are made public and narrativized by the media, producing a range of effects” including ideological and cultural retrenchment (1997, p. 3). Tammy’s lack of shame (as
expected normally) is astonishing, where she takes the initiative to reinforce the existing stereotype of the Southern Other in response to Finebaum’s probing, in fact this intrigues her and extracts shame out of the rest of Finebaum’s listeners/viewers. With frequent callers, such as Tammy and Larry making spectacles of themselves on an everyday base, the show constitutes a “moral geography” (Agnew, 2003, p. 42) in the discursive real of sport media, where the Southern football culture is distinctively unscrupulous, indecent, and different.

In this next example, Paul Finebaum aims to represent Southern football fans as having a non-industrial/lazy lifestyle by assuming that Larry has already begun drinking alcohol in the early afternoon and asking him about it:

PF: So, uh, the exit question would be, let’s see here, it’s, uh, 2:36 central time here in Alabama. How many Bud Lights have you put down?

Larry: [Says something very inaudible while laughing]

PF: How many?! Eight?

Larry: Eight tallboys [Chuckling]

PF: Eight tallboys! How many is in a tallboy?

Larry: 16 ounces

PF: Eight times 16 ounces! [With a surprised and judgmental look on his face]

Larry: Yeah! 120…. Uh, four, um ounces, haha I cant add. I’m the wrong one if you want someone to multiply.

PF: 128 ounces of Bud Light!

Through this we see Finebaum deliberately keeps asking the caller how many beers he has had in the middle of the afternoon on a weekday. It conveniently invokes the assumption that the caller is lazy and would rather drink alcohol than work for his family.
A first time listener of the show could easily get the impression that everyone in the South is like this. This aids in representing Southern football culture as an undifferentiated mass where the people who inhabit it are viewed as being at the bottom of the social hierarchy (Hodges, 2014). While the caller does admit to drinking beer in the afternoon, Finebaum was successful in representing the non-industrial lifestyle of the South by asking him questions. In addition, Finebaum continues to probe Larry with questions by asking him how many ounces of beer he already had that afternoon, otherwise a simple multiplication problem. By doing this, Finebaum further confirms the stereotype of Southern football fans being unintelligent as Larry cannot do simple math. Larry helps to confirm his unintelligence by not being able to do the math problem and admitting that “he can’t add.” Along with these two unflattering representations of the South, Larry also exhibits Southern vernacular and diction by not annunciating his words and being inaudible at times.

In this last example, Finebaum uses a similar technique as he baits Larry, an Alabama fan, through probing questions about a particular bad Iron Bowl memory for Alabama fans:

PF: Hey you remember this Larry, [Imitating broadcast from 2013 Iron Bowl kick six] Davis, Auburn’s gonna win the football game! You remember that one?

Larry: Yeah.

PF: What did you do when Davis took the ball back 109 yards?

Larry: I went to the Coosa River Bridge and got on the edge of it and got pretty well toasted and was gonna jump off.

PF: You considered jumping off the Coosa River Bridge when Chris Davis took that ball back 109 yards?

Larry: [Once again, a long pause from audio probably due to language]
PF: Worse than what?!

Larry: The Poseidon.

PF: The Poseidon? That was a movie Larry.

Larry: No, but the ship went down. That’s the night my ship went down Paul!

PF: [Laughing at his ignorance] The Poseidon, I’m pretty sure was a movie.

Larry: Okay, well I thought it was real.

PF: The Titanic is the one that went down Larry.

Larry: Ohhhhh! Okay, well that’s what I meant

In this example, Finebaum continues to question Larry about how he felt after Auburn beat them on a last second play two years earlier. Finebaum almost seems cold-hearted toward his callers, unwilling to empathize or show comfort. Larry, on the other hand, proudly states that he thought about jumping off of a bridge because his team lost. This action is eerily similar to Tammy’s incoherent response discussed earlier about her confidence in Auburn where she was only concerned with who won or lost the football game. Larry displays this same “winning-losing” mentality when he jokes about jumping off of a bridge because as a fan of Alabama he was upset that they lost to Auburn. Additionally, he did not know that the sinking ship of Titanic was a real historic event while referencing his metaphorical ship sinking that night, which was continually probed by Finebaum. In so doing, it displays Larry’s particular lack of intelligence. On one hand, it seems that the Southern fans seem to know “everything” when it comes to their football team. On the other hand, he appears to be rather ignorant of such a famous historical event. The contrast is striking, invoking the stereotype of a typical unintelligent Southern fan. The interactions described throughout this technique stresses the importance of
college football in the South and how it is exemplified by rabid fans and the constant media coverage (Stand-Gravois, 2012) which is aided by Paul Finebaum.

In this technique, Finebaum consistently tries to display Southern football fans as being stereotypically backward, unintelligent, lazy, and irrational through the act of asking probing questions. When asking these questions, he uses different approaches, such as asking about their personal life or recalling bad memories, in order to make this representation of Southern football culture and castigates them as an embodiment of a backward and troubled territory, the American South (Hammet, 2011). This representation becomes a problem because it allows the embodiment of the American South to become a concrete target for the rest of the country to blame for their backwardness (Kim, 2012).

**Technique 3: Mocking Callers**

Additionally, mocking his callers is a strong identifiable technique used by Paul Finebaum. In this example, we see Finebaum talking with Larry about him bashing a painted Auburn car with a sledgehammer and directly mocks him through imitation:

Larry: Yeah, well you know what, these Auburn fans are really pumped. I’m glad they’re gonna be so freakin disappointed and just dragging their tails going back to their cars. And Charles from Reeltown I hope you get to see that YouTube video Jack! Roll Tide!

PF: Okay. Okay, Larry.

Larry: Roll Tide!

PF: [Imitating and mocking Larry] Roll Tide! Roll Tide! Roll Tide!

Larry: Roll Tide!

PF: [Mocking] Roll Tide! Glenn is next from Atlanta. [rolls his eyes and takes deep breath as if to get over the last caller]
Paul is deliberately mocking Larry by imitating him by continuing to say, “Roll Tide!” which creates dual meanings, denotational and connotational. On the surface, it seems that the two of them are cheerfully hailing for the Alabama football team. More intriguingly, the undertone in Paul’s mocking reveals that Larry is aware of such mocking, but chooses to let go and instead just repeatedly hail pride in his football team. Ultimately, Finebaum is not mocking Larry here to display the cliché communication used by Southern football fans. Indeed, this reveals the one-dimensional and monotonous fandom of Southern college football culture.

In another example, we see Finebaum again mocking the grotesqueness of Larry’s character:

Larry: If Auburn wins I’ll come down there and kiss every Auburn ass I can find! Hahahahaha!

PF: Larry, that would be insinuating that someone down here would want you near them.

Larry: I’ll move [inaudible] over so I can kiss it. [Chuckles, so does PF, but almost out of disgust] Ay man, I just told you Paul. I’m serious, I would kiss every Auburn ass I could pal.

PF: You know, I’m probably not going to take a side in the game, but I think I’m going for Auburn because I’d like to see that.

Larry: Ooooooo! So, you wanna see these hot lips I got goin on? Ight! I can do that Jack. Ay, them Auburn fans they know what’s comin son.

First, Finebaum states, “Larry, that would be insinuating that anyone would want you near them,” then says, “You know, I’m probably not going to take a side in the game, but I think I’m going for Auburn because I’d like to see that.” Through this continuation of mocking by Paul, the grotesque, vile, and ugly side of Southern football fans is shown by Larry volunteering to kiss people’s rear ends if his team loses. In response, Larry makes
his behavior more outlandish and begins to show more signs of irrationality and unintelligence by saying, “So, you wanna see these hot lips I got goin’ on?,” and, “Ight! I can do that Jack!” Furthermore, this example also relates to the “winning-losing” mentality that obsesses Southern fans when they are cheering for their team, as seen here where Larry willingly engages in a grotesque and volatile bet. Through the technique of mocking, we see the stereotypes of Southern football fans more clearly and allows for a heightened and more dramatized image of the American South.

**Technique 4: Using Non-Verbal Gestures**

Non-verbal facial expressions, hand movements, and voice tones also constitutes an important discursive feature in the show. Non-verbal gestures are a heavy component used by Finebaum to facilitate messages about Southern football fans. Before being broadcasted on the SEC Television Network, *The Paul Finebaum Show* was strictly broadcast on the radio. Since becoming a visual tool, Finebaum’s gestures on the show have become an important component to facilitate delivering the representational effect. Through the use of his subtle non-verbal gestures Finebaum represents the American South in a variety of ways, one of which is how irrational Southern fans are:

PF: Larry, we’re in Auburn as you know and we passed through, not far from where you live when we were coming down, and a lot of Auburn fans are here. Do you have a message for them? [*PF says this with his hands raised out as if he welcomes the craziness that is about to come.*]

Larry: [In a laughing tone] Yeah, come on and get you some Jack! Ay, just bring Gus Malzahn cause Auburn fans right now are smarter than their coach. [Says something inaudible, then chuckles hysterically] Aint much of a fight Finebaum.

By opening his arms, Finebaum creates a foreshadowing effect for his audience, as they know that Larry tends to create hysterical and extreme moments on the show. This visual tool allows the viewers of the show to dissect and analyze Larry’s comments that follow.
this non-verbal gesture from Finebaum. Larry reaffirms Finebaum’s foreshadowing gesture and becomes irrational toward the Auburn fans by stating that they are smarter than their coach and using Southern vernacular like “Ay,” “Ain’t,” and “…get you some Jack!” Through the use of non-verbal gestures, such as this arm and hand movement, Finebaum illustrates how viewers have become familiar with the plot of the show. This plot helps to exhibit how the profiling of Southern football fans as irrational and unintelligent can be enduring features of the American South (Johnson & Coleman, 2012). Furthermore, Finebaum also uses one of his common non-verbal gestures, smirking, when talking about Tammy:

PF: There is a rumor Tammy may be here today, but unconfirmed.

Charles: You can’t tell with that girl.

PF: No. No you cant. [Takes off his glasses with a smirk on his face as he does this.]

Through the act of smirking Finebaum is letting his viewers know what he expects from Tammy when she comes on the show, as he did with Larry in the previous example. This smirking is another act of foreshadowing from Finebaum which allows his viewers to embrace the madness and chaos that will come later in the show. Through this invocation, the vices of lacking manners and irrationality have been spatialized (one might say “regionalized”) through Finebaum’s non-verbal gestures, such as smirking about Tammy’s antics and the welcoming opening of his arms toward Larry when he attacked Auburn fans, so that this set of undesirable traits that his callers often display is held to inhere in the imagined space called “the South,” (Jansson, 2003).

In another example that was discussed earlier, Finebaum uses another one of his common non-verbal gestures, the shaking of his head in disapproval:
Tammy: Yeah I think my cousin introduced us, but then he went and jerked me up and went and took me outside and stuck his tongue down my throat. THAT WAS ALL ME BABY! WOOO! [Charles laughs]

PF: [in bewilderment] That was the moment?

Tammy: That was the moment.

PF: He had you from the tongue?

Tammy: Yeah, the turd part [referencing him being an Alabama fan] came right off of him.

PF: You didn’t care that he was a Bama fan did you?

Tammy: No the tongue overruled the turd part. [PF has a shocked look on his face and shakes his head at the camera] And I’m just me all the time.

Here we see that Finebaum directly disapproves of Tammy’s grotesque explanation of how she met her husband by shaking his head and having a shocked look on his face. The look on his face appears to be one that someone would display when they are at a loss for words due to the shocking nature of what they just heard. When Finebaum shakes his head and looks shockingly into the camera he lets his viewers know that this behavior is abnormal and should not be discussed on national television. This act serves as a representational tool to directly disapprove of Tammy’s backward and different lifestyle, and her willingness to share this information on national television. Gestures, such as the ones employed in the previous example, show how Finebaum invokes a dualist mentality, where on one hand he aims to draw this preposterous behavior out of his callers for entertainment purposes, but at the same time non-verbally disapproves of this immoral behavior. These non-verbal disapprovals help to reinforce the cultural representation of Southern football fans and the depiction of them being unintelligent, lacking manners, and having a backward lifestyle. In this process Finebaum culminates a narrative that
asserts that the differences between the cultures of Southern football fans and the rest of the U.S. as unbridgeable (Malcom, 2010). In so doing, Finebaum is the producer of the plots on his show and demonstrates how he is morally superior than his callers. The use of non-verbal gestures doesn’t necessarily draw stereotypical Southern behavior out of his callers, but rather allows his audience to see how he truly feels about his callers’ behavior and morality. Throughout this technique, we see that Finebaum’s non-verbal gestures are a very powerful and rich representational effect that become a distinct discursive feature of internal Orientalism.

**Technique 5: Bringing Callers Live on Stage**

As mentioned earlier, Finebaum will occasionally bring his callers on stage when he is on location for a show. During his November 27 he was live at Auburn University for the Iron Bowl when he brought Tammy and Charles on stage, two popular callers and fans of Auburn. When they were on stage, Charles and Tammy were visual representatives of Southern football culture. Charles from Reeltown is an older man, presumably in his mid to late fifties, with a large belly and grey parted hair. During this show he was wearing an orange Auburn polo, which made his stomach look rather large and was a talking point between he and Tammy. Tammy is a younger woman, in her early to mid-forties, who has long blondish-brown hair. During this show, she was wearing pink framed sunglasses along with an Auburn jacket. Finebaum’s intention in bringing his callers on stage is to make these once mysterious, faceless, and motionless characters into a reality and carry out their real life drama in person. Normally Finebaum’s viewers only get to see a still image of his callers when they call in. However, by bringing them on stage, he is enacting a degree of realness to who his
famous callers are and gives them a multi-dimensional representation. This real and live representation gives the viewers the ability to see that they are real characters and real fans of Southern football. This technique allows the characters to come into full existence and create them as the embodiment of the show, while also giving the audience a non-verbal and visceral image of what his callers and Southern football fans look like. When his callers are on stage, they have the ability to interact with other audience members and are allowed to utilize the space on set. For example, Tammy does this to create moments of lively television, as she does when she turns around to point at and insult a young Alabama fan. This act allows for the “winning-losing” mentality between Alabama and Auburn fans to become even more visual while also furthering the narrative of Finebaum’s show becoming reality television. The reality-like narrative aids in creating a binary, where the audience members of the show are civilized while Tammy and Charles are not. As a result of this technique, the discursive and narrative structures that are created by Finebaum situate individuals in a binary opposition based on cultural and phenotypical difference (Newman, 2005).

**Technique 6: Interrupting and Cutting-Off Callers**

The set up of *The Paul Finebaum Show* demonstrates the different discursive strategies used by Finebaum, who acts as the “gatekeeper” of information, and uses his power to cut off and interrupt callers (Jiwani, 2008). By acting as a gatekeeper, Finebaum is very micro in this technique, which enables him to force his agenda on a national audience. There are various reasons why Finebaum interrupts or cuts off callers, one of which being because they are displaying extreme vernacular, such as cursing:
Example 1 - Larry: Yeah, that aint nothin [a portion of the audio is cut out here, I’m assuming due to language]. Paul, you know how long I have waited since this freakin kick six? Ya’ll I have…

Example 2 - PF: You considered jumping off the Coosa River Bridge when Chris Davis took that ball back 109 yards?

Larry: [Once again, a long pause from audio probably due to language]

Example 3 - Larry: I don’t know why ya’ll cut me off, but I guess you guys though I was gonna say something stupid. Haha!

PF: I would have assumed you would.

These varying examples all show instances where Larry was cut off by Finebaum or his show executives due to the vernacular (i.e. cursing) that he was using while on the show. By cutting off callers frequently, Finebaum exhibits Southern football fan’s abnormalness to society. Other sport and news talk shows, such as those on ESPN and CNN, do not have callers being cut off frequently, which demonstrates the uniqueness of Finebaum’s show and the backwardness of his callers. In so doing, the frequency of cutting off callers becomes drama itself and allows one to see how Southern football fans do not have the ability to use appropriate language. Even though Larry’s communication was not audible to Finebaum’s audience, it still serves as a representational tool to situate Southern football fans as an Other through their willingness to use violent curse words to make their point known, something a progressive and civilized person would not normally do.

In addition to cutting his callers off, Finebaum has also been known to interrupt callers in order to demonstrate their unintelligence:

Michael: Hey Paul, you know Auburn was a two touchdown underdog against Alabama two years ago and we all know about that, the kick 6, Auburn won. So anything can happen in this game. So, let’s reminisce. 2010 I think Alabama gave Auburn a pass. Why? Because Auburn had a chance at the national title and Auburn didn’t. [Abruptly interrupted by PF]
PF: Mike if your memory is correct, and it probably isn’t, Alabama in 2010 was still a really good team, a great team that ended up with three losses and they also had a 24-0 lead over Auburn in that game, and Cam Newton (former Auburn QB), who will be here tomorrow by the way coming off of one of his best performances of the year. We’ve got Terry next from Georgia. Hey Terry. Good afternoon.

Through this example, Finebaum is exercising his authority in sports knowledge/history by deliberately interrupting the caller to assert his own opinion. He directly states, “Mike if your memory is correct, and it probably isn’t…” By saying this, Finebaum is directly exploiting Southern football fans for their lack of ability to recall certain information from past games, or otherwise their lack of sports knowledge. After interrupting him and stating his knowledge over him, Finebaum then drops the caller because he does not want to deal with his lack of knowledge. This act of interrupting callers allows Paul Finebaum to use the dynamics of representing the Southern football culture, in this case as lacking knowledge, to construct a representation about them, invent this representation, and exercise authority over them, therefore constructing them as an Other (Said, 1979; Hall, 1997). This technique occurs frequently on Finebaum’s show and the majority of instances look very similar to the examples above. The powerful and complex examples of authority addressed here demonstrate sport media’s ability to construct the perception of Southern football fans (Kim, 2012). By consistently cutting off and interrupting callers Finebaum formulates Southern football fans as lacking sports knowledge, being irrational, and people who use improper language to defend their teams.

Technique 7: Differentiating Between Frequent and Infrequent Callers

The popular and everyday callers, such as Larry, Tammy, Charles, Jim and Legend, have made Finebaum’s show immensely popular. Through the previous techniques, we have seen that Finebaum knows how to antagonize and agitate these
callers in order to represent Southern football fans as possessing qualities such as irrationality, unintelligence, leading a backward lifestyle, and grotesqueness. However, another technique implored by Paul is the treatment of infrequent callers to further alienate and create an Other of Southern football culture. For the more infrequent callers, Finebaum will let them speak without usually asking any probing questions or inducing them with comments as we see in the following example:

PF: Coach is up next in Nashville. Good afternoon, thank you for the call.

Coach: Hey Paul, what’s up Mark?

Markus: What’s up Coach?

Coach: Hey man this is a very, very sad day for me because if this is true that they’re gonna let Les Miles go then I think… First of all I’m a 49er fan and I don’t even root for the 49ers no more cause all the dumb stuff our owners have done and thrown our team away and now this [inaudible] is gonna throw Miles away. How are you gon’ replace him with Petrino? Saban is not gonna come back, Chip Kelly, that racist, he shouldn’t even be… Man I can’t believe what’s going on with this stuff and Jim from Tuscaloosa, you are dumb! Worry about Alabama! Markus over the, over the summer you said, uh, Brett Beliema would be the number two coach in the SEC, now look at all the stupid stuff he did like lose to Toledo, but over the summer ya’ll said we was gonna be the worst in the SEC. Les Miles came up and I actually think he’s overachieved with this team! The line is not blocking! DB’s make sure you look and….

Since Coach is not an everyday caller on the show Finebaum does not know what will cause him to become agitated, so he simply let him speak his mind. In this caller’s rant he is unable to formulate a complete thought and jumps from one subject to the next without any coherence. Contrary to previous examples, whenever Finebaum has an infrequent caller, such as the example above, he does not utilize any of the techniques that were discussed earlier, but rather lets this behavior naturally occur and allows Southern football fans to still be represented as lacking intelligence and the ability to formulate a coherent thought.
The persistence of internal Orientalist notions about Southern football culture as unintelligent, irrational, non-industrial, and backward are underpinned by much of the content on *The Paul Finebaum Show* and directly embody the American South. In summary, to represent Southern football culture as unintelligent and backward, Finebaum employs a variety of techniques which were explored above. In these representations, Southern football fans are portrayed as unintelligent, irrational, non-industrial, lacking manners, lacking diction, and leading a backward lifestyle. In doing so, fans are depicted as an internal Other to a national audience through the effectiveness of his techniques. According to Said (1979), the delineation of representational dogmas created in an Orientalist and internal Orientalist discourse capture the inherent binaries that position the superiority of one over the other (Jiwani, 2008). In the case of *The Paul Finebaum Show*, sport media acts as a representational tool to create a bifurcated image of American Southern football fans compared to the rest of the country. Hartley (1982) emphasizes that sport media coverage, such as Finebaum’s show, tends to preserve dominant attitudes and “reproduce existing relations of power” that influence the way people see things (Jiwani, 2008, p. 19). The discursive structure of Finebaum’s techniques, that were explored in this theme, allowed the representations of Southern football fans that he constructed, created, and circulated to become a regime of truth (Hall, 1997). This regime of truth enables Paul Finebaum to create “internal others” and is a means used by sport and sport media (Johnson & Coleman, 2012). Thus, sport media act as a theatre in which forms of Orientalism and internal Orientalism are reproduced (Jiwani, 2008 & 2004).

**3.3 Theme 2: Hostile and Violent: The Southern Football Mob**
In the above, we have discussed the portrayal of Southern football fans possessing qualities of unintelligence, irrationality, backwardness, and laziness. The following will focus on the discursive construction of Southern football fans as inherently violent and hostile through the techniques used in *The Paul Finebaum Show*. According to Jiwani (2008) and Jansson (2003 & 2005), representing the Other as violent and pre-modern has always been a component of internal Orientalism. Since the American South has been a major focus in the discourse, the people of the South have been represented as essentially violent and as animal-like savages who participate in violent behavior (Malcom, 2010; Jiwani 2008; Jansson, 2003). In addition, the South is viewed as a region that is tainted by its violent past and where civilization ends and chaos begins (Stand-Gravois, 2012; Dunn & Preston, 1991). Paul Finebaum alleviates this representation by extracting this behavior out of his callers through a variety of techniques. This theme examines the violence and hostility that Southern football fans display toward one another and Paul Finebaum, while also exhibiting an explicit and violent ‘Us versus Them’ mentality with the North and themselves (Yoon & Wilson, 2014).

*Us versus Them Mentality – Technique 1: Labeling Callers by Region*

One specific technique Finebaum uses to construct this discursive binary between the American South and the rest of the country is introducing his callers and where they are from. In so doing, Finebaum strongly influences the perception of his callers before they even speak by labeling them based on their geographical location in the U.S. This is a critical factor in creating this ‘Us versus Them’ mentality, as he is foreshadowing what is expected to come from his callers based on their geographic ties. For example, he introduces a caller from Alabama by saying, “We’ll grab some phone calls here and we
will begin with Durwood in Alabama. Go ahead Durwood.” By stating that the caller is from Alabama, we see that Finebaum imposes an identity on the caller before he even speaks and thus plays a role in labeling his callers and altering their perception to his audience. In a similar example, we see him introduce a caller from the North, “John is in Ohio and you are next up on this Tuesday night. Hey John.” As we saw with the previous example, when Finebaum says that John is from Ohio, he is building his rhetoric of creating this ‘Us versus Them’ mentality by letting his listeners know that callers from certain regions will display certain characteristics. Paul Finebaum exploits this ‘Us versus Them’ mentality between the American North and South by having callers from the North on his show that represent Northern football culture.

It is important to note that Finebaum does this for nearly every single caller that he has on the show with the exception of his more famous callers, who he just introduces by first name. As stated in the literature review, internal Orientalism has a strong geographic connotation. In the Finebaum show, labeling his callers by particularly emphasizing the regions that they come from is frequently practiced by Finebaum. As an effect, such labeling helps to reinforce a mental map, where audience distinguish the American South based on a confluence of factors and the characteristics displayed by his callers. In this technique, Finebaum invokes the implications of internal Orientalism and creating stereotypes of Southern football fans that are implicit by nature and paint the entire culture with a single brush (Said, 1979; Jansson, 2003 & 2005).

*Us versus Them Mentality – Technique 2: Probing and Inducing*

In addition to labeling his callers and where they are from, Finebaum furthers this ‘Us versus Them’ mentality by agitating his Southern football callers by having callers
from the other regions in the U.S. on the show. In this next example, we see that
Finebaum had a caller from the North, Steve, on his show earlier who questioned the
political correctness of callers from the South. I-man then called in to verbally attack
Steve:

PF: We welcome you back to our program. Let’s get some more calls here and I-
man is up next. What’s up I-man?

I-man: Hey Paul! Calling from the capital city, the cradle of Confederacy. Paul, I
loved that guy that called at the top of the hour about being politically correct.

PF: Oh yeah, Steve.

I-man: Yeah do you think he broke up with his boyfriend or girlfriend or lost a
dog or something? This is not the place! I mean people can’t you lighten up and
have some entertainment in your life!! Lighten up Francis! I mean jeez if you
don’t like what’s going on and it’s hurtin’ your feelings then there is a whole
bunch of, you can watch the Kardashians, you can watch Honey Boo-Boo [PF
laughs]! You can do a lot of things during this time of day, a lot of things, but he
got his feelings hurt. Paul send that guy a zippo lighter with my name on it! He
deserves a participation trophy! You know what Paul, I don’t like it when guys
talk about Les Miles’ and Mark Richt’s jobs like it’s nothing. You guys and the
experts have trends and know what’s going on, it just doesn’t come out of
nowhere, but Paul I’m gonna take you to task. When it comes to Jim from
Tuscaloosa you can’t produce no documentation my friend. Didn’t think so, have
a good day.

First, Paul creates a scenario that allows Steve to criticize the callers of the South, while
also allowing I-man to attack Steve’s personality and character as a Northerner. By
creating this scenario, Finebaum allows I-man to become very defensive and use direct
language toward Steve such as “… do you think he broke up with his boyfriend or
girlfriend or lost a dog,” “… he got his feelings hurt,” and, “… you can watch the
Kardashians or Honey Boo-Boo.” I-man makes these claims in order to mock Steve’s
masculinity, mental strength, and manhood. This encounter grants I-man the opportunity
to represent Southern football fans as being tough and blue collar, while Northern fans
are displayed as emotional and weak. He also uses this language to take pride that the South has never been politically correct and that Southern football fans do not intend to be politically correct on the show. This moment helps to further create this ‘Us versus Them’ mentality where the North have characteristics like women and the South is more manly. This binary perception of the American North and South places the two geographic identities in opposition creating a barricade mentality between the two regions where they can never coincide (Ayers, 1996; Jansson, 2005).

In addition to labeling where callers are from, Finebaum will also tempt Southern football fans by asking them questions about football teams from other conferences to create scenarios that further differentiate the two regions. The previous example displays this ‘Us versus Them’ mentality in a subtler nature, but this technique can also be more straightforward where Finebaum creates direct confrontation between Southern and Northern fans. For example, we see Finebaum using his technique of asking probing questions to draw out this confrontation:

PF: Legend, at six o’clock on Saturday night when the field goal went through and Ohio State went down describe what you did and how you reacted?

Legend: I jumped, it was just like, I hadn’t jumped that high since my boy [inaudible; PF laughing] ran off against Florida and took it in on our way to a national title. I jumped straight in the air and the first thing I yelled was, “Where’s Buckeye Earl? Where they at?!?”

Finebaum deliberately asks Legend, a popular caller and fan of Alabama, how he felt when Ohio State lost and was no longer undefeated to allow Legend to reveal his true feelings about the North and Ohio State football. This is a very sensitive topic for some Alabama fans, as Alabama was upset by Ohio State in the previous year’s College Football Playoff semi-finals. Legend clearly shows his happiness with Ohio State’s loss.
and their fan’s heartbreak by saying “I jumped straight in the air and the first thing I yelled was, “Where’s Buckeye Earl? Where they at!??.” With Ohio State’s loss, Legend feels that the South can continue to dominate the North on the football field. This dichotomous logic of internal Orientalism is essential in representing this ‘Us versus Them’ mentality between the American South and North (Johnson & Coleman, 2012).

Finebaum again uses this technique to further extract this ‘Us versus Them’ mentality by making Legend aware of Danny Kanell’s comments, who is a national sport pundit and known critic of the SEC’s dominance and popularity, about Alabama:

PF: Danny Kanell bumped them [referring to Alabama] up to number three this week in his poll, behind Iowa!!

Legend: Danny Kanell used to be funny, but now it’s just a question of credibility now Paul. I mean the average fan ain’t stupid. Who’s gonna put Iowa ahead of Alabama unless you got the IQ of Charles from Reeltown! [Laughing]

PF: I mean if Iowa and Bama were playing this weekend [laughing] I mean, Legend would it even be close?

Legend: That’s a 20 point spread! Get Danny on the line! Somebody get a mental institution and put Danny Kanell in! Get a straight jacket around him; Martha get the straight jacket out brother! I mean the man has grown into insanity to put Iowa ahead of Alabama. And they don’t have to respect, but I’ll tell you this right here, if the only thing that stands between us and ring 16 is Iowa and Clemson, then get the ring ready baby! Haha!

First, Finebaum agitates Legend and attempts to trigger his anger toward the North by mentioning that Kanell put Alabama behind Iowa in this week’s polls. Then Finebaum ultimately derives this ‘Us versus Them’ mentality out of Legend by asking him if a game between Alabama and Iowa would be close. The technique of probing and agitating used in this encounter is successful in eliciting Legend’s distaste for Northern football and his confidence in Alabama’s dominance. Legend has no doubt that Alabama would beat Iowa in a football game and wants Finebaum’s listeners to know about the South’s
dominance in the sport. The consolidation of power amongst Southern fans that is shown here demonstrates that fans want to project their dominance and pride in football to Finebaum’s national audience. According to Newman (2005), Southerners take pride in their heritage and where they come from and sports, such as college football, is a critical aspect of this heritage. This pride causes Southern football fans to embrace a warrior mentality to defend their Southern honor. Using this mentality allows fans to create a Civil War type of battle with the rest of the country via their college football fandom and the results that are played out on the field.

In these examples, Paul Finebaum demonstrates the media’s influence as a site to construct an internal Orientalist discourse and deploy this discourse in popular understandings of this ‘Us versus Them’ mentality. This mentality enables callers, listeners, and viewers to construct Southern football fans as problematic to the rest of the country (Hammet, 2011). In addition, this mentality is hegemonic by nature and prompts a hierarchal, binary value-based judgment of the Southern football fans as an Other (Yoon & Wilson, 2014). Therefore, allowing the South to serve as a receptacle for the rest of the country’s shadow (Jansson, 2005). This provides evidence that the binary representational inertia created by sport media envisions the American South as an opposition to the rest of the country and is hobbled by its historical baggage (Jansson, 2005; Bowles, 2002). As a result, the problem in constructing this ‘Us versus Them’ mentality amongst the North and South, is that no one person can be thought of complexly. This allows the citizens of both regions to be stereotyped through the characteristics given to them and takes away real substances and circumstances.

*Violence and Hostility – Technique 1: Mocking Callers*
Major sport media spectacles, such as *The Paul Finebaum Show*, provide national stages in which human drama can be played out in real time before an audience. This drama helps to aid in the process of Othering through Finebaum mocking his callers and extracting visceral rage out of them. In the first example, Finebaum mocks Larry through his non-verbal gestures, such as the tone in his voice, to agitate him:

Larry: [Southern accent, deep] He’ll retire with 50 mil. I think that’s pretty good, yeah. Let me tell you, this show has been all about say what you want isn’t it?

PF: Always has been Larry [clearly annoyed tone of voice; showing non-verbal disgust on his face]

Larry: Well let me lay something down cause it’s prolly gonna make someone mad, but I am really mad at Jim from Tuscaloosa. That man in that wheelchair, that’s Braveheart, he’s got somethin’ and he’s usin’ that platform to praise God. And for Jim from Tuscaloosa to come out there and compare his injury to his, sayin’ he done this, he prolly had a hernia!

Finebaum agitates Larry by showing verbal and non-verbal disgust in his simple question via his annoyed tone and look on his face. The undertone in Finebaum’s voice and facial expressions reveal the denotation of him being annoyed with the question. However, the connotational meaning in this gesture invokes a duality. Even though Finebaum appears to be annoyed, he is ultimately mocking Larry because he knows that he will rant and therefore gives him permission to do so. After receiving permission, Larry attacks other callers and demonstrates a form of verbal violence that is different from the physical violence discussed below. This verbal violence is seen when Larry attacks another caller, Jim, who compared an injury he had with a paralyzed football player that was on the show earlier and discussed his faith in God. By attacking another caller based off of an injury, Larry uses irrational violence and biblical rage to assert his opinion. Finebaum indeed induced this rage through his comment and non-verbal gestures, such as his
annoyed tone of voice. In so doing, these representations of Southern football fans have essentialized attributes to differentiate them from a civilized society and demonstrates how sport media can resurrect these representations by fostering violent and hostile antipathies that add “spice” to major sport media spectacles (Jiwani, 2008; Rowe, 2010).

In this next example, Finebaum mocks Charles and deliberately infantilizes him by pointing out that one of Charles’ predictions from the previous spring was wrong:

PF: [Talking over Charles] Uh, Charles there is no way to answer you. You have all the answers. That’s why Auburn is, uh, an underdog to lose it’s sixth game of the season tomorrow.

Charles: Well, you know what, I’m glad of it! They’ve been an underdog in every Iron Bowl game…

PF: [Interrupting Charles] Charles let me ask you, I remember back in the spring when you were predicting Auburn to go undefeated and make the national championship. You only missed by about 6 games.

Charles: [Beginning is inaudible] I didn’t know ole Jeff Williams was gonna be a thud like he turned out to be. That’s part of the Auburn problem Paul, of course you know that. Let me tell you something, Auburn is gonna put it all together. They gonna put it all together for four quarters and they’re gonna play hard. They aint supposed to win a lot of them bowl games like the [inaudible] game [starts mentioning other games in a very rushed, loud and inaudible tone, but he is defending how Auburn always overcomes the underdog role in big games].

PF: [Interrupting Charles once again and with his hands facing outward as if to stop Charles from ranting] Charles, I asked you a question. I don’t need you to give me the history of the Iron Bowl. I really don’t. [During this Charles is still screaming in the background trying to talk over Paul.]

Charles: You know what?! All ya’ll fans can brag all you want to, but you’re braggin aint gonna win you ballgames. The braggin is….

PF: [Starts talking and Charles is yelling even louder in the background] Charles, no one is bragging.

Charles: Ya’ll gonna be just as sorry! I’ll tell you that! [Out of frustration, Charles hangs up the phone]
PF: Hmmm. You still there? I didn’t think he was still there. [PF rolls his eyes and takes a big sigh while looking down, almost in an act of disgust] That is an Auburn fan right there, predicting victory. [PF then smiles sarcastically and looks at the camera with a smirk] 855-242-7285. We are live in Auburn for the next 3 and a half hours. Many guests to come. Beautiful day here, same for tomorrow. We will be right back.

Finebaum creates this scenario by arguing and deliberately mocking Charles about his incorrect prediction from last spring. Through this arguing and mocking, Paul serves the role as a “rational” adult, while Charles serves the role as a “childish” fan whose reality of the Iron Bowl is blinded by his fandom for Auburn. Charles exhibits child-like rage by hanging up the phone out of frustration and attacking Alabama fans by saying, “You know what?! All ya’ll can brag all you want to, but your braggin’ ain’t gonna win you ballgames.” While rationality is the characteristic of humans, the lack thereof refers a person to a state of child-like rage, such as we see here with Charles when he hangs up the phone out of frustration and complains about Alabama fans bragging (Jiwani, 2008). Callers such as Charles from Reeltown are fundamental to Finebaum’s show and its success and aids the show in creating stories, populating them with child-like characters, and giving the show its structure and longevity (Lull & Hinerman, 1997; Jiwani, 2008). Through constructing a narrative that reads like reality television, this technique enables Finebaum to contribute to the continual construction of the people of the Southern football culture as displaying biblical and immature violence/rage.

Violence and Hostility – Technique 2: Probing and inducing

In the next technique, we see that Finebaum continues to ask probing questions to further exude this violent nature of Southern football fans. Tammy showed violence numerous times during this week’s episodes when she threatened to “knock her husband’s teeth in” and snarled at an Alabama fan who was a child. In this extended
example we see that Finebaum probes Tammy by asking her a series of questions about her past physical encounters with Alabama fans:

PF: How do you consume the game tomorrow? You’ll be where?

Tammy: Well I was gonna be here to tailgate, and my husband still says I’m gonna be here to tailgate, but my mouth sometimes I may need to be at home, so when I get ready to hit something I can hit.

PF: You have been known to get into altercations because of that mouth right?

Tammy: Oh yeah. Not just my mouth! Someone always wants to fight me! I ain’t gonna back away from it.

PF: So, of course, I already know the answer to this question, but you have gotten in fights with people over Alabama-Auburn?

Tammy: Oh yeah! My husband one of em. [Charles laughs]

PF: Well forget your husband. What’s your best story other than him?

Tammy: My best story of beatin a Bama up. Well we was watching TV and there were prolly about 6 or 7 of us and Auburn…

PF: Where were you?

Tammy: We were at a friends house in Wilsonville, Alabama at my cousin’s house and a Bama was runnin his mouth and doin this and doin that.

PF: How big was he?

Tammy: He wasn’t too big. Not big enough I wouldn’t whoop his butt!

PF: Why are you looking at me? [Charles laughs]

Tammy: Cause I ain’t found one that was too big! He was runnin his mouth, so I pick something up and threwed it at him.

PF: What did you throw at him?

Tammy: I threwed that ash tray that was sittin right over there. My aunt done did it, so she thought I could do it, she done it before.

PF: [In disbelief] You threw an ash tray and it hit him?
Tammy: Yeah it hit him!

PF: Where did it hit him?

Tammy: [Laughing] On the back of the head.

PF: Is he still living?

Tammy: Yeah he’s still living. My cousin sent him in his way.

Finebaum continually asks Tammy about a physical altercation she had with an Alabama fan. Through the act of asking questions and probing at this encounter Tammy willingly describes her violent confrontation, which serves as entertainment for Finebaum’s listeners/viewers. Here we see that Finebaum has created an episode where Southern football fans are represented as violent and having an internal street-fighting instinct by continuing to ask probing questions about Tammy’s encounters with Alabama fans. This act of thuggery and violence portrayed on the show by Tammy are a way to “truth,” a means by which the public façade is penetrated and privileged access gained to the domain of the private lives of Southern football fans (Rowe, 1997). Paul Finebaum cultivates these claims of ritualized assaults by self-consciously bringing the ugly dimensions of the private lives of his callers into the public arena of sport media through techniques, such as probing and inducing, that are interwoven together to further internal Orientalize Southern football culture. In so doing, the significance of violence and hostility amongst Southern football fans is heavily prescribed (Yoon & Wilson, 2014). This reaffirms that sport media spectacles can be the most potent and vibrant stages in which human drama can be played out in real time before a vast national audience (Rowe, 2010; Roche, 2000). In addition, this also reveals how this ‘Us versus Them’ mentality can occur amongst Southern fans and is not just used to combat the North. This
mentality extracts violent behavior from fans because ‘they’ (i.e. Alabama fans) do not agree with ‘us’ (i.e. Auburn fans) as can be seen in Tammy’s attacks on Alabama fans. Finebaum has success in extorting the uncivilized and volatile nature of Southern football fans, in which cases some violence sinks to the depths of senseless and unnecessary.

While Tammy’s physical violence on another human being is indeed a senseless act; this next example further exudes this senseless violence through hitting an inanimate object. Finebaum probes and asks Larry about a YouTube video of him beating an Auburn painted car with a sledgehammer:

PF: We’re back in Auburn on a great Friday afternoon. We are glad you’re on board, Tony Barnhart mentioning before the break that tomorrow may be Les Miles’ last game in Baton Rouge. That goes with the narrative of this week. We will talk a little bit later with Brent Musberger to see what he has to say about that. I was just looking at a YouTube video from the one and only Larry. Larry you’ve gone viral. What’s with this rant you’ve put on YouTube? (Video being referenced is that of Larry smashing a car with Auburn painted on it.)

Larry: [In a very deep southern draw, talking very slowly] Finebaum! Well, you know Finebaum, I was ridin’ along and seen this car on the side of the road and this girl I put a sledgehammer in and I thought, you know what I’m gonna go over there and just whoop that Aubu…n car. And I got so pumped up Finebaum! Wooooo! Man, I was…

PF: Larry, we’re in Auburn as you know and we passed through, not far from where you live when we were coming down, and a lot of Auburn fans are here. Do you have a message for them? [PF says this with his hands raised out as if he welcomes the craziness that is about to come.]

Larry: [In a laughing tone] Yeah, come on and get you some Jack! Ay, just bring Gus Malzahn cause Auburn fans right now are smarter than their coach. [Says something inaudible, then chuckles hysterically] Aint much of a fight Finebaum.

By asking Larry about his actions of beating the car, Southern football fans are construed as fundamentally violent and volatile. In addition, Finebaum deliberately asks Larry what he would like to say to the Auburn fans that are there live, watching his show. This is an act of antagonization where Finebaum enables Larry to demonstrate monstrous behavior.
such as the senseless violence of beating a car and telling Auburn fans to, “… come on and get you some Jack!” which references his street fighting instinct and his willingness to attack Auburn fans. In both examples from Tammy and Larry, they take significant pride in participating in this violence. This instinct is an aggressive and uncivilized characteristic that is used to demonstrate typical Southern football fan culture, where this street fighting and thuggish behavior reign supreme. *The Paul Finebaum Show* is indeed a theatre of sports and manifests a displacement where the socialization of violence is controlled through trash talk amongst fans. Therefore, sport media, such as Finebaum’s show, have become a venue through which Southern football culture contains and tames violence, making it acceptable and legitimizes this behavior amongst fans (Jiwani, 2008). However, this legitimizing of violence amongst Southern football fans further creates a profile of the culture as an internal Other by prescribing them as inherently violent, a common stereotypical representation of internal Orientalism (Said, 1979; Jiwani, 2008). These examples demonstrate behavior that is outside the boundaries of a normal society. The layering biases of representing Southern football fans as inherently violent reflects the power media agendas, such as Finebaum’s, can have in perpetuating pre-existing expectations and stereotypes of Southern football culture (Hammet, 2011). Thus, Finebaum perpetuates images of violence, savagery, and brutality about this culture.

*Violence and Hostility – Technique 3: Interrupting and Cutting-Off Callers*

To further reinforce this representation of a violent and hostile Southern football fan culture, Finebaum uses his technique of interrupting or cutting off callers. In this example, we see Finebaum bringing two of his callers, Larry and Jim, onto the show to argue with one another, then Larry is abruptly cut off:
Larry: Well let me lay something down cause it’s prolly gonna make someone mad, but I am really mad at Jim from Tuscaloosa. That man in that wheelchair, that’s Braveheart, he’s got somethin’ and he’s usin’ that platform to praise God. And for Jim from Tuscaloosa to come out there and compare his injury to his, sayin’ he done this, he prolly had a hernia!

PF: Hey Larry, hold on a second. Regardless of what you think, and regardless of his injury, and I do know the story with Jim’s injury. What Jim had to say really wasn’t so much about that as it was about what he heard from Devon and how it inspired him to look more positively in his future in regards to his faith.

Larry: Okay.

PF: That was the message.

Larry: Every time he’s come on this show Paul Finebaum, he’s never ever used this show or platform to even mention God, he thinks he’s God.

PF: That is not, that is not true. I mean The first conversation Jim and I ever had was in relation to faith and, and that’s, that’s how it began.

Larry: Yeah, I think he picked some bad timin’ to come up with a so-called injury and his super sport thing, you know, I’m just mad about it. Come on there and praise the young man and don’t put yourself on some kind of level with this young man.

PF: Well, listen, if, when, if you listen to a minister, Larry the best way to connect with people are to tell personal stories about yourself or about something that has happened. I’m not talking about quoting from the Bible, I’m talking about real life experiences that relate to that and I thought that’s what Jim was trying to do. It affected me what he said because a lot of people heard what he said. Jim is back, so let me…

Larry: Oh he’s really back man…. I swear.

PF: Jim you there?

Jim: Yeah. I’m gonna tell you something Larry, you’re a damn fool buddy! You don’t know what the hell you’re talking about! [PF cracks a grin at this confrontation] [Jim and Larry argue back and forth and you can’t understand what is said because they are trying to talk over one another, but they are mad and yelling at one another.] You’re the reason that…

PF: Hold on! Larry, Larry, Larry, Larry let Jim speak.
Jim: You’re the reason that I wanna call on this show because you’re a piece of trash! I know what I feel in my heart! I know what’s true! You’ve been doin’ nothin’ but beatin’ up people and you’re going to rot in eternal life! I’m sorry Paul! This stinkin’ scumbag!!!! [Yelling very loudly] He’s wrong Paul! That’s all I’m gonna say. His view is wrong! Thank you Paul.

Larry: Can I say somethin’? Jim are you recitin’ that from the Bible? Callin’ people fools and you love God? Callin’ me all kinds of things. You are a holy rolly Jim. You know that no one likes you and you come on here to explain your situation to bump yourself up. That’s what I gotta say Jack and you’re right, I can kick ass. That’s what I’d like to do to you cause… [Caller gets cut off.]

PF: [sounding disgusted] Thanks Larry for the call. Nothing like changing the mood on what had been a low-key solemn day. I-man is up next.

Finebaum and his show cut Larry off because he was verbally attacking Jim and his personal character. By cutting this caller off, Finebaum is able to show his disapproval of Larry’s behavior and also represents Southern fans as violent and hostile. This abrupt cutting off of the caller is a way to silence his violence. The silence itself highlights the violent nature of Southern football fans and reveals that Finebaum does not want to tolerate this violence. Therefore, the act of silencing the caller is a signal of Othering itself by morally disapproving of Larry’s unnecessary brutality. The verbal threatening and thuggish behavior from Larry such as “I can kick ass!,” and, “You are a holy rolly Jim,” led to Finebaum cutting him off. Through this violent combat, Finebaum creates a scenario where this intolerant violence is displayed and Southern football culture is represented as crazy and wild (Jiwani, 2008). Perceptions of the “volatility” of Southern football fans lead to an exaggerated violent portrayal of lifestyle in the American South (Malcom, 2010). This violence amongst one another implicitly provides a distinct difference between the North and South, where Southern football fans posit raw, uncontained violence.

*Violence and Hostility – Technique 4: Using Non-Verbal Gestures*
As discussed in theme one, Finebaum uses non-verbal gestures to further his constructive narrative toward Southern football culture. Through the use of non-verbal gestures Finebaum highlights the unattractive features about the people of the Southern football culture. In the following example we see Finebaum do this to invoke behavior out of Charles:

**PF:** [Interrupting Charles once again and with his hands facing outward as if to stop Charles from ranting] Charles, I asked you a question. I don’t need you to give me the history of the Iron Bowl. I really don’t. [During this Charles is still screaming in the background trying to talk over Paul.]

Charles: You know what?! All ya’ll fans can brag all you want to, but you’re braggin aint gonna win you ballgames. The braggin is….

**PF:** [Starts talking and Charles is yeling even louder in the background] Charles, no one is bragging.

Charles: Ya’ll gonna be just as sorry! I’ll tell you that! [Out of frustration, Charles hangs up the phone]

By interrupting, another one of his techniques, and putting his hands out to stop Charles from ranting, Finebaum is showing his viewers that he disapproves of Charles’ behavior and wants him to stop. However, Charles continues to rant about Alabama fans and once again demonstrates his child-like violence and rage. Through this use of non-verbal gestures, Finebaum is creating a narrative tone of moral disapproval of Charles’ violence. This non-verbal tone causes Southern fans to become angrier and frustrated. In this next example, that was discussed earlier, we see a non-verbal gesture that Finebaum often implores when his callers are arguing:

**PF:** Hey Larry, hold on a second. Regardless of what you think, and regardless of his injury, and I do know the story with Jim’s injury. What Jim had to say really wasn’t so much about that as it was about what he heard from Devon and how it inspired him to look more positively in his future in regards to his faith.

Larry: Okay.
PF: That was the message.

Larry: Every time he’s come on this show Paul Finebaum, he’s never ever used this show or platform to even mention God, he thinks he’s God.

PF: That is not, that is not true. I mean The first conversation Jim and I ever had was in relation to faith and, and that’s, that’s how it began.

Larry: Yeah, I think he picked some bad timin’ to come up with a so-called injury and his super sport thing, you know, I’m just mad about it. Come on there and praise the young man and don’t put yourself on some kind of level with this young man.

PF: Well, listen, if, when, if you listen to a minister, Larry the best way to connect with people are to tell personal stories about yourself or about something that has happened. I’m not talking about quoting from the Bible, I’m talking about real life experiences that relate to that and I thought that’s what Jim was trying to do. It affected me what he said because a lot of people heard what he said. Jim is back, so let me…

Larry: Oh he’s really back man…. I swear.

PF: Jim you there?

Jim: Yeah. I’m gonna tell you something Larry, you’re a damn fool buddy! You don’t know what the hell you’re talking about! [PF cracks a grin at this confrontation] [Jim and Larry argue back and forth and you can’t understand what is said because they are trying to talk over one another, but they are mad and yelling at one another.] You’re the reason that… (By cracking a smile, PF shows that he believes that this argument between two of his callers is going to be very interesting/humorous.)

When Finebaum cracks a smile at the confrontation that is going on between Larry and Jim he is letting his viewers know that he finds their violence toward one another entertaining. While this gesture may seem simple, its complexity reveals that Finebaum believes that this conflict is pathetic, entertaining, unnecessary, and humorous. This gesture sets the morality and values of Southern football fans as fundamentally different from the rest of the country. Therefore, the stereotypical behaviors of American Southern football fans are heightened by Finebaum’s non-verbal illustration and signals their
failure to become integrated as a part of the civilized U.S. (Jiwani, 2008; Jansson, 2003). As a result, Finebaum’s gestures assist his verbal delivery to become part of the overall discourse of imprisoning Southern football culture as an Other.

Throughout this theme we see that Finebaum employed a variety of techniques such as mocking, inducing, probing, using non-verbal gestures, and labeling callers to reveal an ‘Us versus Them’ mentality amongst Southern football fans and the rest of the country and even amongst themselves, as seen in Tammy’s violence toward Alabama fans. Through this mentality, fans demonstrate verbal violence against the North that leads to physical violence between themselves due to the intense nature of SEC rivalries. Finebaum knows that rivalry games, such as the Iron Bowl, are a sensitive topic for fans of Alabama and Auburn and aims to exploit this for entertainment purposes. However, this results in representing the South’s violent and hostile past while also exploiting an ‘Us versus Them’ mentality with the North. The binary distinction between the American South and the rest of the country is a common dualism presented in Finebaum’s show. By giving his callers a national platform to argue with one another, call each other names, and attack each other’s personal character, he is directly contributing to the narrative of representing the South as fundamentally violent and hostile. According to Said (1979), these representations help to “paint all its residents with one brush” (p. 255). Here we see direct examples of this because Finebaum has the same frequent callers, such as Jim, Legend, Charles, and Tammy that represent this violence in Southern football culture. Therefore, the culture of the American South is represented as violent through Finebaum’s show. However, in reality the same four or five callers help to create this violent and hostile representation. Through the representational power of sport media,
Finebaum’s show creates a wider picture and image of the American South through the representations created by Southern football fans. Through this image we see a profile of Southern football fans representing a hostile and violent South.

CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Discussion

Sport media has an inevitable power to penetrate representations into the ideals and values of our social lives (McChesney, 1989) and these representations indeed consist of power, ideology, value, and biases (Kellner & Durham, 2001). As seen in this study, Paul Finebaum and his nationally syndicated radio show are no exception to this understanding, as it served as a representational tool to shape the discursive narrative of Southern football culture that mirrors an image of an unintelligent, backward, violent, and hostile American South. According to Hanna (2000), all representations are partial and embedded within a discursive context that guides the production of these representations. In the case of the United States, this context includes the discourse of internal Orientalism and the practice of Othering against the American South.

Throughout the analysis, this study discovered that The Paul Finebaum Show aided in representing Southern football culture as an internal Other through two themes: 1) Unintelligent and Backward: Profiling the American Southern Football Culture and 2) Hostile and Violent: The Southern Football Mob. In the first theme, Finebaum utilized seven interwoven techniques that led to representations of Southern football fans being lazy/non-industrial, backward, unintelligent, irrational, incoherent, lacking sports knowledge, and having the inability to annunciate or speak clearly. In addition, this theme introduced us to a narrative of Finebaum’s show, what is supposed to be a talk
show about SEC football, turning into that of a reality television show. To aid in this
narrative, Finebaum often probes his guests into talking about their personal lives, as seen
with Tammy. In so doing, Finebaum creates scenarios that allow his callers to become
famous characters, in which they further create an internal Other of Southern football
culture by showing their lack of virtuousness and revealing grotesque details about their
personal lives. In addition, this reveals how Finebaum uses micro-aggressive techniques,
such as probing and inducing, to enact certain reactions out of his callers. These
representations envision a Southern football fan as lacking manners and having the
inability to refrain from such details. Lastly, this theme revealed a “winning-losing”
mentality amongst Southern football fans that causes them to become blind to the
complexity of a sport or game because of their rabid and obsessive fandom, in which they
are only concerned with their team winning. Through this mentality, Southern football
fans can be labeled as irrational, such as the grotesque bet that Larry makes, and
incoherent and unintelligent.

In the second theme, Finebaum employed five different techniques that revealed
two separate sub-themes: 1) ‘Us versus Them’ Mentality and 2) Violence and Hostility.
The first sub-theme still reveals aspects of violence and hostility amongst Southern
football fans, but is mainly concerned with their combat with the North and the rest of the
country. Finebaum creates a binary narrative amongst his callers from the South and
North by labeling where they are from when they call in. In so doing, he creates an
identity for each caller before they even speak and allows his listeners/viewers to form
perceptions of these callers. This reinforces a mental map of the United States where
Finebaum’s audience can ‘map’ out the South based on characteristics from his callers.
This invokes internal Orientalism by painting all of the people of Southern football culture with stereotyped characteristics and the paint of a single brush (Said, 1979). Furthermore, this sub-theme further reinforces this ‘Us versus Them’ mentality through Finebaum creating scenarios where his callers from the South become agitated by questions about Northern football. In these scenarios, Southern football fans proclaim their dominance on the football field to create a Civil War type of battle with Northern football fans and express their joy when top Northern teams lose because it further reinforces Southern football dominance. This binary ‘Us versus Them’ mentality is essential to understand how Southern football culture feels the need to overcome the inferiority placed upon them and dominate in some aspect of social life.

In the second sub-theme, the violent and hostile nature of Southern football culture is brought to the forefront. According to Jiwani (2008) and Jansson (2005), having the characteristics of being inherently violent and hostile are commonly found in the internal Other. These characteristics are fundamentally forged into the culture of Southern football fans through the techniques Finebaum uses that successfully extract this behavior out of his callers. Finebaum continually agitates, probes, questions, and annoys his callers, which ultimately results in them displaying irrational violence, childlike rage, and unnecessary hostility. As such, the Southern football fans were revealed as carrying thuggish violence and street-fighting instincts, reinforcing the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality. In this sense, Southern fans perpetuated unnecessary violence amongst one another because ‘they’ (i.e. a rival fan) did not agree with ‘us’. In addition, the “winning-losing” mentality that was discovered in the first theme was also revealed in this theme, as crazed fandom blinded Southern football fans ability to articulate their rational about
the game. This instead resulted in violence toward one another and inanimate objects to project their love for their team and who they think would win games. Ultimately, Finebaum’s show and his callers have created a unique sport media spectacle unlike any other sport talk show. The show thrives and succeeds off of drama that plays on the lives of real people, such as Tammy, Legend, Larry, and Charles. The drama displayed by these callers are encouraged by Finebaum via the techniques discussed above, precisely because he has formed relationships with these callers and knows what triggers their outlandish behaviors.

Overall, the characteristics of an internal Other that have been discovered by many (Jansson, 20003 & 2005, Jiwani, 2008, Eriksson, 2010, Winders, 2005; Johnson & Coleman, 2012) were found to be reinforced in this study through the representations created by Paul Finebaum and his show. In this process, the variety and effectiveness of Finebaum’s techniques served as a representational tool for American Southern football culture to be viewed as an internal Other. Indeed, these representations were a production of meaning through language, discourse, and image in an ongoing process of media dynamics (Hall, 1997). As a result, these representations about Southern football culture, whether they were directly displayed by the callers themselves or seen through non-verbal clues given by Finebaum, were unconscious or conscious tools where ideological forces were endowed with specific contexts and given a public life (Kellner & Durham, 2001). Ultimately, these representations reinforced by Finebaum’s show allowed himself and his audience to practice Othering against this culture. In so doing, this reduces the complexity of the people of American Southern football culture and takes away the
ability for Finebaum’s audience to construct their own representations of this culture that embodies the American South.

According to Foucault (1995), power perpetuates itself through knowledge. Thus, while the knowledge produced about American Southern football culture by Finebaum paints these representations as the “truth,” it deprives a person’s ability to form their own representation about Southern football fans. The characteristics of Southern football culture described above are forced upon the people of this culture and therefore help to shape an internal Orientalist image about the American South. As Stuart Hall (1992) reminds us, popular culture such as Finebaum’s show is often stereotyped and becomes the arena in which we find who we really are and the truth of our experience. Sport media itself provides a profoundly mythic arena where “we discover and play with the identification of ourselves, where we are imagined, where we are represented, not only to the audiences who receive the message, but to ourselves for the first time,” (Hall, 1992, p. 32). Through this understanding, we can see how the power of sport media can have in shaping representations about the Other for its audiences, but also for the Other themselves. With this in mind, this study has made contributions and addressed gaps in analyzing the sport media discourse and the discourse of internal Orientalism.

4.2 Contributions and Gaps Addressed in the Sport Media Discourse

As discussed above, The Paul Finebaum Show is a unique sport talk show producing content and contributing to the sport media discourse everyday. Sport media, such as Finebaum’s show, are key conduits in the communication of the representations of certain cultures, such as Southern football culture. Through this sport media patrol and mark the ethical frontiers of media and use between popular discourses, such as internal
Orientalism, in a relentless quest for the “truth” of the day (Rowe, 2007). Press, such as Finebaum’s show, continue to mobilize essentialized discourses about its subjects. The understandings of these people who inhabit Southern football culture are continually reconstructed through the interactions he has with the callers on his show. The system of US sport media representation consists of different ways of organizing, clustering, arranging and classifying concepts, and of establishing complex relations among them (Kim, 2012). Therefore, sport media, through national and global scale ‘frozen moments’, can perpetuate popular interrogations of unintelligence, laziness, violence, and hostility and its myriad connections to other socio-cultural structures and identities, such as the American South (Rowe, 2010).

By analyzing Finebaum’s show from this internal Orientalist perspective, this study was effective in addressing the gaps that were presented in the third research question (Through the representations, how has *The Paul Finebaum Show* contributed to delineate an internalized Other of the American South in the sport media discourse?). By addressing this gap, we were able to see how sport media discursive structures, such as *The Paul Finebaum Show*, have largely contributed to the production of a reified image of the American South as a place where the people are irrational, unintelligent, hostile, and violent. Through this image, the South is viewed as a place that is unassimilable to the rest of the country (Jiwani, 2008). This reveals the representational power that sport media can have in constructing an internal Other, or producing an agenda of any particular discourse as seen in Jiwani’s (2008) and Malcom’s (2010) studies. Therefore, media such as Finebaum’s show, contribute to the subjective positioning of people and places within socially available “hierarchies and systems of signification… that produce
regimes of truth” about its subjects (Tuathail, 1994, p. 535; Hammet, 2011). Through this regime of truth, the institution of sport media is an enormously powerful force in shaping knowledge and understanding of increasingly dynamic, complex societies, such as the American South (Rowe, 2010). Furthermore, it is exactly through the discursive construction of representation that meanings and knowledge are created and circulated, which become regime of truth (Hall, 1997). Overall, this study revealed how powerful sport media can be and why the representations they produce need to be examined while also enriching the discourse by using the framework of internal Orientalism to examine it.

4.3 Contributions and Gaps Addressed in the Discourse of Internal Orientalism

The media narrative of The Paul Finebaum Show constitutes a meta-narrative of internal Orientalism that sheds insight to the framework and how the show aids in contributing to this discourse (Jiwani, 2008). The callers on Finebaum’s show have taken the Southern culture of sports beyond the sports pages and into the realms of hyper-media, where information, analysis, censure, and pleasure intertwine in ways that defy rationalist critique (Rowe, 1997). Popular callers and characters such as Tammy, Charles from Reeltown, Jim from Tuscaloosa, Legend, and Larry have reached iconic status outside of Finebaum’s show because of their outlandish behavior displayed on the show. The textual voracity of sport media can give strong “legs” to particular callers and their behavior to the extent that they achieve “iconic” status. This status allows the continuous invocation of their behavior that has passed its peak media flow (Rowe, 1997, p. 216; Jiwani, 2008). In addition, the antics of these callers and their national fame has permeated the national mediasphere to create a stereotyped image of Southern football culture (Jiwani, 2008). This iconic status is achieved through the techniques used by
Finebaum to extract stereotypical behavior from callers that creates a media-lined plot where these characters border between homage and outrage, celebration and vilification, moralism and nihilism (Rowe, 1997). The representations created by Finebaum about Southern football fans are framed by internal Orientalist power relations that invoke unintelligence, irrationality, backwardness, violence, and hostility into the embodiment of the American South (Hammet, 2011).

This study’s analysis revealed that the conceptualization of Southern football fans has castigated and embodied the culture of the American South. Through the examination of Finebaum’s show and the representations it produces about Southern football culture, reveals how the practical and suggestive distinctions based on binary dualisms are common and frequent structures of Othering. In this sense, all of these themes revealed what is viewed as normal, the lifestyle and culture of the North and the rest of the country, while the South’s lifestyle and culture is viewed as not normal (Kim, 2012). As a result of this, we see that the embodiment of the American South is seen as a threat to the rest of the country’s image. In addition, the American South, through the representations created on Finebaum’s show about Southern football fans, is positioned as an internal Other where the region is perpetually painted as one of backwardness, inferiority, and culturally different from the rest of the country in order to protect their identities (Hammet, 2011). These exaggerations that are powered by Finebaum lead to an imagined South that is connected to popular prejudices that have been essential to internal Orientalist views (Jouhki, 2006). Lastly, Finebaum’s show inserts American Southern football culture into the discourse of an internal Other via the man-made representations that are introduced in the show through narratives that entangle football fans in an already
existing pattern of American Southern representation (Kim, 2012). Through all of these processes we see that this structure of internal Orientalism in the U.S., the Other is an element of comparison with the subject, and remains radically different from the subject (Kim, 2012). In this way, the show is the embodiment of the social processes that underlie and are reproduced by the discourse of internal Orientalism (Jansson, 2005).

Through this analysis and discovering how Finebaum creates an internal Other of Southern football culture, I addressed the questions raised in research questions one - what discursive knowledge about the Southern college football culture is produced from the Paul Finebaum Show? and two - what specific discursive practices, techniques, strategies, and interactions with callers have been employed by Paul Finebaum to represent the southern college football culture? Through his variety of techniques discussed above, Finebaum produces knowledge about the Southern football culture that creates them as an internal Other in the United States by painting them as backward, unintelligent, irrational, hostile, and violent. These findings mirror similar results that were found in Jansson (2003 & 2005) and Newman (2005). However, Jansson examined an early 1900’s literary novel and the film *Mississippi Burning*, while Newman examined NASCAR culture in the American South. This study was able to address a gap by presenting how sport media in the United States represents the American South through its football culture as an internal Other, while also aiding in enriching the internal Orientalist discourse by examining the framework through the processes of sport media.

### 4.4 Problems with Internal Orientalism and Sport Media Representation

While the representations produced from internal Orientalism indeed have power in representing certain cultures as having stereotyped characteristics, such as we saw in
this study with American Southern football culture, the discourse can be problematic by creating stereotyped images and representations of people, cultures, and regions. This further reinforces binary divisions that have structured our political thinking and the theorization about the political for so long: domination and emancipation; power and resistance; Same and Other; civility and desire (Rose, 1999). The Paul Finebaum Show indeed reinforces this binary agenda of internal Orientalism everyday and forces an Othering agenda against Southern football culture to its listeners and audience. This creates a problem of sport media using power to represent a culture, such as Southern football fans, as having certain characteristics, taking away the audience’s ability to form their own perceptions about the culture, and taking away the culture’s ability to represent themselves in a matter in which they please. In this sense we must understand that the spectacle of sport media needs to be further examined to reveal how powerful their representational practices can be.

According to Yoon and Wilson (2014), ‘good’ sports journalism is sensitive to socio-political context and ‘critical’ sports journalism focuses on links between sport and broader issues, such as foreign policy and how sport can aid in this process, then that begs the question: where does The Paul Finebaum Show fall in this debate? Finebaum’s show certainly does not aim to connect to broader social issues, but rather exploits its callers and participants and represent them as an Other. The audience-driven imperatives of media representation that we see on Finebaum’s show, is heavily reliant on an “us/them” dualism that is conducive to benign, as well as malign, practices (Rowe, 2010). Dunksky (2008) examines journalistic values and that these values follow a set of ‘formulaic guidelines’ that inform the production of ‘empirical, dramatic, yet superficial
snapshots’ that the public can easily recognize. The problem with following these guidelines is that journalists may contribute to the propagation of certain stereotypes and perpetuation of certain discourses such as internal Orientalism, as we see with *The Paul Finebaum Show* (Fairclough, 1995; Yoon & Wilson, 2014). The findings in this study highlight the underlying point that context matters when comparing media production practices (Yoon & Wilson, 2014). *The Paul Finebaum Show* is mainly structured around Southern football fans and their behaviors/thoughts, but the American South is a culture that can be viewed through a much bigger context that college football and the media that covers it.

Ultimately, it is important to keep in mind that the antics that occur on *The Paul Finebaum Show*, may be staged in order to increase ratings. Finebaum and his production crew know what behavior warrants discussion amongst its fan base and therefore plays into that role and fabricates the interactions that occur on the show, while also letting his popular callers know what they are aiming to do. In addition, it is also important to keep in mind that it may not only be Paul Finebaum that aids in creating this stereotyped image of Southern football culture, but rather his production crew as well. Finebaum’s producers could be giving advice to Finebaum for certain callers, or letting him know that they have an agitated caller on the line. This could help Finebaum prepare for how he wants to handle this caller and ultimately leading to a reified image of Southern football culture. Through this process, Finebaum brings out the vulgarity of Southern football fans and sport in which he exploits this behavior to create an Other of this culture because of sport media’s representational power (Wiedeman, 2012).
Lastly, sport media representations, such as the ones explored in this study about Southern football culture, have portrayed a homogenous and one-faceted identity. Meanwhile, other facets must be considered in relation to such findings. For example, in examining college football at the University of Mississippi, Newman (2005) portrays how this culture prescribes to “white” ideals and consists of “elitist exclusivity” while injecting “hyper-white and hyper-masculine” ideologies into the culture (p. 149-150). As such, it is attributed to the old, white supremacist ideals of the American South. In a similar way, the results from Finebaum’s show also displays glimpses of “hyper-white” and “hyper-masculine” narratives. For example, one of Finebaum’s most popular callers, Tammy, a female, exudes stereotypical masculine characteristics such as loud shouting and acts of violence toward other fans (i.e. throwing ash trays at people). This could be because Tammy feels that she needs to assert her masculinity amongst the other male callers in order to stand out. In addition, while Finebaum’s show has non-popular callers from different races, the major characters remain dominantly white. The reasoning for this is unknown and this hyper-white narrative of the show could be studied in future studies.

On the other hand, the findings from this show reveal that “hyper-white” and “hyper-masculine” are not the primary narratives of Finebaum’s show. This may be because the format of Finebaum’s show has made the it into the national media spectacle that it is by playing to the masses, where intense arguments and outlandish disagreements of low intellectual ability that occur between Finebaum and his callers provides opportunities for entertainment. In conclusion, the findings from investigating The Paul Finebaum Show, coupled with Newman’s (2005) findings, contribute to a better
understanding of the complexities of American Southern football culture, perpetuated with historical and social prejudices.

4.5 Limitations and Directions for Future Research

While this study addressed the representational power that sport media can have in constructing an internal Other in the case of the Southern United States, some limitations did occur. First, the sample size consisted of one week’s worth of The Paul Finebaum Show, or three total days. The shows that were analyzed in this study primarily focused on rivalry week games and a main topic of discussion was the Iron Bowl. A larger sample size would provide for better validity of the overall findings, but this study allowed for an introduction into studying the sport media discourse, specifically in the United States, and the effects it has in creating an internal Other. Secondly, with this being a qualitative study, the results could have been interpreted differently by another researcher. The subjectivities that I addressed in my methodology section help to explain how these may have skewed the interpretation of the results. However, since there were themes and techniques, and examples to support these themes and techniques, that were prevalent in all three shows I still believe that these results are valuable and can be used in future research. According to Kim (2012), media language is metaphorical and suggestive rather than logical and analytical; therefore it lingers and can easily be adapted to a different context/event, such as the discourse of internal Orientalism.

With these limitations in mind, I would like to address some areas where future research can be conducted using this theoretical framework and the sport media discourse. First, research could be conducted that interviews people who watch The Paul Finebaum Show to see how they interpret Finebaum’s callers and their antics. Important
in this research would be to ask participants how they perceive the American South and Southern football culture based on Finebaum’s callers and asking them if they believe that Finebaum aids in creating these perceived representations. This type of research could help to add validity to the results from this study and strengthen the representation of Southern football culture via the representational power of sport media. Additionally, one could conduct research very similar to this study, but analyze a different set of *The Paul Finebaum Show*. For instance, during the College Football Playoff this past season, in which Alabama participated in, Finebaum’s show could have provided more moments to reveal the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality that was discussed in this study as Alabama played Michigan State in the first round of the playoffs. A data set such as this could further validate the results from this study, as well as reveal some potential new themes and techniques implored by Finebaum.
REFERENCES


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