

**“IT’S GREAT TO BE A FLORIDA GATOR”:
FANS NEGOTIATING IDEOLOGIES OF RACE, GENDER, AND POWER**

By

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To Papa.

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GO GATORS!!!!

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Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School
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"IT'S GREAT TO BE A FLORIDA GATOR":
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May 2003

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This research attempts to bridge two strains of literature—the social psychology fan literature on vicarious connections and the feminist sport literature on hegemonic masculinity—to understand the ways in which fans connect to masculine displays on the field while reformulating the boundaries and expectations within ideological notions of masculinities and femininities. As such, the research questions seek to explore the process of connection and disconnection within larger ideological notions of gender and race, complementing theory and empiricism concerning both.

First, how do fans establish a vicarious link to masculinity within the event enacted on the field as well as in the stands? Second, how do fans maintain this connection particularly in relation to the other team? Third, how do certain members reformulate notions of masculinity as hegemonic? Fourth, how are gender and race used to create boundaries between hegemonic notions of

masculinity and subjugated masculinities and femininities and how are those boundaries maintained to create hegemonic, white masculinity? Finally, how are the football players, creators of some of the most masculine exemplars in the event, denied access to the very notions they help create?

In order to describe the processes connecting to masculinity, reformulating hegemonic masculinity in the context of subjugated masculinities and femininities, and disconnecting from the masculinity on the field, this research analyzes participant observation from the 2001 season of University of Florida football as well as focus groups with self-identified fans, both current students and alumni.

By using the extended case method, the results of this research provide insights into theories concerning the intersectionality of race and gender more generally and in sports as well as how ideology and structure interact. As such, these results suggest that future policy and research suggestions should remain attentive to the complexity of these relationships.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

It is the first game of the 2001 season, early evening on a balmy Saturday in September. The Florida sun will set soon in its usual celebration of orange and blue, but it has already created enough heat to tire the players and the fans who will watch them toil here in the stadium affectionately known as "the Swamp." Stretching on the field, the unranked, unlucky opponents from Marshall University are no match for the Gators. There is an unmistakable sense of expectation in the air, when dressed in his traditional yellow oxford and striped orange and blue tie, Mr. Two Bits (George Edmundson) charges onto the field, back from retirement for the opening game of what is anticipated as a National Championship season. The crowd goes wild and over 80,000 people all yell in unison, "Two bits, four bits, six bits, a dollar. All for the Gators, stand up and holler!" Then, referring to the preseason college football rankings, the cheer director asks the anxious crowd, "How's it feel to be number one?" The decibel level increases tenfold as the crowd roars while the team rushes onto the field, because the video of an alligator's gaping mouth displayed on the JumboTron reminds the crowd, "in the Swamp, only the Gators get out alive." The game begins.

This tiny cross-section of Gator football fandom shows how energy, tradition, community, emotions, and identity intertwine in the fan experiences. We see these elements elsewhere; but here form a more powerful whole. There

is more excitement in seeing the performance live rather than on television. The watcher is well aware of the nuanced traditions that revolve around a particular team and school. Most important, though, the sheer scale makes the experience in the football stadium more intense, multiplying the effects of the factors involved.

In this case, size really does matter, creating experiences that forge the identities of the followers. Perhaps the only experience that competes is nationalistic pride. National pride is particularly evident in times of outside assault, such as the events surrounding the September 11th attacks on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon and the subsequent "war on terrorism." But even here, the Gator landscape co-opts nationalism and makes it a part of Gator fandom. Most importantly, while most Americans must uneasily wait unspecified amounts of time for aggression, Gator fans have only to wait until the next fall season to be guaranteed the conflict that helps solidify groups. In this spirit, the official web page for Gator sports (www.gatorzone.com) once contained a countdown clock for the spring "Orange and Blue" scrimmage and the first game of the fall season.

By merging notions of community and tradition in an energetic and emotional cauldron of 85,000 fans in one stadium, those inside and outside the stadium develop notions of their individual and popular identities. In this research, I focus on the ways in which fans do identity work within the context of football games. Of particular importance are the ways in which fans negotiate their Gator identities in terms of gender and racial or ethnic affiliation.

About the University of Florida and Gator Football

The University of Florida (UF) is located in North, Central Florida in a city called Gainesville, situated just east along Interstate 75. The oldest state university in Florida began as the consolidation of a few smaller institutions, East Florida Seminary and Kingsbury Academy (1853) and then Florida Agricultural College (1860s). The college was officially moved to Gainesville and established as a state university in 1906. The original student body of 102 students has grown over the last century to over 46,000 students, making it one of the five largest universities in the country (Gatorzone 2002b).

UF officially allowed the admission of women in 1947. Since that time, the ratio of women to men has increased to 52 to 48. This ratio is consistent with the state averages of females within the Florida population, which is 51.2% (U.S. Census Bureau 2002).

In 2001, 7.2% of students were African-American, 9.6% were Hispanic, and 6.8% were Asian-American or Pacific Islander. Compared to the state data from the 2000 census, 14.6% of the state population was Black or African-American, 16.8% were of Hispanic or Latino origin, 2.8% were Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander. The amounts of Blacks and Hispanics are disproportionately lower than would be expected from the Florida general population. Approximately three-fourths of the UF student body is White, non-Hispanic, compared to 65.4% of the state population. Like many other institutions of higher learning, UF is very White (Feagin and Sikes 1994).

A large school, UF also boasts of its academic competitiveness. The university houses 21 colleges and schools with more than 100 undergraduate

majors. With a distinguished record in agricultural research, the university also contains the leading law and medical schools in the state. Graduates from the university can be found throughout the country. Alumni throughout the U.S. as well as five foreign countries have formed 104 official Gator Clubs uniting alumni and their families for social and athletic functions and supporting current students through scholarships (University of Florida Alumni Association 2002).

Gator Clubs are integral to the Gator alumni experience. Most season-ticket holders are also members of Gator Clubs in their area. They may gather to watch the games together on television or to travel to Gainesville and to the various away games. The support Gator alumni give to their alma mater is not merely emotional. Gator alumni donate substantial amounts, providing for 240 athletic scholarships annually and contributing to ongoing improvements to facilities such as the \$50 million expansion to the Ben Hill Griffin football stadium (Gatorzone 2002a).

On average, most of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) sports programs spend more money than they raise. With respect to Division I-A schools, such as UF, in 2001, 65% of schools participating in the survey reported expenses that exceeded their revenues when controlling for institutional support (Fulks 2002). On average, 69% of the revenues in men's sports came from football programs. Football uses 56% of the resources for men's sports (*Ibid*). On average, football programs bring in more revenue than they spend. One of the single most important sources of revenue after ticket sales is alumni contributions (*Ibid*). UF claims to be among the few schools whose revenues

exceed their expenditures, noting that they have been able to put \$19.43 million dollars back into the university's academic programs since 1990, the beginning of the winning "Spurrier era" (Gatorzone 2002b).

The University of Florida (UF) is one of the founding members of the Southeastern Conference (SEC) established in 1932. In addition to the University of Florida, the SEC is comprised of the University of Georgia, the University of Kentucky, the University of South Carolina, the University of Tennessee, and Vanderbilt University in the East and the University of Alabama, the University of Arkansas, Auburn University, Louisiana State University, the University of Mississippi, and Mississippi State University in the West. In 2001, eight of these teams went to post-season bowl games and five of those won their competition (Southeastern Conference 2002). In comparison, the Big Ten (actually eleven teams) sent six teams to bowl games and won only two, losing three to SEC teams. The Big Twelve sent eight of its teams to bowl games and won three of those games. Arguably, the SEC is consistently one of the most competitive conferences in the division (Ernsberger 2000).

It is with this sense of pride in the university for its athletic, academic, and financial accomplishments that fans enter Ben Hill Griffin Stadium, known to most as the Swamp. The stadium holds over 85,000 fans and is in the process of adding more seating by the 2003 season, bringing the capacity closer to 90,000. While not the largest stadium in the NCAA or the SEC, it is reported to be one of the loudest and most "obnoxious" experiences in all of college football (Smith 2001, 78).

As noted above, the university has a mostly White campus, therefore, the majority of fans are White. Because many fans give away or sell their tickets, there is no accurate record of racial composition of the crowd. During my research, I took informal counts of different sections of the stadium, but even this has its limitations because people are always moving around and some sections are more costly than others. Some of the most expensive seats, I did not did access. My counts ranged from 0 to 20% Black fans, averaging less than 1% of the crowd. There is no doubt that there are people from various racial and ethnic backgrounds in the stands. However, the proportion of Blacks in the stands is much lower than that on the field; and lower than the racial composition of the university itself.

The SEC began desegregation in 1967 (Harris 2000). The SEC was one of the last conferences to desegregate and did so under the pressure of the U.S. Justice Department and the threat that their teams would not be as competitive with newly desegregated teams (Watterson 2000). The University of Florida responded positively to the University of Kentucky's 1963 request to play interracial teams. UF was not responsible for holding out, but they did not start the revolution either. Nationally, Blacks make up 40% of the players on football teams (King and Springwood 2001, 10), but some statistics indicate that Black players are more prevalent in Southern teams, such as the University of Florida (Harris 2000). At the University of Florida for the 2001 season, over 60% of the team was Black.

Gender is another dimension of the experience. The action on the field is almost entirely conducted by men: players, coaches, officials, and announcers. Some women gain access to the field as cheerleaders, band members, team trainers, and sportscasters, such as Jill Arrington for CBS Sports. However, the proportion of women in the stands is much greater than the proportion of women on the field. Through my informal counts, I noted that approximately 40% of the crowd consisted of women.

Above, I attempted to paint a broad picture of the context of the university, the football program, and the stadium. The actions and experiences of fans must be contextualized to be fully understood. In what follows, I put away the large brush and opted for a more detailed look at what occurs in the football games. I started by answering an important question: Why is it important to look at fan experiences at college football games?

Importance of Studying Football Fans

With 115 teams in Division I-A college football, every Saturday in the fall is an opportunity for around 2.5 million fans to file into their favorite stadiums to root for their teams (National Collegiate Athletic Association 2002). Even more fans gather in groups or alone in homes, restaurants, and bars to watch their teams compete on television. In the 2002 Bowl Championship Series (BCS), the big four bowls drew millions of viewers according to the Nielsen Ratings: 21.6 million viewers for the Rose Bowl (National Championship Game), 17 million viewers for the Fiesta Bowl, 14 million viewers for the Orange Bowl (with the University of Florida vs. the University of Maryland), and 13.1 million viewers for the Rose Bowl (Kielar 2002). To put these statistics in perspective, almost one in one

hundred people in the U.S. attended Division I-A football games each Saturday, and close to one in ten people in the U.S. tuned in to the Rose Bowl to find out the winner of the National Championship competition. Thus, while the majority of people in the U.S. do not watch football games, that does not mean that football spectators are an abnormality. Clearly, football spectators are quite common in the popular culture landscape.

While many spectators, coaches, players, and athletic administrators argue that football is just good, clean fun, there is clearly much more involved. Football games, as mass spectacle, draw millions of fans each week into the stadiums and in front of television sets. Colleges participate in the business of football by investing huge amounts of resources into programs and negotiating various sources of revenue to support their programs. Football programs are an ubiquitous reality on many campuses, located on some of the biggest and smallest colleges and universities. Clearly, football is important to the U.S., but even more, it is an important space for the negotiation of racial and gendered identities.

With millions of spectators participating in football games, millions of dollars are sure to follow. One indication of this manifests in the naming of the bowls. The Rose Bowl remains one of the only bowls to maintain its non-corporate name. With names such as the Nokia Sugar Bowl, the FedEx Orange Bowl, and my personal favorite, the Chik-Fi-La Peach Bowl, the games become a place where advertisers can control what images viewers watch between the plays of their favorite teams. This commercialism changes even the feel of the game. As

the University of Florida increased its airtime, with an increasing amount of games picked up for national coverage, fans were forced to learn about the television timeout. These are timeouts that do not necessarily fit into the natural flow of the game or abide by any rules. Rather, broadcasting companies can force a timeout if there has not been enough commercial time. Since, the timing of these are oftentimes arbitrary, fans have been known to cheer to the point of exhaustion before realizing that the game was not in play. Fans eventually learned that when the official in an all-white uniform, sometimes wearing a red cap, stood on the field, it meant there was a television timeout.

However, the commercial nature of the games is merely one dimension of the financial aspects of college football. As noted above, college football brings in the most revenue for athletic programs. As well, college football programs spend the most money. NCAA teams are restricted to 85 football scholarships on the field, having come down from 105 scholarships due to Title IX compliance. However, most coaches note that this is more than enough to fund all the starting players, as well as most of the second and some of the third string players, considering that on average only 55 players ever make it out to the field each game (Nielsen 2002).

To help fund their programs, university athletic programs turn to alumni, students, institutional support, televising, and bowl games as potential sources of revenue. How each school negotiates these sources dictates its varying levels of success. Some rightly call college football a business because of the large amounts of money changing hands.

While the amount of money and spectators involved in college football makes it an important realm to study, the most compelling reason is the impact upon the collective consciousness of the nation. Clearly, the vast scope of football spectatorship is beyond the reach of this research: to truly attempt to collect a representative sample of the millions of fans across the nation would require resources equaling that of the expenditures for a football program. However, a representative sample is not necessary because this is exploratory research attempting to show how the spectacle of football is an arena in which current racial and gender identities are reinforced and new ideas are formulated as groups interact. These identities are shaped in relationship to the game and the crowd interaction to fuse together notions of race and gender.

In particular, this research understands the stadium experience as a cultural event in which the vicarious connection between spectators and players creates and perpetuates intersecting notions of race and gender. Three research themes emerge from this perspective:

- All fans share a vicarious relationship with the players that is enhanced through fan participation at football games. Fans use the vicarious relationship with the players to connect to examples of masculine power.
- While all fans can use spectatorship to make the vicarious relationship to the players, the types of connections appropriate depend on the race and gender of the fan. Some fans are not as able as others to make the vicarious link to players and require more negotiation.
- Furthermore, the vicarious link only goes from fan to player, not the other way around, creating an exploitative relationship between fans and players.

The theoretical framework for this research relies upon the notion of hegemonic masculinity as an ideological construct that functions to legitimate a structure of gender and racial privilege and oppression. Within this theoretical framework, I

address the ways fans construct hegemonic masculinity as specifically White in contrast to subordinated masculinities and femininities through their vicarious connections to the masculine event of the game.

Hegemonic Notions of Masculinity: Gender, Race, and Power

The term hegemonic masculinity encompasses ideological notions of gender and race (as well as a myriad of other socially constructed identities) at the same time. By starting with differences between men, Connell (1992) argues that these differences consist of different manifestations of masculinity, "multiple masculinities" that are, in turn, understood only in relation to historically situated notions of femininity. Thus, gender cannot be conceptualized as a simple dichotomy of "male" versus "female;" rather it is relational such that "certain constructions of masculinity are hegemonic, while others are subordinated or marginalized" (Connell 1992, 736).

In other words, the gender order is a hierarchically arranged set of typifications in which men and women struggle for ideological resources. Within this struggle, gender itself, specifically claims to the ideals of masculine, is negotiated, for expressions of masculinity serve as justifications of dominance and power, that is, privilege. Even subjugated masculinities are by definition masculine and as such maintain privileges associated with masculinity. As a result, men and masculinities cannot be seen as one, homogeneous group. As Messner (1991) showed regarding athletic careers, prowess in sports after high school and college is subordinate to business success. Both are aspects of masculinity, but once particularized, the values associated with them become

clearer, such that on average society places a higher value on the masculinity of White, upper-class men over poor men of color.

Within this theoretical framework, I posit the participation of fans as ideological workers negotiating notions of gender and race as a process. As such, this research seeks to answer some fundamental questions concerning this process. First, how do fans establish a vicarious link to masculinity within the event enacted on the field as well as in the stands? Second, how do fans maintain this connection particularly in relation to the other team? Third, how do certain members reformulate notions of masculinity as hegemonic and White? Fourth, how are gender and race used to create boundaries between hegemonic notions of White masculinity and subjugated masculinities and femininities and how are those boundaries maintained? Finally, how are the football players, creators of some of the most masculine exemplars in the event, denied access to the very notions they help create? Below, I examine the crucial components of this perspective: vicarious connections to masculine ideals, creating and recreating intersecting notions of gender and race, and maintaining notions of masculine exclusivity. In the chapters that follow, I describe the process that connects these themes into a larger notion of ideology construction, maintenance, and exploitation. I turn first to the literature on vicarious connections between fans and sports teams.

Vicarious Connections and Masculinity

In the social psychological literature, researchers address the notion of vicarious connection as a means for fans to take part in the achievements of their team (Kimble and Cooper 1992). This association with the team is described as

"basking-in reflected-glory," BIRGing, while the opposite dissociation from the team if referred to as "cutting-off-reflected failure," CORFing (Wann and Branscombe 1990, Cialdini et al. 1976). After Wann and Branscombe (1993) operationalized vicarious connection as a scale measuring the degree of identification fans have with their team, researchers investigated the many factors contributing to why fans become identified with "their" teams and how they remain loyal to their team (Jones 1997, Wann and Schrader 1996, Wann et al. 1996).

Subsequent research in this area attests to the strength of this connection correlating with or mediating many other types of fan behavior, such as: attributional bias of wins and losses to intrinsic or extrinsic forces (Wann et al. 2001, Wann and Schrader 2000, Wann and Dolan 1994a), affect (Madrigal 1995), perception of team's performance (Wann and Dolan 1994b), enjoyment of performance (Wann and Schrader 1997), confidence in team's performance (Wann and Wiggins 1999), as well as attendance patterns (Laverie, and Arnett 2000).

The connection between fans and their team is best demonstrated in fans' attempts to assist their team through various behaviors, particularly crowd noise directed at the opposing team. While the actual efficacy of fan participation is somewhat disputed, research suggests that crowds often attempt to become a part of the team (the twelfth man on the football team) and cause penalties on the opposing team (Wann and Schrader 2000, Salminen 1993, Lehman and Reifman 1987, Mizruchi 1985, Greer 1983, Kroll 1979, Schwartz and Barsky

1977). In addition to the empirical support for the notion of vicarious connection, this body of research suggests that because of the high identification with the team's performance, fans must do significant work in ego maintenance when their team loses. Wann and Dolan (1994a) argued that

Because highly identified persons maintain their allegiance even in trying times, they must develop other strategies, such as selective attributions, to maintain their positive social identity, whereas those low in identification are less likely to use these strategies because they simply 'jump ship' subsequent to negative outcomes (790).

Therefore, the literature suggests that these vicarious connections are tenuous and must be continually negotiated. However, why do highly identified fans need to maintain positive identities in the face of a loss? Notions of masculinity help clarify this issue, that is, fans connect to power in the form of extremes of masculinity.

While most of the literature on sports crowds focuses on the violence precipitated by participating in the sport experience, there is beginning to be a theoretical shift away from the limited explanatory power of a simple modeling theory toward the notion of vicarious connections, particularly with respect to claims to masculinity (Wann et al. 1999b, Stott and Reicher 1998, Wann 1994, Phillips 1983, Lewis 1982, Smith 1978). Studies connecting domestic violence with spectatorship (while methodologically problematic) have made the theoretical shift to notions of what Messner refers to as vicarious masculinity (Welch 1997, Drake and Pandey 1996, White et al. 1992).

By using Connell's (1992) notion of hegemonic masculinity and the desire to connect to that source of power, we can hypothesize that fans in crowds experience a special kind of masculinity, a vicarious masculinity. Although they

do not perform the acts of masculinity, they associate with them because they are men as well. This runs somewhat contrary to many arguments that state that only emasculated men perpetrate violence as a means to regain control and power over some aspect of their lives (Majors 1990). Theoretically, the vicarious connection to hegemonic masculinity suggests just the opposite—that it is those in positions of privilege that feel entitled to the physical domination of those they oppress. This work extends this argument by more clearly incorporating notions how race plays out in this ideological construct of power.

From the social psychology literature the notions of connection, identification, and negotiating identities emerge as important concepts in understanding fan behavior. However, the significant gap in the literature on vicarious connection lies in the inability to explain how fans connect, that is, the process of connecting. Chapter 3 explores the energy-filled community formed from and around the games. I argue that it is within this setting that the vicarious bond between fan and team forms. Chapter 4 continues to show the ways in which fans attempt to connect vicariously to the team on a personal level within the broader space of an energetic community.

Yet first we should ask why fans identify with teams to begin with, in other words, what benefits do fans receive from their connection and identification with a winning or even losing team? Chapter 3 explains how many fans enjoy the sense of community as one of the positive functions of the connection to the team. In addition, many suggest that feelings of power influence their continued and enthusiastic participation. While fans may connect to their team for various

other reasons, Chapters 5 and 6 move on to examine the role of power as well as notions of hegemonic White masculinity in contrast to femininities and subjugated masculinities.

Hegemonic Defined vis-à-vis Subordinated Masculinities and Femininity

Hegemonic White masculinity derives value from multiple sources of masculine exemplars from men in all levels of the structural hierarchy. In fact, it can be thought of as an idealized composite of masculine characteristics to which all men can add. Of course, not all men can cash into that "bank" of value equally. By attending games and participating in the event in which players create extreme examples of masculine physical prowess, stoicism, and most of all, success, fans connect to the bank of masculine examples from which they can attempt to create hegemonic notions of White masculinity.

Theoretically, the gender order maintained by hegemonic masculinity necessarily devalues anything feminine and this is most clearly maintained in the strict segregation in sports. As Messner (1990) maintained:

For middle-class men, the tough guys of the culture industry—the Rambo's, the Ronnie Lotts who are fearsome "hitters," who "play [while] hurt"—are the heroes who prove that "we men" are superior to women. At the same time, these heroes play the role of the primitive other, against whom higher status men define themselves as modern and civilized (103).

In other words, White, middle-class men have the privilege to associate vicariously with Black men in terms of their prowess on the field. However, nowhere do privileged men claim that the less privileged are allowed the privilege to associate vicariously with prowess in the boardroom. This unidirectional flow of masculinity is essential in maintaining a racial system of oppression as in

football: it creates multiple opportunities for White men, while minimizing opportunities and pigeonholing Black men (Messner 1992).

Chapter 5 examines how fans continue to define their community and themselves in relationship to “other” fans, teams, and mascots. While strengthening the borders between in-group and out-group, the fans also more carefully define appropriate levels of masculinity, often feminizing or sexualizing the “other.” In this sense, they ideologically construct a dichotomy that valorizes masculinity and devalues femininity. However, as noted above, hegemonic White masculinity is not merely a simple dichotomy, but rather a complex intersection of gender and race.

Incorporating and Reformulating Masculine Identity

As “the culturally idealized form of masculine character (in a given historical setting) which may not be the usual form of masculinity at all” (Connell 1990, 83), hegemonic masculinity “stabilizes a structure of dominance and oppression in the gender order as a whole” (Connell 1990, 94). In this framework, male-dominated sports are pivotal to the construction and maintenance of hegemonic masculinity, because the athletes provide the extremes of strength, stoicism, and intellect to which *all* people (men and women) are compared and by which they are evaluated. In this sense, the performance of men on the field is exploited for its ideological value, and that ideology is then returned to them as a justification of their structural oppression (Feagin 2000).

Of course, hegemonic masculinity is not a static, lived reality of those in control. Instead, it should be thought of as an ideological justification of privilege and control by a few, and this ideology changes when circumstances warrant

reconceptualization. What was at one point conceived as masculine, becomes feminine or an inferior form of masculine to justify the shifting nature of the structure of domination. The contested and continually fluctuating nature of hegemonic masculinity and how it becomes distinctly White is exactly the focus of this project: I analyze the narrative moves that men and women of various racial and ethnic backgrounds make to vie for symbolic power.

Chapter 6 uses the term “reformulation” to describe the process by which fans incorporate masculine exemplars from the players into a more complex, hegemonic notion of White masculinity. At the same time, they start to associate masculinity on the field as subjugated or subordinate. So while they associate with privileged forms of masculinity, relating to power and control, they create a hierarchy of power with themselves on top and players close to the bottom.

I borrow the concept Gerschick and Miller (2001) outlined with respect to hegemonic masculinity and the ideological work people must do to maintain notions of power, particularly within changing circumstances. As such, one must reformulate his or her conception of masculinity to fit into his or her abilities and level of resources. For that reason in Chapter 6 highlights the ways in which fans reformulate notions of masculinity to incorporate their contributions to the game, while minimizing other forms of masculine displays. However, hegemonic White masculinity and the power it represents is not available to everyone. Therefore, Chapters 7, 8, and 9 examine whose claims to masculine power are rejected and how race and gender play into that exclusion.

Boundary Maintenance and Harassment

As noted above, hegemonic White masculinity is constructed in the context of subordinate masculinities and femininities. Chapter 5 explores the feminization and sexualization of others as a means for solidifying the boundaries between those in the group, “us,” and those outside the group, “them.” Simultaneously, fans engaging in sexism and homophobia add to the masculinity of the space. Aggression, violence, and physical proficiency of the players and taunts from the fans serve to create a hypermasculine space. Chapter 7 goes into greater detail concerning the ways in which fans use masculinities and femininities to establish correct behaviors and roles.

Similarly, while the relationship between race and hegemonic masculinity is not absolute, as noted in Chapter 6, typically hegemonic masculinity is associated with Whiteness and subjugated masculinity with Blackness, creating a notion of hegemonic White masculinity. Combined with the fact that the majority of students and fans are White, this establishes the composition of the stands as distinctly White (in stark contrast to the composition on the field). Therefore, Chapter 8 mirrors Chapter 7, investigating fans’ perceptions of this racial space in terms of Blackness. Both chapters note that White women and Black men and women pose threats to the homogeneity of the space. As such, fans employ surveillance and sanctioning as types of harassment to preserve the White, masculine space.

Although all fans described in this research discuss some benefits from their participation in the community, upon further probing they reveal that the stadium environment also becomes a harassing space, particularly in terms of

gender and race. The popular media have focused on sexual harassment, particularly quid pro quo harassment at work or school. However, the academic literature more broadly defines harassment as behavior intended to make individuals of a particular group uncomfortable, intimidated, unwelcome, and ultimately, nonexistent (Collins 1998, Benokratis and Feagin 1995, Feagin and Sikes 1994, Lorber 1994, Feagin 1991). Harassers communicate to their targets that they do not belong in a particular space. This consists of yet another way to maintain boundaries and, as detailed in Chapter 9, the players are not exempt from exclusion.

Objectification and Dissociation

By disconnecting from the players, fans dissociate from identifying with the players, such that men on the field do not get a chance to fully utilize their own masculine examples—they are excluded from claims to hegemonic masculinity, creating a one-way flow of power. Disconnection takes into consideration Kelman and Hamilton's (1989) work on massacres, in which they note that mass crimes such as the My Lai Massacre and the Nazi “final solution” result from an extreme adherence to authority and a resultant lack of personal responsibility. Important to the current discussion, they also discuss the notion of dehumanization, in which an oppressing group strips an oppressed or exploited group of their fundamental qualities or characteristics of humanity. This is implicitly an ideological process, and is one that can take advantage of existing stereotypes or can create fresh dehumanizing stereotypes to fit the specifics of the situation.

Chapter 9 looks first at how, in general, players are objectified, and more specifically, how race becomes an important variable in increasing the level of objectification. This allows for those making claims to hegemonic White masculinity to disconnect from individual players and their personal suffering. As such, this creates a special type of exploitation on the ideological level, one in which players labor to add to a larger notion of power and masculinity from which they are denied.

Conclusion

Current sports sociologists dismiss the simplistic notion that football is just "a fun diversion, a pleasurable release, a cultural time-out that is mere entertainment" (King and Springwood 2001, 8, see also, Oriard 1993). Instead, the move has been to analyze sports as a cultural space in which ideologies concerning race and gender are continually reproduced, contested, and resisted (King and Springwood 2001, Birrell and McDonald 2000, Sailes 2000, Messner and Sabo 1990). To get at these conflicting ideologies, researchers have taken to "reading" different cultural texts from autobiographies to newspaper articles. It is from this strain of research that my work emerges. The text of this research comes from what spectators do during games and how they talk about their experiences at games. From this text, some of the ways that race and gender are negotiated are explored.

Notably, I look at the process in which fans connect to masculinity, reformulate hegemonic White masculinity in the context of subjugated masculinities and femininities, and disconnect from the masculinity on the field. As argued further in the conclusion in Chapter 10, while the focus of this

research is very much grounded in the ideological production and negotiation process, this serves to buttress a more systemic institution of race and gender privilege and oppression in and outside the context of football. First, however, let me address the research methods I used to uncover these texts of gender, race, and power.

CHAPTER 2 METHODS

This research follows an analysis of interpretive practice, focusing on the texts constructed by Gator fans before, during, and after the games, and always about their experiences at the games. I performed participant observation, focus groups, and a key informant interview to study the ways in which football fans construct themselves vis-à-vis the players, each other, and the other team. The implications of this research lie in how the football fans create a gender and race hierarchy within the realm of football that can be used ideologically in the game and outside.

Narrative Analysis: Examining Interpretive Practice

The type of data collection I used is traditionally associated with ethnographic methods. Furthermore, my methodological and epistemological approach is grounded in narrative analysis. To properly describe the perspective I use and why it is appropriate for this research project, it is necessary to compare narrative analysis with traditional ethnography.

By definition, ethnography is a descriptive methodology that seeks to interpret or evaluate a social group through direct observation of the activities performed by members of that group (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw 1995, Emerson 1983). Ethnographers attempt to tell a story. Narrative analysis, on the other hand, "takes as its object of investigation the story itself" (Riessman 1993,1). The strengths of narrative analysis lie in its critique of positivistic notions

concerning knowledge and its analytical strategies for getting at the meanings made in a situated process.

What Constitutes the Knowledge from the Field?

Epistemologically, naturalistic ethnography is based on the notion that there is an objective reality and with the proper methods we can get closer to that truth. They attempt to answer localized "what" questions about communities and the people living within them. In other words, they carefully describe the social worlds of particular, historically specific, communities. They are not searching for generalizable truths—they do not assume that the knowledge collected at a site can be abstracted to explain actions in all circumstances. Quite the opposite, they argue that knowledge is local and cannot be abstracted.

Ethnographers are starting to get away from the notion of a "Truth" with a capital "T;" instead, "the task of the ethnographer is not to determine 'the truth' but to reveal the multiple truths apparent in others' lives" (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw 1995, 3). This is really only a slight shift from traditional positivism to a postmodern, reflexivity-informed post-positivism (Guba and Lincoln 1994). Thus, from the perspective to gain insight of the overall truth, researchers simply have to incorporate increasing amounts of the situated truths.

Narrative analysis takes a more critical position in relation to traditional ethnography. This position posits a more self-reflexive notion of research in which the researcher uncovers meaning and actively assists in constructing knowledge with his or her participants. No matter how close a researcher gets, no matter where he or she is geographically, the researcher is always the researcher, an outsider whose presence influences what is said and what is done

(Holstein and Gubrium 1995). Therefore, the type of knowledge that narrative analysis uncovers is not assumed to reflect an underlying reality. What is analyzed in narrative analysis is the meaning construction of the participants through the stories they tell.

How Can "Truth" Be Obtained?

Analytically, ethnographers believe that the best methodology is to catalog the everyday nuances of people's lives, histories, and contexts. Ethnographers do not seek to imbue meaning on the lives of the people they study. Instead, they assert that the meaning is already there and all they are doing is relaying it—ethnographers are sociological mirrors, reflecting the information from the field back to academia.

On the other hand, narrative analysis, based in ethnomethodology (Garfinkel 1967), looks at how meanings are made *through* stories, rather than *in* stories. It is not that narrative analysts ask that we let the narrative speak for itself; the key is that it cannot speak for itself. As Gubrium and Holstein (1997) noted, "As a meaning-making device, a narrative assembles individual objects, actions, and events into a comprehensible pattern; telling a story turns available parts into a meaningful whole" (147). In other words, stories are created in order to be interpreted; it is the purpose of researchers to locate how the stories are being used in the particular context they are told.

But traditional ethnographic reporting tends to extract the knowledge of those observed by taking apart the bits of the stories as "truth." Through a traditional ethnographic analysis, "the analyst creates a metastory about what happened by telling what the interview narratives signify, editing and reshaping

what was told, and turning it into a hybrid story" (Riesmann 1993, 13). This means that ethnographies attempt to tell a story by using parts of the stories of others, which necessitates quoting the respondents when it suits the purpose of the ethnographers. They use the content of the stories, oftentimes losing the context in which the story was told.

However, through "analytical bracketing" the researcher suspends commonsense assumptions about what he or she perceives as reality to allow the participants or respondents to demonstrate how they construct their own reality. The content of what is said is momentarily ignored so that the researcher can "focus on how they are used as facets of the organization and management of the social settings" (Heritage 1984, 141).

Note that the content is important but must be put aside to understand how it is being used. And of course, context is important as well. Because speakers often use indexical terms, that is, terms whose referents are usually found in contextual knowledge in order to understand the meaning of the content, the contextual (insider) knowledge must be identified (Heritage 1984). However, this is really secondary to comprehending how the information is organized and used. Only then can the researcher try to assess why the story is being told.

While narrative analysis lies within ethnography, at the same time it represents a challenge to traditional notions of observing the field. Critiques from narrative analysis have forced traditional ethnographers to assess the type of knowledge they can obtain through observation: truth with a "t" rather than a "T." More importantly, by making truth and reality problematic, narrative analysis

alters the ways in which knowledge can be studied. Instead of letting the "natives" speak for themselves, narrative analysis seeks to address the project of creating those very stories. Finally, narrative analysis is open to more types of data; it is not wedded to participant observation. In sports literature, for example, researchers are reading and interpreting the texts of newspapers, commercials, sports radio and television programs, and autobiographies (Birrell and McDonald 2000, Oriard 1993). In our everyday lives, narratives surround us, and each is a potential source of analysis. Here, I have chosen to focus on fan narratives constructed in and about football games.

Situating Myself as Participant and Observer

As a social researcher, I realize that I am not just passively and objectively observing the spectators in the stadium and the participants in the focus groups. I am a part of the discourse that is constructed in all of those settings; I am one of the many voices in the conversations I have detailed in the following chapters (Holstein and Gubrium 1995). As such, it is important that I describe my perspective in order to give insight to the context in which I collected the data.

The 2001 season was not the first time I had been to a football game. I have watched football since grade school, having gone to my first Gator game as a non-student with a middle school girlfriend and her older brother, who is an alumnus of the school. As a child, I remember watching my mother yell at the television as the Miami Hurricanes played. Later, I was a statistician for my high school football team, learning a great deal about the rules of the game. When it came time for me to choose a college, however, I was frustrated with the level of

consumerism surrounding football and opted for an undergraduate institution that had no football team.

Then, the Gators began to rise in popularity through the 1990s because of the winning tradition started by Steve Spurrier (head coach 1990-2001). Through this period, I noticed my father and his sister revive their interest in their alma mater, watching and listening to games against Florida State and Tennessee with nail-bitten fingers in their mouths. Still, it was not until I was into my second year of graduate school at UF that I attended my first Gator football game as a student.

I quickly associated with a group of alumni and students who regularly attended games. I became the bloc chairperson for this group in 1998 through 2001, organizing and distributing tickets. I steadfastly refused to attend away games, sticking to my principle that no one should ever have to pay more than ten dollars for a game. In 2000, I did go to the Tennessee rematch in Knoxville, the Georgia rivalry in Jacksonville, and the SEC championship game in Atlanta when I started to think about this research project. Initially, I had thought of using those experiences in the research, but I ultimately decided to focus on one season. Therefore, it was not until doing this research that I attended every game in a single season, traveling as far as 700 miles to observe the spectacle of the game from as many perspectives as possible.

Consequently, I come to this research project as a fan myself. However, I have always tried to maintain reasonable boundaries of fandom that coincide with my ideals concerning gender, race, and the financial aspects of exploitation.

I also come to this project as a sociologist and feminist. It is with this "bifurcated consciousness" that I study the narratives created by spectators (Smith 1987): while enjoying the game and receiving some benefits from it, I am also critical of the structural inequality within it and the limits of the benefits I may enjoy. Being an outsider within, I was able to draw upon my knowledge of the game, the university, the history, and the traditions that I had learned over the years.

Participant Observation

I come from the perspective of interpretive practice for the participant observation. This is important because it maintains the contextualized nature of knowledge production. The narratives that come out of fan talk are not constructed as a result of being questioned by a researcher. They are spontaneous creations of meaning in the context of everyday talk. To ask a person what he or she thinks about football players might arrive at some of the same stories that arise in the football game context, but they may not; one may come up with stories in the context of an interview that reflect what the interviewee thinks the interviewer wants to know or should know. Since my main research objective is to describe the process by which fans connect to, conceptualize, and disconnect from the masculinity of players, narrative analysis of the conversations at and surrounding football games helps to elucidate "how" or process questions.

Of course, fan talk is not spontaneous; to say so would lose its grounding within the game. It is not that fans just start yelling things at random. Their talk is in response to the action on the field. Fans are basically in dialog with the team, the coaches, the other team, and each other. These types of dialogs occur

throughout the game with many people yelling at the field as if the people on the field could hear them and would listen to them if they could hear them. This dialog, as unconventional as it may seem, can be analyzed as a narrative that arises from the context of the game, indeed, the game is the other, unwitting participant in the dialog (Riesmann 1993). Furthermore, I loosely define these conversations or dialogs to include all forms of communication including words, signs, symbols, and non-verbal communication in body language.

People construct narratives to establish their selves in particular situations. As Holstein and Gubrium (2000) assert, the self is "a project of everyday life, whose local by-product is more properly articulated in the plural, as 'selves'" (13). Football fans construct many selves within the context of their talk: they are generally speaking, football fans, that is, spectators of the game; they are specifically that team's fans, showing their support for and connection to that particular school; they are students, alumni, and parents of students that attend that school; they are loyal; they are partiers; they are thrilled; they are angry; they are masculine; and, they are feminine. Not every fan is all of these things and not every fan is limited to only these things. The object of this participant observation is the *process* of how fans construct various selves through fan talk.

Data Collection

For participant observation, I studied the subject matter at the scene of the action. No recording devices (video or audio) were used for data collection. I attempted to bring a tape recorder to the games to record my observations, but found it cumbersome and suspicious to use during the game. Furthermore, after

the September 11th attacks, there was heightened security in all stadiums and, thus, it was more difficult to bring in equipment such as recording devices.

Therefore, much of the data are comprised of field notes written from memory directly after each quarter of the game. For most of the games, I brought a pen and a small notebook to take notes during the game. Most of these notes consisted of what happened on the field and the corresponding reaction from members of the crowd around me and what I could hear and see further away (e.g., if the whole crowd seemed to moan on a missed touchdown pass). Sometimes I would also write down specific comments of people in the crowd. Oftentimes, I would wait until between the quarters to write down those comments so that the spectators around me would not get suspicious. By taking notes as plays occurred during the game, many spectators around me assumed that I was a journalism student working on a submission to the school paper, an incorrect assumption I negated if asked directly.

I did not solicit any information or ask fans to clarify any of their comments. I simply wrote down what I heard and saw in the context of the game. Furthermore, I did not write down comments when I knew people were just conversing about issues not related to the game. I would mention if it seemed that most people were socializing and not talking about the game, but I found it intrusive to write down the details of personal conversations. The only questionable entries concerned intimates teaching a significant other or child about the game, either in terms of the rules of the game or the traditions of the

school. However, the fan community is rather open about teaching new members, so this seemed to me to be public discourse as well.

Most of the items I recorded were the ones that were clearly meant to be public. Comments yelled to the field, cheers, collective moans and gasps, and hand gestures in the context in which they were uttered or performed were recorded in my notes. As a result, my notes do read somewhat like a journalism student's notes, such that for most of the events I give play by play descriptions of the games. I also asked two White, female colleagues to take notes at two separate games against the University of Louisiana Monroe and the University of Georgia. This was an attempt at checking the reliability and validity of my notes. All three of us noted similar patterns.

One benefit of participant observation is that I am an insider in the respect that I have an understanding of the "recipe knowledge" of the game, that is, some of the underlying assumptions on which fan talk is built (Heritage 1986). This means I literally did not have to ask about the rules of the game. Furthermore, as a fellow fan (albeit, a female fan), rather than conspicuous researcher, surrounding fans were not guarded with their comments. Finally, because I did not intervene, fans were able to construct narratives on their own terms, rather than having to fit them into a research questionnaire. The narratives created are uncensored, reflecting the extreme emotions and energy of the game.

Unit of Analysis

For participant observation, the unit of analysis cannot be an individual actor. Especially within the context of an open game, it is impossible to locate

single subjects. The multivocality of fans precludes using them as the unit of analysis for study (Holstein and Gubrium 1995): fans make continuous narrative shifts speaking as Gators, men, mothers, students, business owners, and endless other selves. While tracking these narrative shifts is interesting work in and of itself, it makes for attributing discourses to one voice, to say the least, difficult. Therefore, the unit of analysis is what the spectators said, that is, the narratives they created with each other and the action on the field. I did not observe behavior to make judgments about fans. Rather, I detailed what was said by whom. My assessments of "who" was talking was based on my perceptions of their gender, race, and age. I noted these details to provide context, not to attribute causal relationships between gender, race, or age and the comments said. Indeed, because this is not a probabilistic sample I cannot make claims to generalizability. How and when fans use specific talk further clarifies the interpretations of those narratives.

Description of the Stadium Settings

I participated in a total of twelve games. There were six games in Gainesville. The East Stands of the stadium are reserved for student tickets. Students have individual tickets and blocs comprised of from twenty-five to over a hundred students. Many students sell their tickets, so there is often a mix of students, alumni, opposing team's fans, and community residents.

The most prized alumni tickets are in the West Stands and Touchdown Terrace in the North Stands. The band is located in the Northeast End Zone. The opposing team's fans are seated in the far north side of the East Stands and

the lowest part of the East Stands serving as a buffer in-between the student section and the opposing team.

For the Louisiana Monroe University (LMU), a non-SEC game; Mississippi State University (MSU), a pay-back for loss the previous season; and the University of Tennessee (UT), a big rivalry game I sat in sections primarily filled with alumni and Gainesville community members. For the Marshall University (MU), a non-SEC game; Vanderbilt University (VU), the homecoming game; and Florida State University (FSU), a big non-SEC rivalry game I sat in mostly student sections. This provided equal amounts of time in the alumni and student sections for both big and small games. For some games I had multiple tickets and was able to move to more than one section during the course of the game. For those games, I would spend half of the game in one section and the rest of the game in the second.

There was one game each at the stadiums of the following four teams: the University of Kentucky (UK), Louisiana State University (LSU), Auburn University (AU), and the University of South Carolina (USC). In Auburn I sat surrounded by Gator fans in the visitor section. In retrospect this was good because I had a safe seat away from the AU fans rushing the field to tear down their goal posts after they won. However, in Kentucky, Louisiana, and South Carolina I was seated in the middle of the opposing teams' alumni, towards the end zone in the UK and LSU stadiums and right on the fifty yard-line in the USC stadium. All three of those stadiums were fairly positive; by the end of each game I did not

feel scared and found the fans to be in pretty good humor even as (or perhaps because) the Gators won.

The game against the University of Georgia (UGA) was played, as it has been for over 50 years, in the neutral territory of the Alltel Stadium, the stadium for the professional team, the Jacksonville Jaguars and also used for the annual Gator Bowl. I sat on the Gator side in the end zone just below the rickety temporary stands erected especially for this game. The final game was the Orange Bowl, played in the Miami Dolphins' Pro-Player Stadium against the University of Maryland (UM). Here I sat in the corner toward one of the end zones.

By traveling to away games and sitting in various parts of the stadium, I attempted to sample widely. This was purposive and did not provide a random, representative sample. Because there is no clear data on the composition of spectators in the stands, it is impossible to truly create a representative sample. However, the analysis which follows does not represent an attempt to generalize from the data. Instead, the varied positions in the stadium provided me with more narrative resources to assess in terms of their use in race and gender identity construction. In a sense, I collect a tool chest of narrative resources.

Focus Groups and Key Informant Interview

One shortcoming of participant observation is that I was unable to take completely verbatim field notes as the talk was occurring. Therefore, many of the narrative exchanges have been paraphrased and reconstructed rather than direct quotes. Another constraint of my methodology is that a great deal of questions remain unanswered because I did not ask fans to clarify their discussions. To

help attain some of the answers to content questions, I supplemented the participant observation with focus groups and an interview.

Data Collection

The focus groups were conducted in varying environments. I held some on the university campus in conference rooms and at tail-gating events. They took place in off-campus conferences rooms, participants' homes, and restaurants. All participants were recruited in a search for Gator fans. This was a purposive sample, not a random, representative selection.

The questions used for this research were aimed at addressing the research topics listed in the previous chapter. I used a semi-structured interview protocol. I conducted and transcribed all the focus groups. I began with more general questions and only brought up the more specific and probing questions for clarification of issues. Generally, the first question, "What does it mean to be a Gator fan?" opened up many different aspects of gender as well as notions of a vicarious connection to the team. Most of the probes came out of this first question as a way of picking up what participants had already said and rephrasing it as a question for the rest of the group. This method of questioning allowed the participants to start defining things themselves rather than simply answering preset questions.

Unit of Analysis

Below I describe the participants of the focus groups. While it is important to carefully describe to the fullest extent the people who took part in the focus groups and interview, they are not the units of analysis. Because of this, I did not try to find correlative relationships between what participants said and their

gender, race, age, or other various demographic factors. The unit of analysis, like the participant observations, is the discourses themselves, not the participants who uttered them.

Just because I did not establish causal linkages between gender, race, and the discourses does not mean that this study is not concerned with race and gender. Quite to the contrary; men, women, Blacks, Whites, and Hispanics are all able to articulate the rules regarding gender and race with respect to spectatorship. Women may be more attentive to gender issues and Blacks more attentive to race issues, but this is not necessarily the case.

As with the participant observation, these discourses must be contextualized. The description of the participants which follows helps to provide the context of the dynamics in each group. Also, the participants did not simply answer questions in isolation from other participants and the facilitator. I engaged in active interviewing, understanding that my very presence influenced the direction of the discussions in the groups (Holstein and Gubrium 1995). Therefore, in the analysis in the following chapters, it would not make sense to merely cut out individual quotes and attribute them to particular demographic characteristics. Instead, I showed them in the context of my questions and comments as well as other participants' comments. Typically, any editing I have done to the quotes simply reduces redundancy, while attempting to maintain the entire context of the discussion.

Sampling and Description of Participants

I used two methods to recruit participants for focus groups and interviews. First, I went early to tailgating events surrounding the stadiums and asked

naturally occurring groups if they would like to participate in my research. The benefit to this type of focus group is that I reached fans who were already thinking and talking about the game experience. I constructed two groups through this method. One group had nine mixed-gender participants and the other had four male participants, making a total of thirteen participants. Almost all of these participants were White except for one man in the mixed-gender group who was Hispanic.

Both of these groups consisted of alumni, although some of them had friends in the group that had not graduated from UF. Both groups were filled with relatively recent graduates, ranging in age from mid-twenties to late thirties. The group of men lived and worked in an urban city in North Florida. A third of the participants in the other group lived and worked in Gainesville, while the others traveled from urban environments in South Florida, West Florida, and Central Georgia. The group of men had been members of the university band. All of the participants were middle to upper middle class professionals and paraprofessionals.

The bulk of the groups were recruited through the second method which was to sample students from the university and members of the alumni Gator Clubs. Students were asked in classes to participate in the research. Four groups of students participated. One group consisted of four women, two Black and two White. One group had one White man and two women, one Black and one White. Another group consisted of one Black man and two women, one Black and one White. Both of the Black participants in this group were

coincidentally Jamaican and talked about this fact both before and after the focus group. The final group consisted of one man and one woman, both White. The man labeled himself a "nontraditional student" because he had worked for several years before enrolling in the UF education school. These students came from varied backgrounds, but for the most part seemed to be middle-class.

Finally, I contacted Gator Clubs to recruit participants. This formed two groups, one consisting of two men and another consisting of six women. All of these participants were White and middle-class. The two men were professionals in a large, urban city in the East. In the group of women, five of the participants were involved at one point in time with the public school system in a Southern Florida rural town and the sixth participant worked at the local bank. This made a total of twenty-one recruits through this method. A complete list of participants can be found in the Appendix.

I was also able to interview the current president of a prestigious Gator Club. He attempted to construct a focus group for me, but was unable to bring his members together. He expressed concern about me interviewing participants in the all-male club where women are strictly forbidden. He was very willing to be interviewed over the phone and was very helpful. He was also a White, middle-class man, but he was very adamant about distinguishing himself from the upper-class Bull Gators. He worked hard collecting money for scholarships, and did not consider himself upper-class.

Like groups before games, the Gator Club participants were naturally occurring and participated together in game activities. The student groups were

familiar with interacting together because they were from the same classes, although they often had different game experiences. The proximal distance from the game may have taken away some of the emotional connection of the participants, but there was no way to measure whether or not this was true.

There were no Blacks in the alumni groups and only one Hispanic in all of the groups. The under-representation of Blacks, Hispanics, and other non-White groups is due in part to the relatively low amount of participation in spectatorship by these groups. However, while most spectators are White, not all of them are White. Relative to the amount of Blacks in the student body as reported in Chapter 1, a disproportionate amount of Blacks were in the student groups. Therefore I over-sampled for Blacks in the student groups. Likewise, to assure that I heard the voices of women, I over-sampled for women in the student groups. Furthermore, I constructed an alumnae group that was entirely women.

While I attempted to recruit varied participants, this was not to make universal claims about gender and race with respect to spectatorship. As noted above, the unit of analysis is the discourses created in the focus groups, although their experiences certainly inform their narratives. Ultimately, my goal was to describe the methods participants use to create notions of race and gender with respect to the game. By varying the types of people and the compositions of the groups, I was able to obtain more narrative resources used in ideology construction.

Analysis: Extended Case Method

Fortunately, through this research I collected a great amount of rich data. Every researcher wants large samples of data to make his or her conclusions

stronger. Unfortunately, the larger the amount of data, the more specified searches through it must be. There is not the space in this document to adequately report on all of the emergent themes in the data I collected. Instead, I had to focus on particular parts of the discourses recorded.

This does not mean, however, that I only discuss the themes that make my point and merely dismiss the rest. My analysis of the data was guided first by the theoretical and empirical literature presented in Chapter 1. As such, I started by employing the extended case method approach (Buroway 1991) by comparing the data to the existing theories. As a result of constant comparisons, I attempted to locate inconsistencies and gaps in the theories, basically looking for instances in which the data does not fit existing literature. By doing so, I am able to construct the process which serves to encompass and bridge together the existing empirical literature more carefully explicating the theory of hegemonic masculinity.

I return to the research topics that emerge from the literature in Chapter 1:

- All fans share a vicarious relationship with the players that is enhanced through fan participation at football games. Fans use the vicarious relationship with the players to connect to examples of masculine power.
- While all fans can utilize spectatorship to make the vicarious relationship to the players, the types of connections appropriate depend on the race and gender of the fan. Some fans are not as able as others to make the vicarious link to players and require more negotiation.
- Furthermore, the vicarious link only goes from fan to player and not the other way around, creating an exploitative relationship between fans and players.

Therefore, I focused on the ways in which spectators in the stadium and in focus groups use discursive tools to negotiate ideological understandings of race and

gender. In particular, I systematically analyzed the vicarious linkages spectators make to each other and to the action on the field. I also address the elements of the spectacle of football that make it conducive to negotiating race and gender ideology. Hence, the vicarious connections must be contextualized.

Because I wanted to detail a process within context, I focused my analysis on the participant observation first. Comparing all the games, I attempted to locate emergent themes explicating the processes of connecting to the event, formulating and reformulating masculinities and femininities, and disconnecting. After isolating the themes that shaped the chapters to come, I compared this framework against the narratives from the focus groups. Where the participant observation provided more of the process, the focus group participants helped elucidate the meanings behind the process in terms of race, gender, and power.

Summary

This chapter explained my position in relation to methodology, epistemology, and analysis. In terms of data collection, I used narrative analysis, in which I was an active participant in the narrative constructions I recorded. To explore the ideological process discussed in Chapter 1, I engaged in participant observation within the context of the games. To further explicate the meanings involved in this process, I conducted six focus groups and a key informant interview. The sampling for both these methods was not representative, therefore, the following observations are not generalizable. However, this is not the point of this type of exploratory research. As noted above, I used the extended case method as a means for theory bridging and building, rather than theory testing that is traditionally associated with quantitative studies. By

constantly comparing existing theory to my data, looking for gaps and inconsistencies in theory, I located the following trends used to organize the coming chapters: (1) connecting to the event through community building, energy, and personal linkages to the game; (2) formulating masculinity through feminizing, sexualizing, and emasculating the opposing team, fans, and mascots (3) reformulating masculinity to hegemonic notions of control and authority associated with Whiteness; and, (4) disconnecting from the event by denying claims to hegemonic White masculinity to White women and Black men and women through gender and racial harassment and objectification of the team.

CHAPTER 3

“IN ALL KINDS OF WEATHER, WE’LL ALL STICK TOGETHER”: BUILDING ENERGY AND COMMUNITY

Research on football fans consistently show the positive functions of the connection football fans make to each other and their team ranging from a sense of belonging to feelings of self-respect (Wann et al. 1999a, Hirt and Ryalls 1994, Wann and Branscombe 1993, Branscombe and Wann 1992, Hirt et al. 1992, Cialdini et al. 1976). For people of a society in which institutions constantly break down and change, identification with a group that spans the generations with unchanging traditions and unwavering participation provides fans with a sense of stability. As “crazy” as fans seem to outsiders, they represent consistency within an anomic society. As illustrated in this chapter, one of the most positive functions of the connection to a football team lies in the community formation and identification fans make with the energy the team produces, particularly in a winning tradition.

The crowd and team work together to build a cauldron of energy in the stadium, palpable to all who enter, particularly the opposing team and their fans. The energy created through the violence of the playing on the field, the band, and the cheering produce a masculine, intimidating space. However, within that space, notions of community are also forged. The Gator community incorporates many of the elements of typical societies including nonmaterial and material cultural elements that serve to define the space, history, and generations of the

group. As one of the first things many fans discuss in terms of their experience as Gators, I start below with a discussion of energy.

Energy in the Event

Taylor: The adrenaline rush that I get when I walk in that stadium, too. It's like, you just feel the energy.

Connie: Yeah, it's totally exciting.

Like these alumni participants, almost every focus groups' participants cited the energy in the stadium as the main reason for their involvement as football fans, as opposed to other sports. James provided an example of the energy within the stadium and how it relates to a community of emotions:

It's almost like you can feel the energy though. It's kind of like when you walk into a room and people have been fighting and you can feel the tension. It's almost like there's something else there that you can feel. My best example of that is. . .when we played South Carolina, and they got two punt returns back in for a goal, like right off the bat. And I mean, you could just feel it in the entire [stadium], eighty thousand people, you could feel the depression and the lull. And then when all of a sudden the punt kicker ran, instead of kicking it, grabs and then runs it for a first down. I mean, you could just feel the energy almost like a whirlwind, just like pick up.

The event in the stadium becomes alive with the participation of the fans, coaches, referees, and players along with the emerging action on the field and reaction in the stands. However, this "energy" is notably masculine in nature. The ways in which energy is created, fueled, and maintained within the event—violent and exciting plays, the band, and the cheers—all reflect and serve to build extreme notions of masculinity.

Energy from Exciting and Violent Plays

Some of the responses to the big plays and big misses are more like a dialog with the game; the fans simply react, almost without thinking, to the action

on the field. However, the importance of the big and especially the violent plays is that they add to the energy of the game by infusing it with masculinity, for violence is the extreme form of masculine power displays. The following came from my field notes in which I sat in the alumni section at the game against ULM. I noted the relationship between violence, aggression and the fans' reactions:

The one thing that fans on the alumni side were fairly expressive about was good hits. This was usually an "Oooh!" or "Yeah!!" shouted fairly spontaneously from a male fan when one of our defending players would hit (i.e., aggressively tackle) the quarterback, running back, receiver, or kick returner. In other words, aside from touchdowns, the fans on the alumni side only seemed to really cheer when there was an extreme moment of violence or aggression from the Gator players toward the other players.

While a football game is really won through persistence and solid plays (particularly a good ground offense with running plays), crowds respond to more exciting and fast plays. Long passes or punt returns, in which the plays become easier to see because they spread over larger areas of the field, often get the fans to their feet cheering wildly. All the fans, even those with little expertise, can easily identify these big plays and cheer loudly. This helps build the energy, or what announcers often call momentum, of the game. You will hear collective grunts, groans, and cheers that come out as "natural" or spontaneous reactions to the action on the field but are actually very much scripted and appropriate responses that fans learn over time. With these types of plays it is as if the crowd is responding to the *actions* of the players, not the players themselves.

However, the problem remains that violence tends to receive the most accolades from the crowd, as in the following example from field notes I recorded in the student section during the homecoming win against VU:

There was a flag on Earnest Graham's run. The quarterback, Rex Grossman, was under pressure again and threw the ball out again. Then Jabar Gaffney juggled a pass and it was intercepted. Earnest Graham picked up the player who intercepted the ball and dropped him to the ground. The crowd cheered, "Yeah!" On the replay they repeated the "Yeah!" and also laughed at the fact that our player picked him up. A White woman actually said, "Look, he picked him up," as she laughed.

This indicates the ebb and flow of the energy levels with big plays later in the game. While the fans' energy should deflate in the face of losing possession of the ball, instead, they laugh and cheer at the tackle. Of course, the energy is only sustained with continued big plays. Here men and women were especially excited by shows of power in violence, and it did not matter if it was violence by or against UF players. Fans also respond to the band.

Energy from the Band

As an alumnus band member, George, exclaimed, "We [the band members] lead the cheers!" As one of the loudest units in the stadium, above even the voices of the announcers, the Pride of the Sunshine band plays an important role in stimulating the crowd and the team. The ways in which the band engages the crowd take on masculine tones as well.

War themes and intimidating songs

The songs that the band plays reflect an extreme notion of masculinity, primarily through intimidation, the act of a superior to invoke fear in the weak by aggressive means. One of the long-standing songs heard in the Swamp and in any stadium in which the Gators play is the theme to *Jaws*. Fans quickly recognize the refrain and begin to extend their arms in an up-and-down clap, referred to as the "Gator chomp." The chomp reflects a predatory notion of

eating one's prey. If that connection does not seem clear enough, the band also plays the ever-popular song, "Gator bait" to which the fans also chomp.

Of course, the band also plays less foreboding songs meant to encourage the team or simply entertain the crowd during a break in play. However, in the heat of the competition between teams, especially during close games, the band tends to play songs meant solely to invoke fear from the opposing team. The band acquires songs from various movies, almost always finding those in which masculine characteristics of intimidation, physical threat, heroism, and stoicism predominate. For example, in the 2001 season, the band played theme songs from the following movies: *Cape Fear*, *Jaws*, and *The Gladiator*. In addition, they occasionally played the drumbeat to the song, "Beautiful People," originally written by the king of darkness himself, Marilyn Manson.

Proximity of students in relation to the band

While the band represents one of the loudest entities in the stadium, it pales in comparison to the din of the crowd cheering on the defense. The effectiveness of the band, therefore, depends upon its proximity in relation to the crowd. Many fans enjoy sitting near the band so they know when to do the appropriate cheers. Doing the cheers in time with the band allows these fans to get closer to the action by participating directly in intimidating the opposing team and their fans. In that context, the following explanation by female students participating in a focus group makes sense:

Anne: But I kind of like being near the band.

Marcy: Yeah.

Anne: Because, like, I sat further away from the band and like you can't, like, it's delayed reaction of, "Do, do, do, do, do," [long pause] "Go Gators!" It's like later.

Laurel: . . . What about you?

Susan: Both. 'Cause you get more riled up when you're by the band. . . .

Anne: I had fun over there [sitting directly above the opposing team's players] because we picked on the Vanderbilt people. 'Cause we were like kind of by the sidelines sort of.

Shelia: I was, too.

Anne: You pick on [the opposing players]. [laughs] It's funny.

Shelia: It made it a little more exciting. [laughs]

These fans prefer to participate either with the band or by directly harassing the other team's players. Fans enjoy being a part of the masculine display of bravado, provoking fear in others and a sense of power in themselves. The proclivity toward intimidation reveals itself in the cheers fans perform as well.

Energy from the Cheers

Whether led by the cheerleaders, by the band, or started by the fans themselves, cheers fuel the energy in the stadium. As well, they further construct the space as masculine by adding to the menacing nature of the experience. Just as with the band, intimidation and proximity remain key factors. Additionally, the fans' cheers and excitement clearly reflect the intensity of the game itself.

Intimidating the opposing players and fans

Before the game begins, the cheerleaders help bring the crowd into connection with the team and other fans. Mic-Man (Richard Johnston) stands in the middle of the field inciting the alumni and student sections to compete for loudness, coordinating the fans to cheer "Orange and Blue," which is heard for

miles around. The student section yells “orange” and the alumni section yells “blue.” Later in the game, the students will oftentimes challenge the alumni by starting “Orange and Blue” without the cheerleaders. Students in one focus group joked that this is the only time that the alumni get motivated to stand and cheer:

Anne: Yeah. [laughs] That's like the loudest cheer they do, I think.
“Orange and blue.” “Orange!”

Others: “Blue.”

Marcy: They even do that in the student side. But like you said, by the time you hear it, it's like, “Blue!!” [louder, with Anne] Where you're like, “Oh my. This is awful.” [all laugh]

Laurel: Yeah, you always hear, like the students starting, trying to start “Orange and blue,” to get the alumni going. . . .I wonder if that, I wonder how intimidating that is for another team, to hear that.

Susan: Awe.

Marcy: Just looking up and seeing all that orange and blue [“orange and blue” at the same time as Anne]. I'm like, “Oh, my.”

By competing with each other, the alumni and student sections create what these students agree is an intimidating atmosphere.

To complete the sense of the perilous Swamp at the beginning of the game, a video of alligators in the water is played along with the theme from *Jaws*. As an alligator opens its mouth wide, the announcer states, “In the Swamp, only the Gators get out alive.” Like the songs the band plays, this cheer is meant to invoke notions of predator and prey. At the same time, the Swamp’s reputation as one of the most grueling experiences for both player and fan (in terms of heat and noise) raises the expectations of masculine survival of the fittest.

The fans really only ever respond to the cheerleaders during “Orange and Blue.” For the most part, the fans tend to ignore the cheerleaders. For one reason, it is difficult to hear what the cheerleaders say over the din of the crowd. While the cheerleaders and the band conduct some of the cheers, the fans also pride themselves on starting action themselves. These actions occur more often when the team wins and the fans do not feel a responsibility to help the players. Some examples include tossing around balls, doing the wave, throwing toilet paper, and rushing the field.

Whatever the type of cheering and whoever initiates it, the goal remains intimidation of the other team. The following alumni discussed their perception of the opposing team’s experience due to the imposing nature of the stadium:

John: Especially for somebody who’s never seen a place like that, like the first time I think I went there and it was empty, I was just like, “Oh, my gosh. This place is HUGE.”

Taylor: It’s intimidating.

Connie: Very intimidating. I mean it has to be so intimidating for those 50, 100 guys standing out on the field going, “Oh, no.”

While not the largest stadium in college football, most announcers, fans, and opposing teams agree that, because of the construction of the Florida stadium, it is one of the loudest in the nation (Smith 2001). Of course, the cheering from the fans composes the other reason for the intimidating nature of the experience. Through coordinating cheers and getting loud on defense, the fans work to scare the other team. However, sometimes the cheering in the stands, while still very well organized, is not orchestrated; instead it is a response to the intensity of the game itself.

Reaction to the intensity of the event

Much of the cheering sounds like a dialog with the action on the field. Fans groan, moan, and writhe in pain in response to a bad play on the field. Likewise, they scream and high-five for great plays. They may wait breathless on the edge of their seats and sigh in relief on close plays. The concerted reactions by the crowd encompass set reactions to the intensity of the game. My field notes from the homecoming game against VU illustrate the conversation with the field: "Rex Grossman passed to a receiver and the crowd anticipated the catch with, 'oooo' and showed disappointment when the receiver dropped it with, 'oh!' Some fans actually looked away or slumped their bodies when they said, 'oh.'"

People attend to discussions in similar manners. One rule of speaking concerns the appropriate response when engaged in a dialog (Holstein and Gubrium 2000). Conversation often entails turn-taking in which one person says something and waits for an appropriate response from the other person, indicating that the listener understood what the speaker said. If the listener does not make moves to show s/he remains attentive to the conversation at hand, that conversation begins to break down.

As a conversation, the football game involves players speaking to the crowd in many ways, most of all through plays on the field. Culturally bound to respond appropriately, the crowd shows they understand what the players attempt to communicate to them. A student, Melissa, explained how she responds to the action:

If they're running, I'm up with them, watching, you know. I'm like, "Ahhhh [high pitched scream]!" . . . It's just. . .not even conscious, you know. I'm watching the game, and then you know, they catch the ball and I'm up, you

know. . . .Cause I'm not really thinking about it, it's just, you're all absorbed in it.

In this way, fans feed off the energy created on the field, and likewise, the energy created in the stands fuels the players. However, not all parts of the stadium respond to the actions similarly. One of the crucial factors includes where the fans sit.

Seating in the stadium

As noted in my methodology section, I made a concerted effort to sit in different sections of the stadium. This was done because, as an insider to the Gator scene, I already knew that people acted differently depending on where they sat. I had previously heard rumors of the alumni section and their lack of participation but I had never experienced it until this research. While there may exist other ways of categorizing the stadium, I chose to rely upon this distinction made most often by fans themselves.

Student section. UF has one of the largest student ticket allotments in the nation at 21,000 tickets per season (Smith 2001). Of course, some students sell their tickets to Gainesville citizens, opposing fans, or alumni. However, even with many non-students in the section, it still invokes a reputation for drunken rowdiness and obnoxiousness. No doubt, the placement of the students near the opposing fans and directly below the opposing team serves to frighten the fans and fluster the team.

Furthermore, the energy of the student section helps to connect all the fans to each other and the game. A student, Susan, explained:

I definitely feel more of a connection like, with the game as a whole because of the crowd. Like, I don't get anywhere as near as riled up or

even enthusiastic about football as when I'm at the game, as opposed to watching it on television. There's so many things going on. I don't know. It's like, it is the crowd's reaction that makes me react. I don't know. I just don't think that I would feel it, or be into it as much if I were in the alumni section, 'cause I've seen it and heard about it. [all laugh]

Susan expresses what many other fans indicate that the student section and the rowdy, obnoxious behavior many exhibit add to the experience of the game.

Many of the alumni with whom I talked also acknowledged the heightened and even extreme level of participation they recall from when they attended the university. At the same time, Susan jokes about the common lore that the alumni remain much more detached from the game and each other.

Alumni section. When attending the game against MSU, I moved during the game from the student section to a section with a higher proportion of alumni and noted, "People were sitting down when I got there. I had been standing the whole time in the student section. So this was a nice break. Some people actually looked a little bored." While I did note an actual reality to the distinction discussed by alumni and students, the distinction alumni make really serves more to construct their particular behavior as more important to the functioning of the event. For example, many alumni lament the "drunken" behavior in the student section, particularly blaming them for the majority of offensive behavior. On the other hand, since students often lacked the resources to participate at the levels of many alumni, they can define their physical labor as more "true," a notion discussed more fully in Chapter 4.

Even though the alumni section remains relatively sedate, they by no means lack energy. As Charles, a participant from a Gator Club told me:

Certainly on the alumni side it's, it's a little bit more sedate. But you know, every time I've been there, the groups that I've been with, everybody is just going crazy, you know? They get up. They do the wave. They yell like crazy. People can't talk after the game because they're so hoarse from all the scoring and everything.

Charles explains that the energy of the stadium gets to all fans, no matter where they sit. One relatively recent phenomenon does work, however, to decrease the energy in the stadium—the television timeout.

Breaking the Flow of Energy through Television Timeouts

As stations televise more of the games at UF, commercialism becomes an obstacle in maintaining the energy of the event. Television timeouts tend to break the energy created in conjunction with the game. The following example I recorded in the student section from the game against UGA in Jacksonville indicates this problem:

The television timeouts messed up the rhythm of cheers. The band started to play the drumbeat to the chomp that we do at kick off. However, the crowd and the band started to speed it up before the timeout was over. So we had to chomp fast for more time, with many fans giving up before the kick off.

The band did not represent the only entity ignorant of the changes to the structure of the game. Television timeouts require many fans to adjust their knowledge of the game:

There was a television timeout that messed up the timing for the crowd. Normally, we always make noise on defense. Since both teams were on the field the crowd started cheering but quickly noticed that the clock hadn't started because we were still on a commercial break. Some fans complained about the television timeouts.

As a result, fans were forced to reorganize the ways in which they cheer as to not lose the energy they and the players create. Some fans will help each other out by yelling, "TV timeout!" so that people do not exhaust themselves before the

action begins. Most fans learn to recognize that when an official, wearing all white moves off the field, the commercial ends and the play begins. The reaction to television timeouts also reflects the fact that fans alone do not create and maintain the energy in the stadium. The officials play an important role as well. Of course, central to the construction of energy is the masculine display created by the players on the field. However, what is apparent is that all these people work together as a community of common interests.

Gator Community Emerging in and from the Event

Gator fans build and establish a clear community that follows them far outside the stadium even into distant countries. Most of my participants consistently talked about the feeling of a Gator community or the Gator "family." As I noted in an interview with a president of a prestigious Gator Club:

"Let me tell you something about the 'family.'" He said the "family" is a part of being a Gator and that no other school has this strong extended family system. He mentioned that perhaps Notre Dame with their long history, but they are the only ones that would even come close.

As a latent function of the game experience, fans form an extended community that reaches past the current generation. The community simplifies differences among its members because all fans come together for one reason—to support their university. As Stan, an alumnus band member, explained, a Gator is a Gator, no matter how different people within the community may be:

There's a guy. . .who owns a couple of buildings and they call him the mayor of this little tailgating town. And all these other people come in and the mayor goes around and talks to everyone. . .I guess that's the kind of thing that just makes you like it even more than just the football. I mean, the football's great, you know, and the Gators are winning, and that's cool. But, the fact that it's all this camaraderie and all this, all this, you know group mentality. . .There's more connectiveness there and a few generations there. . .You can talk to people that came here when they

were, you know, when it was the forties. And then you can talk to somebody who's still here and there just, it's almost like there's, there's no change. I mean, there are changes. But he's a Gator and you're a Gator even if, well even though forty years separates you.

Therefore, the Gator community takes on the formation of a subculture, or a cultural group within a larger society. As such, the community maintains similar means for social order in nonmaterial culture, material culture, spatial delineation, history, and generational connections (Kroeber and Kluckhohn 1952).

Nonmaterial Culture of the Gator Community

As a community, the Gator family produces and reproduces nonphysical notions, such as values, norms, beliefs, customs, and symbols. Cheers and chants, discussed above, fall under the designation of nonmaterial culture. However, values and norms become particular significant in terms of maintaining the connectivity of the community, the social order of the community.

Values—“in all kinds of weather, we'll all stick together”

As the clock runs out on the third quarter, the band starts the song that has been a tradition at UF for generations: “We Are the Boys from Old Florida.” As the players switch sides of the field to begin the fourth quarter, the entire stadium stands, links arms, and sways with the band as they sing:

We are the boys from old Florida
F - L - O - R - I - D - A
Where the girls are the fairest,
the boys are the squarest
of any old state down our way. (hey)
We are all strong for old Florida,
down where the old Gators play.
In all kinds of weather,
we'll all stick together. For
F - L - O - R - I - D - A

The song articulates the key value in the Gator community—the notion of maintaining connections through all types of adversity. In essence, it translates to a notion of community and coming together. The song encourages everyone to come together, even when the team does not win championships or has a losing season. The strength is defined as supporting the team. That this is tied to the “boys” and not the “girls” of Florida, this indicates a very masculine notion of loyalty and devotion.

Furthermore, as the quotes at the beginning of the section indicate, there exists a notion of equalizing, such that all types of people come together to form the community. Tricia noted the value in coming together in the following quote:

I always get goosebumps. . . .I think it's just really amazing. . . .Eighty thousand people are in there and they're all screaming, well, the majority of them are screaming for one purpose. And they're all focused in on that one. It seems like so silly that we're all in there for a game. [Elaine laughs]. . .But then there's a lot more to it, because everybody kind of comes from different, different backgrounds and like has a different feeling about the Gators. They all join together.

While over 80,000 people standing and swaying together provides an amazing image, the song invokes the values of community building and maintenance at other stadiums where Gators comprise a vast minority of the fans. For example, a friend and I used the performance of the song as a chance to connect to our extended community while among Louisiana State fans: “The two of us stood surrounded by LSU fans and swayed as the rest of the Gator fans in the alumni section across from us did ‘We are the Boys’ together.”

Of particular importance, the song relays the values of community and singing it actively initiates that connectivity. By standing, we connected to the other fans at the other end of the stadium, showing our solidarity even at a

distance. Therefore, the actions associated with singing “We Are the Boys” encompass norms of behavior and are subject to sanctioning from other members of the community.

Norms and sanctioning

The norms of any group establish structured expectations for behavior enforced through sanctioning. Indeed, many of us learn the rules for correct behavior by breaking them and receiving sanctions from those who know the rules (Garfinkel 1967). Perhaps one of the most well-known norms of Florida football lies in the unwritten rule that all in the student section must remain standing for the entire game. A typical example comes from the game against UGA: “Most of the student fans in the section I was in sat down for the television timeout. While we were sitting, a White, male Florida fan shouts at us, ‘Florida fans don’t sit down!!!’” Here we breached the rules because of the relatively new phenomenon of the television timeout. Because it interrupts the normal behavior of the crowd, we were unsure how to proceed. The sanctioning from the other man clearly reminded us of the appropriate behavior.

As is the case with the “standing rule,” sanctions tend to enforce norms that build or maintain a sense of connectivity and community energy. As I noted from the game at LSU, “There were a couple of fights in the stands and people would watch the fights instead of the game. A White, middle-class man said, “‘Watch the game,’ instead of watching the fights.” The fan reminded the others of the purpose, or common goal of the community, that is, to support the team.

Another example that illustrates this notion can be taken from my field notes from the game against MSU, where I sat in a section filled predominantly with MSU alumni:

During the game, I really got a sense that things were much more laid back in this section, that the people weren't as involved in the game. However, I noticed a man and woman (both White, maybe 20) talking. Another White woman did the chomp in the face of her female companion who wasn't paying attention.

Here, even when the fans did not seem as connected to the game and began to socialize, another fan attempted to maintain the community by sanctioning her friend in a playful manner. Notably, she uses a Gator chomp, a symbol of the Gator community, to remind her friend of the true purpose of being in the stadium. Clearly, the nonmaterial culture of the community works to maintain that community and the connection it provides. Likewise the material culture provides artifacts that also help maintain the sense of community.

Material Culture of the Gator Community

Aspects of material culture include the physical artifacts that help to shape the lives of members in a particular group. Further, they define the character of a given group. Material culture includes clothing, buildings, artwork, food, and music. Above I discussed how the songs and chants, aspects of material culture, relayed the values of the group, in the nonmaterial culture. Below, I discussed how clothing, team colors, and other paraphernalia help to bring the community together.

Clothing and colors

By wearing orange and blue, fans can find each other and congregate with more of their kind. Also, knowing which colors to wear to games constitutes

knowledge that legitimates one as a true Gator. For example, one cannot wear blue to a game against UK because their colors are blue and white. One cannot wear orange to a game against UT because their colors are orange and white. Furthermore, one must make sure that he or she does not wear the shades of orange and blue that AU wears while attending that game. An alumnus, Calvin noted the difficulty of defining community at the AU:

Calvin: It's like that Auburn cop, it took him forever to figure out I was Gator.

Laurel: Well, you know we're all orange and blue.

Calvin: But it was a good hour into the cop's time before he goes, "Oh, you're a Gator fan?" [And I said,] "See the hat?"

Calvin required the services of the police at Auburn after the fans there harassed him and stole his orange and blue hat. The police officer did not understand the problem because he did not recognize that Calvin belonged to another group.

Later in the same group, Taylor explained that the colors and type of clothing he and his friends wear reflect the desire to create a sense of community by telling other Gators that he is one of them: "I mean, I broadcast, you know, Calvin does, most of us do, broadcast whenever we go anywhere. Most of our T-shirts that we're going to be wearing, or hats or whatever, are going to be Gator something or other." The practicality of broadcasting can be seen at away games when the community does not come together as easily as it does in Gainesville. Before the game at UK, I noted the significance of material signs that brought the fans together:

While I was walking around the UK fans' tailgating parties I saw and heard Gator fans looking for each other and the Gator tent. Basically all they had to do was search for the orange, a fact they would mention to each other. In the sea of blue clothing, bright orange really stuck out. Also, the Florida

band would play occasionally to help bring everyone together, since you could hear them from far away and follow the sound to the tent. By coming together at the Gator tent, the Florida fans who were clearly and visibly in the minority everywhere else could come together and have more strength in numbers.

Clearly, as a temporary minority group, Gator fans in opposing cities attempt to form a microcosm of their home. Bringing all the fans together under one tent helps to solidify the fans and offer them a safe space to mingle with those like them.

The Gator community, however, extends past the games and into all aspects of individuals' lives. The feeling of commonality, too, pervades all facets of fans' lives so that they always feel like they share a common bond with fellow Gators. Many alumni and students echoed the story from alumnae below:

Judith: I can see somebody in New York City, somebody with a Gator cap on, and I just have a kinship with that person, and I know that I'm really going to like them. You know what I mean? Don't you all have that feeling? [others agree]

Betty: You can always talk to them, cause if you say, "Go Gators!" you have an instant conversation.

Judith: That's all it takes. That's all it takes.

Betty: In Cairns, Australia, I did that. [There was a] man wearing a Gator cap and I walked by and said, "Go Gators!" and we talked for ten minutes. [all laugh]

Judith explained that she automatically assumes she will like a Gator because of the special connection they share. Betty noted the more practical side of that connection as an "instant conversation," such that fans can always talk about the team, their current record, past games, or their next season. Even in outside the stadium, Gators find each other and bring a piece of familiarity and home back into their lives.

Flags, license plates, and car magnets

When fans pass other Gator fans on the road—identified by Gator bumper stickers, magnets, flags, or license tags—they may honk and do the Gator chomp to each other. Nicole, an alumna, discussed this phenomenon:

I think it's neat when you go to the Florida games on the weekends, and the closer you get to Gainesville every car you see is just totally decked out. I mean, yeah, it's not just the tags, it's everything imaginable. Yeah, you see the vans that they've customized orange and blue. It's cool.

As when using colors and clothing to establish the boundaries of the community, particularly at away games, decorations on cars serve to show a presence, and they broadcast that presence and community to fellow fans in the community.

Again, the community exists beyond the season as an alumnus, Charles notes:

I feel connected to everything about the University of Florida. When I'm driving, uh, into work and I see a license plate go by and it's got "University of Florida" on it or something, I feel connected to that person in that car that's driving it, even though I don't know who the heck they are. It's weird.

These artifacts of material culture help to bind the extended community together, whether situated in the Swamp, in other stadiums, or in various cities across the country and even world. In the external examples, the artifacts remind the fans of the values of the community; within the context of the game the artifacts serve to define the spatial boundaries of the Gator community.

Spatiality of the Gator Community

While, creating a community in Gainesville takes relatively little effort because of the prevalence of Gator fans, establishing community in places where Gators constitute the minority is difficult. As a result, fans use strategies to maximize the affect of the community at the games, as I discovered before the game at UK:

A friend noted that Gators always help each other out in getting tickets and that they would much rather sell their extra tickets to a Gator than to a Kentucky fan. This is mostly about pride and community, but it is also logistic: the Gator tickets are all together in one section. If Gators buy Kentucky tickets and Kentucky fans buy Gator tickets, then the two sections mix and there isn't as obvious a demarcation. This isn't so bad for Kentucky fans because they are the majority, but for Gators, this dilutes them throughout the stadium, making it harder for them to work together doing fan behavior. This is because many of the cheers really need to be done collectively in order for anyone on the field to see or hear them.

Fans are able to create a microcosm of the Swamp community in the stands of opposing teams when all together, hence, the importance of getting "Gator" tickets when going to away games. If fans spread throughout the stadium, they become diluted and the microcosm cannot be constructed.

After Florida won at USC, I noted an example of dilution and the ways fans attempted to connect to each other despite it:

Since ESPN GameDay was in Columbia, they were going to give their final report right after the game. Many Gators went to be on television supporting their team. I went to the GameDay setup and it was almost all Gator fans. There were a few South Carolina fans in the minority, so they were searching for each other. One man right up against the fence said, "I'm all alone up here," to which another fan replied, "I've got your back, man." It was an interesting switch for the Florida fans to be the majority and the South Carolina fans to be in the minority all of a sudden. All the Gator fans looked for each other to celebrate right after the game. So complete strangers would see each other in a crowd and say, "Go Gators!"

The South Carolina fans jokingly intimate their fears due to being a minority without their community. By telling the first fan that he will back him up, the second fan alludes to sticking together as a community. Clearly, Florida fans are not the only ones creating notions of community and value that connection to each other. Florida fans take advantage of their new-found majority status to reestablish their community in a foreign space. They look to others wearing the

same colors and call out the password, "Go Gators!" After identifying each other, they work to take over the space previously monopolized by South Carolina fans.

These examples suggest that fans can construct a community anywhere, with their basis reflecting the community created and maintained in Gainesville. As I found before the game against MSU, that community has evolved over time:

I arrived on campus at 10:30 am and people were already gathering. After walking around and talking to the people tailgating, I found out that many have the same spot week after week for years. These are not reserved spots in the sense that the university holds them. The people respect each others' spots and get there early enough to make certain that no one steals their spot.

While some fans receive reserved parking with their tickets, most do not. Over the decades, most fans have created elaborate tailgating communities to informally claim their territory. The spatial organizing reflects a long history and tradition that respect.

History of the Gator Community

History and tradition comprise another dimension of a group. The specific experiences of the university's history help to define those who attended in the past, attend today, and will matriculate in the future. Alumnae discussed the memories of past experiences at the university provoked by going back for games:

Meredith: If you go with [my husband] you have to walk all over campus. You have to hear about every place. [all laugh] And every, "That didn't use to be there till that fire of '42." [all laugh]

Judith: I worked in the cafeteria, you remember when the cafeteria burned down?

Meredith: You have, and the kids have heard them over and over again. They have them all memorized. All the hours he spent in the library.

While Meredith joked about the tedium of hearing repeatedly about her husband's experiences at the university, clearly, those experiences and the ability to share them with family reflect something important to her husband. By sharing the history to his children and wife, he places himself in a tradition and anticipates his children's part in the future.

While discussing traditions, Kirk Herbstreit, a previous Ohio State University quarterback and current College GameDay analyst for ESPN, said, "Traditions are passed down from generation to generation. As alumni, you have a love affair with the team because that's your place. Students know that their grandparents and parents went to school there and experienced many of the same things" (Smith 2001, 13). The traditions and their history at UF, including the songs and cheers detailed above, help define the true fans, as two alumni noted:

John: It's more that you know the traditions and you do the traditions. You know all the cheers and "We Are the Boys."

Connie: Right, yeah. You know that we didn't start doing the Alma Mater until Spurrier came.

While John established the importance of acting out the traditions in the context of the game, Connie suggested the further importance of understanding the history of the traditions as well.

History represents the shared experiences of the group, experiences that work to connect members of that group. As Stan, an alumnus band member explained, it places you in a lineage: "I guess it's because you're a member of a lineage, you're a member of such a, of a thing that's been around since, what, 1853? And, uh, football hasn't been around that long, but you know, the school

goes back that far." History connects over time, through the generations, in a literal line of people, within and outside of football. For these fans, the history allows them to feel a part of something larger than what exists in the present—they belong to an extended community with ancestors who bridge the generations.

Generations in the Gator Community

I'm from Gainesville, so I've grown up a Gator fan. All of my family, you know, a lot of my family went to UF. My, like, great-great-grandfather is one of, like, the founders of the graduate school here. So it's like, Gators go way back. [laughing] And, uh, I was thinking about this story, it just made me laugh. When we won the National Championship, and my great uncle is a really big Gator fan, and he was crying. We were at the game and he was crying. It's like, "Daddy's looking down on us now." Like being a Gator fan is a big deal, I guess, in my family. [all laughing]

Above, Shelia, a student, discussed her connection to the school and team, and she invariably invokes her heritage and lineage of Gators. While she and the other group members laugh about the extreme emotions aroused in Shelia's great uncle, that emotion indicates the strength that bonds the community together.

As multiple generations attend the university, go to the games, and become a part of the community they discover ways of bonding with family members as a result of their common experiences. Even those who do not anticipate a connection eventually find a connection with previous generations, as did the following student, James:

Both my parents went here. . . .I found some of their old stuff that they had from way back when they were here. Like, memorabilia stuff, but I didn't even know they had it. Like, I had known that they had met at this school and they went here and that was about it. We never talked about the school. And now, we actually exchange stories, like, I, I was, when I first

came up here and I rushed my fraternity my mom was like, "Oh yeah, I was in tri-delt." And I would never know my mom was even in a sorority.

While he knew pieces of his parents' university story, they never stood out to him as important until those experiences provided a bridge for the generations to connect, making his parents' lives and histories real and significant to him.

In another focus group, Calvin discussed the ability for the commonality of football to bring families together:

Thanksgiving, from childhood. Thanksgiving to me was, it was, it was. Thanksgiving that's when everybody, all the family got together to watch the Florida/Florida State game. And it was on TV that weekend. That's Thanksgiving. That's the reason everybody gets together, to watch football. [all laugh]

While the rest of the participants in the group joked with Calvin about not knowing the "real" reason for Thanksgiving they, nevertheless, acknowledged and later went on to discuss the importance Gator football plays in bringing them closer to family members.

The experience of participating in the event brings family members together and forges connections between other families. An alumna, Meredith explained the impact her Gator connection makes on her family and friends:

It's just how our family spends our time. I mean, I grew up there. Right outside of Gainesville. And met my husband there. . . . His father was a professor there and his mother worked at P.K. Yonge, which is affiliated. And, we've been going [to games] since we met. And we have college friends that we bought our season tickets together [with] for about eighteen years. And we see them at every game and see their kids. And, you know, it's our, it's our time we see them. We'll go from January till August without seeing them. We'll call them, but we won't see them sometimes. Then we'll see them every weekend.

The games provide opportunities to maintain friendships and also forge new friendships among the next generation of Gators. Participating in the game day

rituals socializes Meredith's children into the group and prepares them for the day in which they will attend the university.

Jokingly, many fans discuss how their Gator affiliation is in their blood. Some talk about bleeding orange and blue. Others talk about themselves as purebred because both their parents attended the university. Alumnae alluded to the genetics of Gator affiliation:

Jennifer: We had orange and blue kids, as [my husband] said when I brought [our first daughter] home from the hospital [everyone looks at daughters who are now in the room playing in the corner].

Meredith: She had hair of orange and eyes of blue, Gator true. She had a little outfit that said that.

Jennifer: [Meredith] gave her a T-shirt that said, "God made me a Gator true. Hair of orange and eyes of blue."

While jovial, Meredith and Jennifer constructed the notion of "true" Gator, a concept explored in the next chapter, as something biological in nature, something inherited. As a "true" Gator, whether ascribed or achieved, fans create a bond with their families, with each other, with the university, and most importantly, with the team exemplifying notions of masculinity.

Summary

Most fans describe the stadium experience and the community of over 80,000 people working toward a common goal as an intense, energetic feeling. Furthermore, the event energizes the crowd in specifically masculine ways. Violence on the field as well as intimidation by the band and through cheering work to create a very masculine experience for all involved. Energy can be conceptualized as the social glue that maintains the group's cohesiveness most clearly seen when it becomes unglued during television timeouts. During the

television timeouts, the energy in the stadium subsides, atomizing the fans collective to individuals instead of part of a greater cause. When the game resumes, fans and members of the team jump back into their respective roles.

The Gator community that surrounds the games operates in a fashion similar to societies described by sociologists. The community possesses its own nonmaterial and material culture. The values, norms, and material artifacts define and preserve the notion of community. The community establishes its own space that fans use in establishing positive identity, particularly important in towns and cities in which Gators comprise the minority. As a community, the Gator family proudly discusses its history and traditions, which serve to connect the various generations together.

The sense of community created as a result of involvement with football provides members with many material benefits. For example, because of my identification as a Gator, most alumni eagerly participated in focus groups wanting to help out a fellow member of the community. Participants often discussed the benefits of networking with fellow Gators even in terms of job opportunities. The connection to the community provides the members with psychological benefits, such as self-respect (Wann et al. 1999a, Hirt and Ryalls 1994, Wann and Branscombe 1993, Branscombe and Wann 1992, Hirt et al. 1992, Cialdini et al. 1976).

Because the positive benefits of connecting to and participating with a team are many, we need to remain attentive to the positive functions of this connection, particularly if we intend to change more oppressive aspects of the

structure. The most powerful latent function of the connection to a team lies in the connection to a larger community. This also lays the groundwork for fans to connect to the team and the masculine displays they produce. The fusion of energy and community combine to form the first step in the process of vicarious connections. Chapter 4 shows how individuals within the community make moves to connect to the play on the field.

CHAPTER 4

“IT’S GREAT TO BE A FLORIDA GATOR”: FORGING A VICARIOUS CONNECTION

The literature on fan interaction highlights the notion of a vicarious connection to or identification with sports teams (Messner and Sabo 1990, Wann and Branscombe 1990). Researchers, however, have yet to examine the ways in which fans establish that connection. Instead, they assume *a priori* that the connection exists, measure the extent to which it persists, and address the ways in which it increases or decreases. While this body of literature contributes greatly to the legitimacy of my project, it is important to start at the beginning and describe the means by which fans connect to the action on the field. By delineating the ways fans connect to the masculine event, I will be able to more clearly examine how fans maintain and sever that connection for various reasons.

Chapter 3 discussed the ways in which fans connected to each other, their school, and, more generally, the event of the game. By connecting to the event, fans make moves to connect to the masculine displays occurring within the context of the event. The sense of connection reaches farther than just the players and the masculine displays they perform. The connection takes on a wide notion of community that extends outside the game, the UF campus, and the immediate city of Gainesville. By identifying with a broad sense of the group

“Gator,” fans put themselves in a position to identify with the benefits of a winning team.

When describing his experiences intimidating opposing fans in the Swamp, an alumnus from my focus group research, Taylor noted, “You have so much power.” By contributing to the stadium experience, as a part of the action and energy, Taylor feels powerful. The experience that comes from the connection described in this chapter allows fans access to this sense of power.

Perhaps Melissa, a student, explained the vicarious connection she feels to the players and to their wins even more clearly:

You know, it’s like, they’re my friends, although half I’ve never even seen before. So being a Gator fan is just something that, I don’t know, maybe it’s a social construction of it, but it’s just like something you just feel. You just feel like connected to this team, I mean, because, and it might not necessarily be, um, I don’t know, anything in particular, it’s just cause you go to that school. This is the school I go to. . . .So I always want the Gators to be the best, you know. I think it makes me look good and like when I go home, I brag to my friends.

Even though she does not labor on the field, she connects to the wins her “friends” make and uses those instances of masculinity to “brag” to the friends with whom she interacts.

The ways in which the crowd connects to the action and to the power on the field include making personal linkages to the event and connecting to individual players and team. This process occurs during the course of the game as the masculine displays on the field play out, but it can start even before the fans ever get into the stadium. Fans, as a group, connect to the general event on the field, but individuals also attempt to connect on a more personal level. The establishment phase of connecting to other fans, the action on the field, and

individual players is mostly an inclusive action—for the most part people are attempting to come together for the common cause of winning. In this sense, it is a very positive stage in developing group cohesiveness. The discussion below begins with the ways in which fans connect to the team through personalizing the players, interacting with the team, and claiming to be Gators. The ways fans link personally to the event through a sense of personal responsibility, investing in the win, and participating in specific roles is then discussed.

Connecting to Laborers in the Event

You feel the, you feel the connectiveness with the team. Even though the guy's on the field. And you never meet them. Maybe you see them in one or two classes, or you know people that know them in their classes. But you know, the fact that you're there supporting them, either as a fan, or in our case, as the band, is, you're like part of the team.

As Stan, an alumnus from the Florida band, explained, he feels a sense of connection with people with whom he does not personally know or interact. Most fans in focus groups discussed this notion of connection in one way or another. Through their participation in the process of the game, many fans begin to feel as part of the team. Or as James, a student, expressed he even starts to identify a common purpose with players, such that he starts to feel as if he knows them:

So I can't really say I'm a football fan, I'm only a Gator football fan. . . .I think it's because I have something in common. It's like, I recognize the people on campus, and I recognize what other people identify with. . . . Players here, since I see them and I have friends that are friends with the players. . . I think I identify with them more.

To develop a sense of closeness to unknown people on the team fans attempt to connect to the team through personalizing the players, interacting with the team, and celebrating with the players as Gators. By connecting to the players and the

team they connect to the university community, the event, and the masculine displays within it.

Personalizing the Players

Anyone with good eyes (or binoculars) can know or find out the last name of the player written across the back of the jersey. However, knowing the first name means that a fan has seen the whole name either in an article or some other media. This reflects a level of knowledge and suggests that fans attempt to connect to the players by keeping up with what the individual players do. At the game against Louisiana-Monroe I noted the significance of how fans in the alumni section referred to the players:

There wasn't that much of a connection between race and names; many people call Rex Grossman (White quarterback) and Lito Sheppard (Black receiver/punt returner) by their first names. However, players like Ernest Graham (Black running back) or Jabar Gaffney (Black receiver) were usually just referred to by their last names. For the lesser-known players, the White, middle-class man in his 30s next to me would refer to them by their numbers and not even try to look up their names.

The effort to look up the players represents an investment of time and energy that this fan would only relinquish for the more important players. Those who rarely play do not invest as much of themselves into the game and, therefore, do not receive much investment of time from the fans in terms of learning their names.

Fans tend to nickname those players who often produce masculine displays on the field. In particular, the quarterback position receives a great deal of attention from fans. For example, fans referred to Rex Grossman as "Rexy" or occasionally "Sexy Rexy." While attending the game at LSU, I heard fans cheer for their Black quarterback, Rohan Davey, "Come on Ro." Nicknames typically

reflect a level of intimacy between friends or close relations, thus, establishing a closeness to those producing extremes of masculinity on the field.

In contrast to popular players, lesser-known players, while still referred to in endearing ways, would not receive nicknames from the fans. Instead, fans often referred to them in paternalistic ways, as at the game against Louisiana-Monroe: "One White man with his wife and children would yell, 'Run, baby! Run!'" Alternatively, for players with names that fans found too difficult to yell on a regular basis, they would affectionately shorten the names. Fans would often call the defensive end, Marcus Oquendo-Johnson, simply Mo Jo. By learning the names or making up names for the players, fans suggest an attempt to forge more intimate relations between fan and player. Furthermore, referring to players, even if only a select few, suggests an attempt to construct them as actual persons instead of mere bodies.

Football is an interesting space because it is one of the only places in the U.S. social landscape in which emotions from, for, and about men are not only acceptable, but are in many circumstances, expected. Sports media tend to highlight a few players from each team to show the human side of them, especially players who have overcome great obstacles to play and succeed. These sappy, human-interest stories are complete with fuzzy camera shots and emotional music. The media might do this to propagate the notion of the "American dream," however, another consequence of personalizing the players makes them "just like you and me" or "everyday people."

Sometimes this occurs in the context of the game, such as before the game against Marshall in which I sat in the student section, the first game of the season:

Before the game began, there was a moment of silence for the freshman fullback, Eraste Autin, who died of heat stroke after a July preseason practice. I was struck with sadness. The stadium was completely silent except for one Marshall player who was yelling to someone else on the field during the moment. Some men took off their hats and placed them over their chests in a show of respect. I think I heard someone yell at the Marshall player who was not quiet.

Here, the university directed attention to a fallen athlete, personalizing his extreme sacrifice. Fans responded by showing and enforcing the show of respect, by demanding that the opposing team display the same level of respect. Later, they talked about Autin's motivation, drive, and potential, further constructing him as more than just an athlete, rather, a three-dimensional human being.

Students feel almost an automatic connection to the players because they often see them around campus and in their classes. Through their interaction in classes or through friends, they talked about them as "ordinary" students and friends. Two students discussed the impact of friendship on their connection:

Anne: I was shouting and like the next day in class, [a player] was like, "I heard you." [all laugh] He's like, "I heard you scream, and I looked up." And I had two little Afro-puffs, and he said, "And I saw your puffs. I was like, 'The girl is loud'". . . . I was screaming for one of our other friends. He had like a good run thing. We're like, "Woah!" We were screaming like crazy. . . .

Marcy: I know for me, like, I felt more connected when I was here in '96 cause I knew a lot of the football players. And now that I'm back, I'm looking and I don't know, you know, a lot of the people cause I didn't go, I mean I'm not in the same classes with them. Whereas like, in '96 I knew Jaquez and Ridel and you know, just a lot more people. And so when they

did something, I was like, you know, “Way to go!” I was more into it, because we were on a friendship level.

These two students could relate more to the action because of their intimate connections to the players, whether currently or previously. Furthermore, Anne actually received feedback from the players about her contribution to the event, encouraging her participation and fueling her feeling of connection.

While alumni no longer attend classes or know the current players on a personal level, many that I interviewed told me about the players they knew when they did attend the university:

Eric: Well, when I was younger I always looked up to them, like, you know, they’re so much older almost as heroes. . . . But now, I know some of the guys who are on the team and everything, so they’re just ordinary people, even though they have the uniform. You still think, you know, they’re great.

George: ...and then I had one of them in my Spanish class, and he’s this normal guy. I mean, I went to one party with him, and I realized, you know, completely different, uh, social groups there. But, I mean, it’s, they’re just normal people. They do their thing. They still have classes.

Interestingly, Eric assumes that students express more awe for the athletes because of a maturity level. With age, he learned that they are just “ordinary people.” George agreed, remembering an athlete in one of his classes. By constructing the players as “normal guys,” fans move to connect to them on a more intimate level, bringing both fan and player to a space in which interaction is not only possible, but necessary.

Interacting with the Team

Interacting with the team represents another way in which fans connect to those laboring to construct the event. As “ordinary” people, the players and fans

interact in a conversation of energy and action, the coach seems accessible to requests, and both the team and fans celebrate wins together.

Responding to the players

As discussed in Chapter 3, the interaction between the players and the fans can be conceptualized as conversations. The fans do not speak to an unresponsive audience. Players indicate they understand their influence over the fans and attempt to raise the energy level, as in the game against MSU: “As the players ran on the field to set up the defense, they waved to fans in order to provoke cheering. The fans responded by yelling louder and doing some of the organized cheers, such as, ‘Go Gators.’” Of course, by motioning to the fans, the players encourage them to create the din that for which the Swamp remains famous.

Later in the same game, “The Gator players motioned to the fans in the stands to get loud by raising their arms above their heads. At one point, it looked like the players were looking at the stands with their hands on their hips waiting for the crowd.” The fans usually respond positively to such requests from the players. Fans enjoy the feedback they receive from the players as it forges a sense of common purpose between players and fans. Also it allows them to contribute to the success of the team.

The fans’ contribution lies in the amount of noise they create and in their advice as well. The following event noted from the homecoming game against VU, in which I sat in the student section, shows another example of fans responding to the actions or inactions of the team:

Rex Grossman "worried" some of the fans because he almost ran out of time. Although there was not one thing that people said at that time, it sort of became a frenzied rush of people counting down and screaming to Grossman things such as, "Time," "Get it off," or "Hurry up."

As a part of the team, and with their egos at stake as well, fans maintain the link to the team when they advise them. This suggests the connection as real and ideological at the same time. Fans respond to and advise the players and the coach becomes a part of their conversations as well.

Requesting to the coach

Sometimes fans make moves to influence the decisions of the coach. Likewise, the coach realizes that he can energize the fans and the team with his decisions. The fourth down conversion represents the clearest example of requesting to the coach. In football, the team has four downs to progress ten yards or more for the next first down. If they do not achieve the first down the opposing team gains possession of the ball where the team ended. Therefore, on fourth down, most teams punt the ball to get it further from their end zone. Sometimes, however, a team will risk good field position to try to gain or maintain momentum. Such was the case at MSU game:

At one point on a Gator fourth down, the crowd chanted, "Go, go, go." Spurrier decided to go for the fourth down conversion. Someone in the crowd noted that Spurrier must just have said to listen to the crowd or to take ideas about coaching from the crowd.

This decision energizes the crowd primarily because of its masculine nature. As a risky move, it demonstrates a masculine daring and fearless disregard for negative consequences. It also establishes clear confidence in the abilities and strength of the defense that must hold the offense at bay if the play proves unsuccessful.

This quote also indicates that the fans perceive the decision to be, at least in part, a result of the coach's responsiveness to the crowd. As the following quote from alumni suggests, recognition by the coach fuels the connection:

Laurel: Do you feel some sort of connection to the actual people on the field?

Connie: More so when you're there.

Donald: You kind of lose that when you watch it on TV. Like you go to the South Carolina game in South Carolina and we [the Gators] score by four touchdowns in the first quarter and by halftime, it was freezing cold at halftime, we had gone from the upper deck, under our blankets, we were sitting on the fifty yard line. And then afterwards, Spurrier or somebody says, "Well, yeah, by the second quarter we looked up at the stands and it was all Gators." That was cool. That was pretty cool....

Connie: That's a good point, is the players and the coaches will come out pretty regularly and say, "It's because the fans. The fans help. The loudness." You know. And that's cool, you know, you feel like you're a part.

Reiterating many of the concepts already discussed in this chapter, Donald and Connie discussed the importance of having the chance to contribute to the event. Receiving gratitude from the team for a job well done, the fans feel more like a part of the action. As participants in the event, they therefore enjoy the right to celebrate with the team.

Celebrating with the team

When the team wins by a large margin at home, many fans leave early and celebrate on their own. When the team defends the Swamp from a fierce competitor, however, fans stay to the very end. After the game concludes, players and fans together stand to sing the Alma Mater, a tradition begun when Steve Spurrier became head coach at Florida. The tradition works to connect the team and the fans in the glory of a win.

Furthermore, authorities have created other ways in which fans and players may connect. As alumnus, Donald recalls the only time in Spurrier's coaching career that authorities allowed fans on the field, "They said everybody who wanted to rush the field, 'Okay, you can come out on the field and shake hands with players.' But they only let us out to the twenty-yard line. Got to shake hands with Nattiel and all those guys."

"Rushing the field," the act of thousands of fans swarming on to the field at the same time after their team wins, relates to the desire to participate in the action and reflects notions of vicarious connection to victory. An example from the AU victory over Florida, where I sat with Florida alumni, illustrates these notions:

I watched as Auburn fans swarmed to the field dismantling the goal post, like angry ants protecting their hill. The win invigorated the fans with confidence to rush past police on the field and to come over to harass the Florida fans. As I left the stadium, I walked past many students holding twigs from the bushes on the field as memorabilia from the time "they" beat Florida.

Because of the importance of rushing the field in fan connectivity to victory, in Donald's example authorities from Florida negotiated with fans in order to maintain the condition of the field along with the fans' feelings of significance. As Donald noted, authorities acknowledged the importance of touching the field but infused it with notions of coming together with the rest of the team. Therefore, since the fans got to be a part of the team, with the team on the field, it defused their destructive desires to participate through tearing down goal posts (extremely expensive items to replace, at approximately \$5,000 each).

The Gator community remains strong at home, but the minority status of fans at away games makes the celebration at the end of the game all the more important. At all the away games in which Florida won, only Gator fans remained to the end of the game. I recorded in my field notes, when I was sitting between the Kentucky and Florida alumni sections at the end of the game against UK, “After playing the Alma Mater, the players came over to the Gator section and slapped hands and such with the Gator fans still there.”

While fans may be dispersed through the crowd in an opposing team’s stands, they all come together at the end of the game to celebrate as one. As in Kentucky, players often go to the fans in the stadium cheering together, touching them, and talking with them. This forms a connection between the fans and the players and also allows the fans to participate in the glory of the win. However, this sense of connectivity does not rely only on winning. No matter what, as the participants in this study all assert, they are not just Gator fans, they are Gators.

“It’s Great to Be a Florida Gator!”

After Florida scored late in the first half on fourth down at the win against UGA in Jacksonville, I noted one of the most positive aspects of connecting with the team, “The majority of the Florida fans weren’t instigating, insulting, or fighting with the Georgia fans. Instead, the Florida fans were high-fiving each other and clapping along to the Florida fight song. They started to chant, ‘It’s great to be a Florida Gator.’” Perhaps one of the most simplistic cheers, aside from “Orange and Blue,” the chant, “It’s Great to Be a Florida Gator” reflects the notions of identity many fans participating at the games and whom I interviewed for this research expressed. Clearly, the words themselves carry significant

meaning. Through this chant, fans claim to be more than simple followers, rather, they *are* Gators, just as the players are Gators. This creates the ultimate link between the fans and the laborers and their masculine labor on the field.

I recorded this rather innocuous cheering when the team won and also in the face of defeat. However, only the “true” Gators described in the second half of this chapter do this cheer when Florida loses. Regardless, it reminds the fans involved that they belong to a community that, with or without a winning football team, is “great.” As part of the team, all fans recognize their responsibilities and roles in creating the win.

Individual and Personal Linkages to the Event

In the student section of the stadium, fans tend to act in a rather large mass, connecting to each other before connecting personally to the event. On the other hand, fans in the alumni section do not make the overt gestures to connect to the entire stadium. Instead, they make more personal and individual moves to connect to people within their smaller group or to the play directly. The groups in the alumni section tend to be smaller and composed of families, as opposed to the groups in the student section which tend to be more social in nature and much larger. Regardless of where in the stadium fans sit, many make moves to connect personally to the event by one means or another. The personal linkages typically take the form of responsibility, work or effort, and particular roles.

Responsibility to the Team

Some people make a connection such that they act as if what they do in the stands will somehow affect the outcome of the game. Most people admit the

preposterousness of this superstitious behavior, but the process of joking about their personal responsibility reveals the establishment of a personal connection with the team and thus, masculinity. Part of this relationship reflects a sense of responsibility toward the team, such that fans acknowledge a sense of accountability to the game and for what happens on the field. Student fans expressed this sense of responsibility:

Elaine: Like at the moment, I really feel I'm on the field talking to the players. I know they can't hear me all the way up here, but I just feel like I'm doing something and because I wasn't paying attention to this play, [that's] why he missed the ball here.

Laurel: So you feel almost a sense of responsibility?

Elaine: Mm, hmm. Yeah.

Tricia: I think a lot of people are like that, too.

Elaine rationally understands that her involvement does not affect the play of the game. Nevertheless, she feels a sense of responsibility, such that she must remain involved in order for the team to win.

While this connection can be positive and empowering, some fans can also feel a sense of blame for a loss their team suffers. The following example from the game at USC highlights the negative impact of the loss on two young girls:

There were some very young girls there who were cheering wildly for South Carolina and were decked out in paraphernalia. Toward the end of the game when it was fairly certain that South Carolina would not come back and win, the girls were so disappointed and started blaming the loss on their participation. They actually thought they jinxed the game with their presence and, in tears, decided they would not come to any other games.

While this does not show exactly how the girls made a connection to their team, it does clearly illustrate the intense feelings associated with that connection, whether good or bad. However, most fans merely joke about the notion of jinxes,

blaming each other for losses ("This is your first game--you're the jinx!") and trying to figure out what factors within their control changed and remained static ("Oh no, I'm not wearing my lucky National Championship shirt!"). This more jovial attitude reflects attempts to connect with the team by establishing a sense of responsibility toward the team and their performance. However, once fans leave behind the playfulness they begin to address the work and effort required from them in order for the team to win.

Working toward the Win

Some researchers relate football to religion (Hackett 2000, Percy and Taylor 1997, Goodger 1985, Stein 1977). Certainly, the analogies of the stadium as a temple, coach Spurrier as a revered god, the field as hallowed ground, and the cheers as ritualistic ring true (Hackett 2000). Perhaps, in this context fans attend and participate in games due to a sense of moralistic duty. However, my research reveals a reason more clearly related to connecting to the event. Many of the fans I interviewed do not attend football games as a form of entertainment or merely as a ritualistic pilgrimage to their Gainesville Mecca—for many, it requires hard work and a great deal of effort. In other words, fans participate in the event, some more actively and some more authoritatively, as if it was their job. As Gibson et al. (in press) note, football fans at UF engage in a type of serious leisure, exhibiting a commitment to their participation in the event.

The work that goes into being a fan often begins far before the game takes place. During the week before the game, many fans use Internet listservs to discuss the team and their strategy. Fans may watch ESPN or research the opposing team on the Internet as well. Many fans tune in to the coach's show on

the local network the Thursday prior to the game to discover his game plan. Alumni travel far and wide, arriving at the university the Friday before the Saturday afternoon games. Hours of coordination and preparation go into the tailgating events surrounding the stadium, which begin in the early hours of the morning. In essence, fans invest in terms of skills, emotions, physical effort, time and money.

Skill and knowledge investments

Serious, active participation requires some level of skill, knowledge, or experience (Stebbins 1997). Fans must learn about the game of football to understand their part in the process. Anne, a student, discussed her learning curve:

Before I came to this school, you couldn't ask me one thing about football. But now, I'm like, "If Florida State wins, that'll make us better when we beat them for the BCS polls and then we can play Miami." I know like everything now, it's ridiculous. [all laugh]

While not always the case, many women did not know about football until after attending the university and the games (Chapter 7 returns to the difference between men and women in terms of knowledge). Another student, Cheryl, explained how she learned about the game:

I did not understand football, really, until I came to this school. I've learned so much. [I ask her who taught her.] I think my boyfriend's taught me a lot, just within the past year. I've learned so much, more than I ever knew before. And I was that person who was in the bloc going, "What's, how'd they get two points? Isn't it six?" You know, I was just so confused. I've learned so much. And I think that girls probably are portrayed as not knowing quite as much about the sport. But, I think my dad just didn't teach me as much when I was growing up as he did my brothers.

While she came to the university relatively ignorant of the game, she took it upon herself to learn more about the game, using her boyfriend and his knowledge as

a resource. Whether male or female, many of my focus group participants discussed the necessity of understanding the game.

Another part of the knowledge of the game and of the university relates to the history of the team, which was discussed in Chapter 3. The knowledge of history and traditions reflects the responsibilities of being a Gator. An alumnus, Donald, related: “Being a Gator knows that you’re supposed to stand up for the entire game. And when the other team is on offense and the game is in question, scream at the top of your lungs.” Being a Gator requires knowledge about proper actions within a given context. Behaviors, such as when to stand and cheer, are just as important as the cheers and songs themselves. This may seem like knowledge that any football fan would learn over time, however, some of the ritualized aspects of fan work are particularized to each school. For example, of all the SEC stadiums I attended, Florida remains the only team whose student fans scream the entire time the team defends and come down to a hush when the offense takes the field. Fans must learn particularized knowledge to effectively perform as fans.

Emotional investment

Many fans expressed their emotional involvement in the game. Further, my field notes from the games indicate my sense of the shifting tide of emotions from ecstasy to despair and from dismay to relief. A student, Melissa, recognized the emotional labor fans express when discussing her feelings after Florida lost to AU:

I felt bad with Auburn, but I didn’t cry, but I felt *really bad*. You know. Just like, uh. . . .It’s like the worst emotion, like I was one of the players. And I

was imagining how the players might feel. I was like, “Awe, I feel so sorry for them.” You know. And I couldn’t even go to sleep.

Similarly, two student fans discussed their reactions when Florida lost the chance to go to the National Championship game after losing to UT:

Tim: I wanted to cry. I really did. I didn’t cry.

Cheryl: Just, just sad. I just felt bad for everyone, all the football players.

The extreme connection to the players and event results in a well-documented depression after a loss (Wann and Branscombe 1990). Melissa’s lack of sleep shows how deeply the loss physically affected her. Of course, the flip-side means that fans also identify with the masculine boasting after winning, referred to by Cialdini et al. (1976) as “basking-in-reflected-glory.”

Physical investment

Besides knowledge and emotions, fans also contribute physically into the occupation of supporting their team. As noted above, student fans require each other to stand the entire game, a trend I recorded at almost every game. Of course, this activity takes a physical toll on the fans’ bodies. While sitting in the student section at the game against MSU I recorded the following interaction:

A White man in his late 60s came to the section. I was in the student section and standing the whole time. He said to a young male fan, “Help an old man out,” as he tried to get to his seat. He then looked at everyone standing around him and said, “I don’t know if my knees will make it the whole game.”

While acknowledging the standing requirement, this fan also clearly noted the physical exertion required for success in this particular aspect of being a fan. In a sense, the physical sacrifices reflect the ultimate physical exertion of the team, connecting fans and players in similar efforts.

Many fans show pride concerning the amount of physical sacrifice they put into their performance as fans. For example, alumnae discussed the physical exertion involved in climbing to their seats:

Judith: That's probably the only thing I do not like about the stadium is the heat. In September, and oh, it's just unbearable. You got to drink lots of drinks. And it's tiring, doesn't it bother anybody else?

Meredith: Climbing up to the eighty-fourth row pregnant was tiring.

Julie: It's tough when you're not pregnant, too. [all laugh]

Judith: Yes, it is.

Betty: Climbing up to the eighty-sixth row will get you, even if it is in the shade on the West stands, and we get shade quick that high up.

These fans noted the difficulties encompassed in their role as fan. Further, their attention to physical sacrifice further enhances their level of devotion. In a sense, Meredith made moves to show her extreme dedication because she endured the physical challenge of participating even while pregnant. As the others noted, whether pregnant or not, fan participation requires a commitment to physical exertion.

Temporal and economic investments

While the student section requires more physical stamina, the previous quote indicates that the alumni also make physical sacrifices. In addition to the other investments detailed above, fans in the alumni section invest into their participation in other ways. Students in focus groups acknowledged that alumni might actually be “truer” fans than they are, partially because of the financial investment:

Elaine: I think that a lot of alumni are more die-hard than we are. . . .

James: I think, I think students are just more fair-weathered. . . .When you watch any, any football game on TV that's at a college. And usually if someone's getting their, you know, their butt kicked, usually the alumni side, while there will still be people on the student side, you know, [students] will all leave. . . .I mean, the alumni are the people that pay the money—

Tricia: Drive into town.

James: You know, come all the way here, and you know, camp out and spend all that money, just to sit in those seats.

Students attending games in the home stadium each Saturday need only walk across campus or drive across town. On the other hand, alumni often travel from all over the state and some from across the country to participate in the games.

Especially when traveling to both home and away games, this entails a great investment of time and money. As a result, especially at away games, many people would wear T-shirts that both noted their Florida affiliation and their current residence. The following alumnae joked about the investment of time and money that is required by alumni fans:

Judith: The main thing I notice, Laurel, is it seems like we have more money now than we did [as students]. [others agree] That's a big, big part of it right there. 'Cause as students, I attended also, and, uh, you just didn't have the money to do what you do now. Now you can go over to the university and buy T-shirts and stuff that you couldn't do back then.

Laurel: Yeah, you'd have your parents buy them in college.

Judith: Yeah.

Betty: If you could.

Laurel: [Now] you have the money to go to away games as well. Although you might not have the free time to do that. I mean, that's an investiture of time, taking time off of work, sometimes to do that. Not everybody can do that. [laughing]

Judith: It's amazing how you can figure something out. [others start to laugh, everyone giving examples at one time]

Meredith: My boss is here, so—

Nicole: So we know that Meredith is out every Friday during the, uh, "Meredith's not going to be here on Friday."

Laurel: Yeah.

Nicole: I told you that wouldn't be a problem if you got me those FSU tickets. [all laugh]

Fans must negotiate time to take from work, sometimes justifying it as a special occasion or necessity to their bosses. But as these fans suggest, when a boss is a fellow Gator, they both ultimately understand the work and dedication required in supporting the team.

Finally, fans also work to support the team by financially contributing to the Athletic Program. In an interview with a prestigious Gator Club president, he repeatedly encouraged me to support my team in the following ways:

He emphasized that the game is still about the scholarships and the education. And most importantly, it is about the "kids" who demand respect. He said that they're the ones doing two-a-days. They're the ones who've made this a twelve-month a year job. They're the ones putting in the time in the weight room and spring practice. He urged that we have to support them win, lose, or draw.

From this point he took the opportunity to define what he considered to be a Gator, and he noted that it is probably different from my definition. He said that a Gator fan is a member of Gator Boosters, who "puts your money where your mouth is" and gets to the stands "rain or shine" to support the team.

Incorporating some of the other notions of work and investment of fans, the president raised the financial aspects as well as the constant devotion to the team by filling the stands, even in inclement weather or losing seasons. He also recognized the hard work that the players contribute to the event and, by relating his ideas about the responsibilities of fans, he suggested that fans must do their

share of the work as well. In the end, both players and fans work in the stadium. The work they perform, however, differs greatly depending on their specific roles.

Participating in Specific Roles within the Football Hierarchy

As workers in the stadium, fans participate in specialized roles. As noted in the previous section, the roles of fans do not require “two-a-days” or weight training but rather financial investing or participating at the game. Even within the category of fan, differences exist. These differences create a hierarchy of power and control, which is more completely attended to in Chapter 6. In this hierarchy, fans perform different roles and specialized work: the referee, the coach, the “obnoxious” fan, the true fan, and the twelfth man.

“Referee” and “coach” fans

Toward the top of the hierarchy sit the fans performing the roles of refereeing and coaching, respectively. Chapter 6 discusses the importance of these roles in the context of reformulating masculine examples into hegemonic White masculinity. But here, these two roles reflect the necessity of knowledge and expertise in performing serious leisure by anticipating referee’s rulings, critiquing rulings, and giving advice to players (Stebbins 1997).

Anticipating the referee’s ruling. Fans oftentimes exhibit their knowledge of the game by anticipating the calls the referees will make with respect to penalties. The following quote provides an example of anticipation, which I observed as I sat in the Florida alumni section at AU:

On third down, Auburn fans were on their feet cheering to stop Florida. Florida got the first down. A couple rows in front of me, a White man in his late 30s did the first down hand signal by moving his arm in a chop motion in the direction of play, as a referee does. He was doing it all by himself.

But as we got more first downs in this drive, more men started to do it, too, although they were not around him.

Here, a man makes a hand gesture that referees typically make, showing his knowledge about the rules of play. As more people joined him, independently and together, they made moves to connect to the play by anticipating the referee's rulings. This helps to build energy during the game, particularly as more people start to participate and as the team begins to win.

Critiquing the referee's judgment. Whether the team wins or loses, many fans critique the referee's rulings. Again, this shows knowledge of the game and even a better perspective with which to see the action. Notice in the following excerpt from the homecoming win against VU how fans replays as a tool to emphasize their own "expertise":

Florida attempted a fourth down conversion and fumbled the ball. Vanderbilt recovered the ball. There were many angry Florida fans (mostly young men) pointing down while the replay indicated that the runner was already down when he dropped the ball, meaning that there was no fumble. The fans booed when the referees gave the ball to Vanderbilt.

Even though Florida won the game by a substantial margin, fans still critiqued the referees, indicating their own expertise regarding the intricate rules of a fumble. Furthermore, fans used the replay as another way to prove their point, indicating that the referees did not see the entire picture correctly.

Advising the coach and team. Likewise, fans coach, or advise the players, whether the team wins or loses. Like refereeing, coaching requires knowledge of the game's rules and knowledge concerning the skills and strategies required to play the game. For example, a White male fan from LSU

admonished a defensive player by saying, "You need to look when they look," referring to a defensive man who "should" have picked off a pass from Florida.

Likewise, during the homecoming game against VU, I noted a Florida fan in the student section as he coached the quarterback, Rex Grossman: "A White man in his 20s complained that the defense could 'read' him and that Grossman needed to try to disguise where he was looking." Both of these comments relate to flip sides of the same phenomenon, one directed to the defense and the other to the offense. Fans who give unsolicited advice to the players and the team connect to the action by showing an understanding of the intricacies of the game as well as ways in which to strategize within it. This type of participation can be performed at the individual level and without any resources aside from knowledge and expertise. However, to properly perform "obnoxious" fan requires an assortment of resources.

"Obnoxious" fans

Throughout the Southeastern conference and perhaps the entire nation, fans from other schools all recognize the obnoxious reputation of Florida football fans. This reputation preceded me to every game, evidenced in the following example:

While looking for tickets before the USC game, a South Carolina White alumnus offered my friend and me Club tickets at a very reasonable price provided that we not "cheer too loud for the Gators." I promised him that we were "good," not "obnoxious" Gator fans.

Later in that same game, a young, White alumna from South Carolina explained what "obnoxious" meant to her. After Florida got a touchdown, many Florida fans started cheering, "S-E-C." But at the same time a key South Carolina player was

injured on the field. The South Carolina alumna said, “That’s what’s wrong with them [Florida fans]! We have a man down on the field and they’re still cheering.”

Notably here, while the female fan made her comments to me, she did not include me in the “bad” fans she condemned because she used the word “them.” While a friend sitting next to me enacted the very behavior the woman cited, the woman condemned neither my friend nor me. Also notable concerning the woman’s remarks is that it does not matter if some fans are “obnoxious” because, in the end, all fans get lumped together. Even though she did not include me in her frustration by saying “you Gators,” she nonetheless discussed the Gators as if they encompassed a homogenous unit.

Furthermore, many fans feel a connection to the event even when they do not invest as much as others, as a student, James noted:

My mom said, you know, she went to the school, and she said she feels bad. [Other alumni] have the RVs, the majority of the teachers have the RVs, are alumni, you know, do the full nine yards. And my mom’s like, “Well at least I went to this school, so I don’t feel like I’m lacking.”

Even though his mother does not participate to the full extent by going “a step above” or “overboard,” she nevertheless feels like a part of the extended community. Those few who do the obnoxious behavior help to define what it means to be a Gator, a label all fans can claim.

“A step above” in behavior and appearance. Many Florida fans acknowledge and seem to identify with the “obnoxious” label. In nearly every focus group, the participants would initiate a discussion of the typical obnoxious fan, always using the term “obnoxious.” At that point I would challenge them to define the word and explain what it means to the Florida fan identity. This task

proved difficult since most fans simply took the term for granted. Perhaps the best definition I received came from the following group of student fans:

Tricia: Yeah, I think it's like your dress and the way you like portray yourself to others. Like when you're in there screaming. . .I saw it most on Tennessee game when they played here two years ago. And we were out there on University [Avenue] before the game, and. . .all the Gator fans were just yelling these obscenities at the Tennessee [fans]. . .They wouldn't just be like, "Yeah, Go Gators." They'd be like in your face, like, I don't know, making fun of the other team. . .

Elaine: When I think obnoxious, also. . .yelling at the referees, "Don't you need glasses?" . . .

Laurel: So like really going crazy in all senses of the word?

Tricia and Elaine: Mm, hmm.

James: I think obnoxious is when you go a step above. Well, say if you're in a type of setting and then if you feel even yourself or someone else is going above what you would do, at that, you know, the majority of the time, then that's when it starts to get obnoxious. Like, me and my friends, when we get together. . .we'll do some crazy stuff and we'll scream the obscenities and stuff like that. So it's like, that, I don't really count as obnoxious, cause that's what we do all the time. [laughing] But, when we were at Florida/Georgia, we get a knock on the hotel door and we open up and there's just some lady and some guy standing there. And they're both all dressed in Gator stuff, like painted, the full nine yards. . .And they had some Georgia bulldog thing or something they stole from someone, and they literally, just come into our hotel room. . . ."Rrrr. Go Florida." And we're sitting here, like going, "Riiiiight." 'Cause we would never just go barge into someone. So then, to us that would be obnoxious because that was something, even though we do some. . .more stunts, we would never do that. We would never. So that, to me, was obnoxious.

These fans explain that obnoxious relates to taking one's participation to another level, going over and above what is expected by others and one's self in terms of behavior, dress, and language. Interestingly, the first two participants cite examples of offensive language and demeanor toward the opposing fans and referees. However, the third participant, James, does not include those in his

definition of obnoxious since he takes part in that type of behavior. For all three, obnoxious meant to go above what they would consider normal.

Of course fans exhibit this "step above" behavior in different ways. James discussed it in terms of how he dresses for the games. Indeed, I noted many examples of extreme behavior by fans at the games. For example, when I sat in the student section at the Marshall game, "There was another man in the crowd, a White male, who would just scream for no apparent reason. At one point, while screaming to the field, he lifted his shirt and shook his big belly toward the field."

Other fans rarely condemn this behavior and sometimes even encourage it. For example, at the Georgia game young White male fans told a young, White woman to let her boyfriend be obnoxious. Since no one condemns these actions and they are sometimes even condoned, fans become complicit in the functioning of the institution of fan behavior and should be held responsible for the implications in terms of racism and sexism. The above quote shows a gendered dimension of obnoxiousness. Here a man utilizes his not-so-perfect body in a non-sexualized display of being very extreme. His actions elicited mostly laughter and some disgust from surrounding fans.

However, women do not have access to that level of obnoxiousness. Indeed, if a woman lifted her shirt, surrounding fans could and/or would sexualize her and she could even be taken out of the game or cited with a ticket for sexually inappropriate behavior. Therefore, the "Blue Girls" I noted from the student section at the Marshall game can be seen as obnoxious in a distinctly gendered manner:

Perhaps the best dressed in the crowd were the “Blue Girls.” I’m not sure if that was the name they gave themselves or if the surrounding fans gave them that name. But as the name suggests, these were two White women who had painted themselves blue from head to toe. They were wearing orange bikinis and orange grass skirts. When I got there, they were having their picture taken with the people around them. They also had some of the men around them buy them drinks: “Get Cokes for the Blue Girls.”

One might argue that they were completely objectified and sexualized, excluding them from a true actualization of obnoxious fan. However, these women were present at almost every game and a few times a man would be with them dressed in a similar manner.

These comprise two of many examples of fans expressing obnoxiousness in terms of behavior and dress. Of course, this does not only occur at UF nor only in college football. Indeed, the Cheeseheads, rooting for their Green Bay Packers with chests painted while snow and ice surround them, provide a clear example of this phenomenon. Of course this represent only a taste of the extremes fans from all over exhibit at games.

Going “overboard” financially. Other fans related the term “obnoxious” to the large amounts of money that some fans spend to participate in the games. Alumni from my focus group explained:

Lance: I think people recognize when other people go overboard. . . You see the other alums that, people that are spending hundreds of thousands of dollars for motor homes that they drive and then park a weekend to watch a game. And, uh, are decked out in orange and blue. I can appreciate that. Uh, one has to ask what other values they really have in their lives. [Lance and Laurel laugh] And why they become so focused on the Gators. . . .But now, let’s say, [my wife’s] brother is obnoxious about being a Vol, actually more her sister than anyone else. So it’s not limited to [Gators], uh, but I think that the fact that we’ve been winning for the past decade has a lot to do with why people think we’re obnoxious.

Laurel: And so more people have been doing the things where they get RVs and they get all decked out. Do you think they’re doing that moreso now?

Lance: Yeah.

Charles: I'm not sure that they're doing it more so now. I think that it's always been a tradition in Florida.

Here, Lance notes that while his wife considers him an obnoxious fan, he considers only those who invest obscene amounts of money and time to constitute obnoxiousness, again raising the bar to a level higher than himself. Furthermore, he notes that Florida fans are not alone in this type of behavior. However, they do remain the only ones consistently labeled as "obnoxious."

Defining obnoxiousness in material terms helps explain why fans tend to bask in the label. During a focus group before the MSU game, alumni from the Florida band talked with me about how I should really talk to other people because of their higher devotion and level of participation in the event reflected in their obnoxiousness:

Stan: [Travis] and I have a desire to be Bull Gators when we're older and get one of those awesome converted buses with like the Gator horns on top that play, you know—

Travis: "Orange and blue."

Stan: "Orange and blue." Be a Bull Gator and just pull up and enjoy the whole, you know.

George: And that's based on age, not necessarily—

Stan: Age and, and money and class, you know. It's the desire, the American Dream, to climb above your, your station. I mean, not, not that I'm coming from, you know Orphan Annie situation. I mean, I'm upper middle-class to begin with, so, I don't. But, but you still have that desire to climb above where you started and you know, move up and—

[A classic car decorated with lots of airbrushed Gator paintings pulls up and people make room for it. The participants start cheering for the car.]

Travis: Wow that's awesome!

Stan: Cool!

Laurel: As you were saying, something a little like that?

Stan: Yeah, exactly. That's what we're talking about—something so obnoxious.

While the participants describe the car as obnoxious, they still acknowledge their desire to one day emulate that type of behavior. Therefore, in terms of financial devotion to the game, fans seem to look up to those who invest obnoxious amounts of money in their participation. Of course, not all fans possess the resources to invest into this level of obnoxiousness. As Stan noted, his desire to create an obnoxious identity revolves around what he perceives as the American Dream, that is, the ability to use one's resources to exhibit a relatively high standard of living.

While not all fans can or do live up to this level of participation, the few examples of obnoxiousness reflect upon the entire group, as shown when alumni from USC lumped all Florida fans together. Whether or not all Florida fans act obnoxiously, by whatever definition, most fans co-opt the term as a part of the Gator identity and as part of being a "true" fan.

True fans

For the most part, most participants juxtaposed their definition of a "true" fan with a "fair-weather" fan. Hence the refrain in the ever-popular, third quarter song, "We are the Boys:" "In all kinds of weather, we'll all stick together." Most notably, alumni noted that true fans date back to the times before the Spurrier Era in which the team did not win all of their games:

Meredith: But we say that every year, "This is the year." . . . So many people hate them if they lose a couple games, but we've been there when they didn't win any games.

Betty: No.

Judith: "Wait till next year."

Meredith: Right, that's the motto.

Betty: Oh, Gators don't worry about that. [laughs] They're not fair-weather Gators.

Of particular importance, almost all alumni would eventually make mention of the "0-10-1" season in which the team tied one game and lost all the others. True fans would say with pride that they supported their team even in those circumstances and would talk with disdain about fans who only started following the team when Spurrier began a tradition of winning seasons.

Similarly, before the MSU game, alumni band members discuss what it means to them to be a Gator fan:

Travis: It's probably also just trying to become part of, you know the team. I mean, you want to become part of that greatness.

Stan: Oh, sure.

Travis: So you want to participate in any way that you can, especially if your team's doing well. . . . You see a lot of people in the stands in other area of schools that don't do as well, less people show up because they're less interested in being a part of that, but you know.

Stan: They're the fair-weather fans, too.

Travis: Oh, yeah, true. . . . success will attract people, no matter what. You know. You want to be part of that.

Stan: That's true. . . . Your support for the team will wax, wane based on how they perform. But, if you're a true fan, I mean, you're going to be there and you're going to come to the losing games and you're going to be upset, but you're going to say, "Okay, well, we'll get them next year."

Relating back to the notion of work, these fans define their work in physical, economic, and emotional terms. They must support their team no matter whether they win or lose, suffer along with the team when they lose, and bask in

the glory of the wins. Fans link devotion and commitment as inextricable aspects of being a true fan. Most important in his statement, Travis discussed the notion that being a fan means that you attempt to become a part of the team. As such, some fans participate directly in the action of the game, attempting to be a part of the action through the twelfth man.

Twelfth man on defense

According to the rules in football, a team can only have eleven players on the field at one time. However, many fans count their participation on defense as the twelfth man. By standing and screaming at the top of their lungs, fans create the din for which the Swamp remains notorious. Of course, this also adds to the obnoxious reputation as well as the energy discussed in Chapter 3. This excerpt I recorded in the alumni section at the MSU game exemplifies the behavior typical of fans playing out the twelfth man:

Pretty much all we could do in our section was yell on defense because we couldn't hear enough to be organized with the rest of the stadium. . . .When we were on offense, there was a hushing so that the team wouldn't be distracted. You could actually carry on normal conversation at this point. Some people still cheered for the Gators, while others were waving their hands above their head in a "V" with palms facing down, "hushing" the rest of the crowd with a corresponding "shhh" sound.

Furthermore, fans see being the twelfth man as a part of their job with a positive impact on the functioning of the team. Alumni in a mixed gender focus group discussed their part in the game:

Donald: We can, we can make them mess up. [all laugh]

Calvin: It's always us.

Laurel: Personally, you guys?

Connie: Just us.

Donald: Like the Georgia game, they marched down the field. We were winning, and suddenly, Georgia's on the ten-yard line, everybody kind of woke up. We're like, "Arghhhh!!! [yelling]." Illegal procedure, and a fumbled snap, and a missed field goal, and they didn't score.

Ben: Participated in the game. Directed its outcome.

While Connie, Calvin, and to some extent Ben joked with me about their personal contribution to the game, Donald takes the role very seriously. By citing a particular example in which he suggests the crowd affected the results of the game, he positions himself, his friends, and the rest of the fan base as responsible for the outcome of the team's performance.

Likewise, the following student discussed his eagerness to contribute to the event:

Tim: That's one of the reasons that I like sitting in, *standing* in the student section, because I get into the football game. I'm there for the football game. And I hate, you know, I mean, the intense moment, I want to, I'm hyperactive, so I want to stand, I want to be like, you know. I love being able to stand the whole game.

Laurel: You're being an active fan. . . .

Tim: It is, you know, I'm ready to scream, you know. I'm ready to be the twelfth man, you know.

Standing and screaming for four hours, oftentimes on a hot and humid Florida afternoon, takes a physical toll on the fans, leaving many exhausted after each game. In combination with the heat and oftentimes drinking, some fans must be taken from the stadium in stretchers as they suffer injuries similar to those the players incur. This as well as the other roles in which fans participate help the fans become a part of the event taking place in the stadium. Furthermore, the roles of the obnoxious fans, true fans, and particularly the twelfth man build the energy level within the stadium.

Summary

Returning briefly to the overarching theoretical perspective guiding this research, in our society, defined by a hierarchy of power and control, the ideological construct of hegemonic White masculinity justifies and maintains that structural hierarchy of material and political privileges and oppression. As a cultural event, a football game provides a space in which participants construct, negotiate, and reconstruct ideological notions of masculinity together. However, this implies first and foremost the existence of a connection between fans and players as a group. While researchers discuss the notion of the vicarious connection between fans and their teams from an individual perspective, the pathway through which fans make this connection has not been documented. This chapter as well as Chapter 3 suggest the ways in which fans use the energy of a relatively cohesive group, the “Gator family,” to vicariously connect to the event, players, and team.

Fans indicate their personal linkages to the event and the outcomes of it. As such, they both take advantage of the positive consequences of a win and feel personally responsible in the case of a loss. To minimize the negative feelings associated with a loss, fans work toward the common goal of a win, investing their knowledge, skill, emotions, physical effort, time, and money. While not all fans invest in all these ways or in similar amounts, the act of working toward the win allows fans to feel as though they are part of the process. Furthermore, they participate in specific roles within the context of the event, as “referee,” “coach,” “obnoxious” fan, true fan, and the twelfth man. While fans may not agree on the exact level of significance each role has, all whom I

interviewed agreed that by acting in their role, they become a part of the energy created by the event.

By connecting directly to the players, fans attempt to connect to the labor of big hits, great passes, long runs, and ultimately, wins. Fans connect directly to the members of the team by personalizing them through the ways they talk about them or to them and making them seem like everyday people. Rather than untouchable heroes, fans construct the players as much closer and more accessible to them. As approachable, players and coaches become the subjects of interaction by the fans. Further, players and coaches make moves to acknowledge the work of the fans by responding to and encouraging fans' cheers as well as celebrating with fans at the end of the game. The most often heard cheer, "It's Great to Be a Florida Gator," solidifies the notion for fans that they are not mere observers of the action, but are active participants within a larger community of interests.

Not all members in the community must do everything the community claims as part of itself. That is, fans need not labor on the field in order to enjoy the bragging rights of a Southeastern Conference Championship team. Likewise, not all students or alumni must excel scholastically to enjoy the reputation of a top-tier academic school. One would think that communities would equalize the playing field, however, it does not. The insidious underbelly of a community is the more exclusive side, that is, to maintain an in-group, there must exist an out-group to which fans compare. Chapter 5 examines the ways in which fans attempt to define and maintain the boundaries between themselves

and “others.” Notably, fans tend to define “others” in terms of femininity, sexuality, and other forms of degradation. Meanwhile, as fans denigrate others, they further establish the stands as a masculine space.

CHAPTER 5

“IF YOU'RE NOT A GATOR, YOU MUST BE GATOR BAIT”: MAINTAINING THE GATOR COMMUNITY BOUNDARIES THROUGH SUBORDINATED MASCULINITIES AND FEMININITIES

As part of the intense community connection described in Chapter 3, exclusivity becomes an integral part of the community's existence and maintenance. By excluding particular people, the group members create “the other” to which they compare themselves. This is called the process of othering, that is, creating artificial divisions between an in-group and an out-group. This process functions positively making the group stronger and the boundaries of the group more clear. However, by distinguishing opposing fans, their mascots, and the opposing players as “the other,” fans use denigration as a means to elevate their sense of self. In particular, this chapter discusses emasculation as a form of denigration through sexualizing, feminizing, mocking, patronizing, and transferring violence upon other fans, mascots, and teams. Fans either maintain distance while anonymously harassing “the other” or jokingly rib those intimately close to them. Regardless of the distance maintained, fans’ actions elucidate a hierarchy of power with all characteristics associated with women, gays, infants, the aged, and the infirm situated far below idealized notions of masculinity, such as that exhibited in the game and vicariously claimed by fans.

There exist many ways in which to distinguish between community and “the other.” As the following alumni made clear, part of being in a community means

more than identifying with your team; you must also strongly, and here emotionally, distance yourself from other teams:

Donald: A fan is very casual, if you're really a Gator you hate everybody that we hate. [all laugh]

Connie: If you hate everybody that plays us ever.

Connie and Donald construct rules of proper Gator behavior, noting that you must hate opposing teams and their fans. Hating other groups of people becomes easier when fans start to associate "the other" with an assortment of bad behaviors and attitudes. A group of alumnae from a Southern Gator Club discussed this issue:

Judith: And, you know, you hardly ever see, this is maybe off the subject, but, you hardly ever see a Gator fan doing things that you wouldn't do. Do any of you all feel that way? I mean, I can see an FSU fan doing, like [others laugh] running a stop light.

Meredith [still laughing]: Have a little bit of ethnocentrism?

Betty [still laughing]: You wouldn't be prejudiced would you?

Interestingly, while Meredith jokingly points out Judith's exclusivity she later goes on to assert that the only "bad fans" she had encountered came from FSU, supporting Judith's original claim.

Almost all fans can remember "bad" experiences with opposing fans. However, the disturbing issue lies in the fact that fans start to associate all of the other group with the bad behaviors of a mere few, a phenomenon described in Chapter 4 with respect to "obnoxious" fans. As I will show later in this chapter, the "bad," or "obnoxious" fans as Florida fans call themselves, represent a small percentage of the total fan experience. However, as I will argue, the fact that

only a few engage in this type of degrading behavior does not reduce the effect of maintaining boundaries of masculine superiority.

Further, fans do not merely construct opposing fans as “the other,” they also look to the opposing players to find ways to devalue the entire team, program, and school. Two alumni band members discuss what they perceive to be major problems in competing programs:

Travis: Yeah, and some [players] are actually thugs.

George: Yeah.

Travis: And, and, and you know, I always hate when they, when, uh, Nebraska and a lot of other colleges, especially in the eighties were notorious for their thugs. They got Nebraska, who beat the Gators, who raped a woman, drug her by the hair down a flight of stairs, and he was on the team a couple weeks later.

Nebraska’s program allowing “thugs” on the team indicates the low quality of the school more generally. Apparently, these fans find a “win-at-all-costs” attitude inexcusable when it involves sexually deviant and aggressive behavior. By suggesting that other schools participate in such abhorrent behavior, these fans also intimate that their team and school do not exhibit inappropriately aggressive behaviors.

While there are many ways of creating “the other,” notions of sexuality and gender characterizing, means often used by fans, also help to create and justify a hierarchy of power based on hegemonic notions of masculinity, which Chapter 6 will show is also White masculinity. In order to construct and maintain a superior ideal of masculinity, there must exist an opposing feminine and subjugated masculine against which to compare. “The other” created through feminizing and sexualizing gives the masculine something over which to express power, control,

and domination (Connell 1990, White and Vagi 1990). As Pronger (1990) wrote, "In a patriarchal society, men have power over women; the practice of masculine behaviour by men and feminine behaviour by women is the semiotic instrument of this power" (144). Fans symbolically construct their team, their school, and ultimately, their selves, as idealistically masculine while constructing the other team and fans as feminine, perpetuating oppressive notions of gender both inside and outside of the context of the game.

The ways in which fans emasculate "the other," both maintaining a sense of community, while also heightening their sense of masculine power are described below. I suggested that fans other opposing fans, their mascots, and the individual team members by sexualizing, feminizing, mocking, and patronizing. Furthermore, I examined the differences between anonymous, obnoxious othering of people at and around the games and more personal, intimate harassing of family, friends, and co-workers. While seemingly disparate, both reveal a distinctly masculine space surrounding the game and actors within it. Harassing intimidates the weak who do not belong and binds together the strong who are tough enough to handle the "playful jabbing." I began with the types of insults that specifically revolve around notions of gender and homophobia.

Othering Opposing Fans

Othering the teams, schools, and fans serves a protective value as fans start to associate general bad behavior with "the other," for example, poor academics, violence, and cleanliness. Fans may look to these things in an attempt to comfort themselves after a loss – "At least we have a good school!" While these types of claims to superiority seem devoid of gender implications,

Chapter 6 shows how fans reformulate ideal notions of masculine to incorporate these types of items. However, this chapter deals more with overt attempts at establishing a gender hierarchy, based as well in heterosexism, sexism, and ageism. All of these relate to privileged forms of masculinity as well as subordinate masculinities and general femininity.

Feminizing and Sexualizing Opposing Fans

Indeed, fans use unsanctioned, but well-known cheers and chants, gestures, and clothing to establish the opposing fans as a sexualized and feminized “other.” Fans use sexually explicit language to degrade fans. At the same time, they create a masculine space in the process of being offensive. Described below are some of the symbolic cultural artifacts I observed in the student section at the game against Louisiana-Monroe which explicitly sexualized “the other”:

The Louisiana-Monroe fans would convert the Gator Chomp to an “FU” chomp by clapping up and down and as they brought their hands together they would shoot a bird. They would do this as Gator fans did the chomp in an attempt to subvert the symbols. There were a lot of instances of this type of subversion. Many of them were on T-shirts. A Gator fan wore a T-shirt that said, “F.S.U.C.K.S.” which starts with the acronym for one of the Gator rivals (FSU), but then turns into denigration (sucks).

Of course, there were many instances of fans “shooting birds” or telling opposing fans that they “suck.” The rate with which this occurs belies the fact that fans do not contemplate their language, rather they use it because it is just something that one does in that context in order to be tough. Using sexual references such as these with such frequency loses the sexual meaning they would otherwise have. They are simply seen as the most offensive jabs possible and are not deconstructed for their underlying meanings.

However, to say that no underlying meaning exists would be premature and inaccurate. These terms and gestures reaffirm a social-sexual hierarchy. Shooting a bird represents the hand gesture for “fuck you.” Those who do the gesture penetrate and control those to whom they gesture. While “suck” colloquially connotes “something not good,” the root comes from the slang term for performing fellatio, or giving oral sex to a man. This becomes clear when you hear “suck” used interchangeably with “blow,” another slang term for fellatio. In this case, those who “suck” or “blow” sacrifice themselves for the superior person in control.

Of course, not every fan performs the etymology of these words each time he or she shouts them at other fans during games. However, the meanings are not completely lost and fans occasionally acknowledge this in the way they direct their insults. The following excerpt reveals how a fan plays with the sexual meaning of “suck” before the game at USC: “As we walked to the stadium, we were inundated with South Carolina fans with the men chanting ‘Game’ and the women alternating with ‘Cock.’ A White, male friend told me he liked the pause in their ‘Game-cock’ chant because it left just enough time to say, ‘suck.’” This shows the dual meaning, disparaging the team’s ability and also accusing them of performing fellatio. That the women chant “cock” (a slang term for penis) further sexualizes the comment. If the comment was meant only to insinuate performance, the “suck” would have been strategically placed after, not before, the term “cock.” As it stands, the insult insinuates that the team’s performance relates to their sexualized position in the gender hierarchy.

While some cheers and chants require some added analysis to decipher the underlying meaning, sometimes fans make the meanings very clear. Take for instance the following sung cheer:

I'd rather eat shit than be a 'Nole,
I'd rather eat shit than be a 'Nole,
I'd rather eat shit than take it up the hole,
I'd rather eat shit than be a 'Nole

The cheer is not significant in and of itself, for it is possible for fans to sing the cheer without any critical examination of what it means. Indeed, some fans spontaneously created "the other" verses for other teams in which the aim was to simultaneously offend the other team while making certain that the new verse rhymed. Furthermore, many women (some of whom may have at one point experienced anal sex) sang the cheer with gusto, not contemplating how it reinforced their position of inferiority.

What is significant about this cheer lies in an argument that ensued concerning the proper wording of the song. Some fans argued that the "than" in the third line was supposed to be "and." These fans quickly realized that this constituted more than a mere semantic issue. This has ideological significance. Replacing the "than" in line three with "and" does two things simultaneously. While it suggests that being from the opposite team is worse than playing the homosexual receptive role, it also implies that these loyal fans could conceive of circumstances in which they would identify as homosexual.

This contrasts completely with extremes of masculinity, which equates homosexuality, particularly the anal-receptive role, with femininity. The anal-receptive role implies sexual passivity and objectification. Likewise, the anal-

insertive role implies control, subjectivity, and the ability to make one's partner the feminized "other."

However disgusting the consumption of feces, it contains no feminizing connotations. Indeed, it could be argued that precisely because of the disgust and harshness of this experience, those who partake of it could claim the badge of masculinity, much like fans creating a tough and offensive space in the game with these insults. Furthermore, by explicitly contrasting fecal consumption with anal-receptive homosexual relations, the male singers of the song contrasted themselves to a feminized "other," illuminating their masculinity.

Southernizing the Sexual Comments

Because of the university is located in the South, sexualized comments often take on a specifically Southern tone. However, this in no way means that only Southerners engage in sexually explicit cheers. While the insults described below constitute unique Southern spins on sexual comments, they remain only part of a larger phenomenon of using emasculation to distinguish "the other." The more general emasculating devices described in this chapter can and are used elsewhere. Here, it is argued that even the Southern insults and chants take on specifically emasculating connotations within a hierarchy of perceived gender characteristics.

In particular, fans often exchange barbs concerning sexual deviance and inappropriate relationships between family members. Obviously, class constitutes a part of this heckle. Furthermore, it suggests that "the other" is not man enough to find appropriate women and must prey on sisters and cousins. For example, at the end of the game at USC, "A White man in his 30s yelled at

Florida fans leaving, calling them ‘inbreds’ as the rest of the fans around us started clapping at their exit.”

Likewise, toward the end of the game against MSU in the alumni section, I noted a White man, in his 30s shouting, “Cousin-fuckers, cousin-fuckers, cousin-fuckers, go home!” to particular MSU fans. While the cops eventually ejected him from the stadium, no other fans objected to his behavior. In a similar situation at LSU while seated in the opposing team’s alumni section, I noted that fans reacted much in the same way: “A White man in his 20s that seemed inebriated said randomly, ‘Fuck your sister.’ The others around him laughed, perhaps more because he sounded silly and out of place than at what he said. They did not condemn him for what he said.”

This will be discussed more at the end of the chapter, but for now it is important to recognize that while many more examples of sexually explicit language were seen, I never saw any fans condemn or censor the offensive fans for the specific things they said. By not doing anything, fans become complicit in this behavior, even though they do not perform it. While many fans never utter sexually derogatory language or display sexually explicit symbols, many fans mock and patronize the opposing fans.

Mocking and Patronizing Opposing Fans

By patronizing, fans feign an obsequious attitude to the opposing fans. This faux kindness, rather than indicating respect, instead reveals a sense of personal superiority and the corresponding inferiority of the opposing fans. Furthermore, people often use a similar condescending attitude when speaking to children. Therefore, this type of othering constructs the opposing fans as not completely

masculine because by definition children cannot be “men.” This attempts to constantly relay a notion of secondary (or lower) status, as at UK:

Whenever the UK got a first down, the announcer would say enthusiastically, “First downnnn, Kentucky!” All the fans would say it with him, especially emphasizing the “Kentucky.” Toward the end of the game, Gator fans in the alumni seating were yelling out “Kentucky,” too. . . . Gators were actually booing with the Kentucky fans when they intently and repeatedly booed the referees.

Perhaps some Florida fans genuinely felt sorry for Kentucky because they lost, however, even pity for another connotes something wrong with him or her.

Therefore, this patronizing attitude, whether sincere or malicious, serves to establish ideological notions of superiority and inferiority based on the masculine performance of winning.

Mocking the opposing fans also plays a role in defining this hierarchy. For example, at the game against UGA, “Florida fans started mocking the Georgia fans. Some of the young, White men in front of me started barking at the Georgia fans. They also started to bring out their keys and shake them at the Georgia fans.” By shaking their keys, the fans tell the Georgia fans to get in their cars and go home because there is no way their team could win the game.

However, if the game is essentially over, why do the Gator fans not take out their keys and go home themselves? The key gesture indicates to the other team their losing status compared to the superior, winning status of Florida and also establishes the stadium (here the neutral, Pro-player Stadium in Jacksonville) as Gator space and that the opposition is no longer welcome. They claim the space and harass others who do not measure up. At its heart, harassment defines the character of a particular space as well as superiority and

inferiority within that space (Miller 2000). Therefore, fans allow only the “winners” to remain. Harassment permits only those tough enough to survive.

Sometimes fans more clearly articulate the hierarchical arrangement. The win against FSU caused FSU to have their worst record in recent school history. Furthermore, it cost them their conference championship title. Two students discussed the spontaneous cheer that arose from the crowd during that game:

Tim: [yelling to Seminole chant] “Six and four! Six and four!” I will never forget that. That was the most brilliant of all rude things.

Cheryl: Yeah. That was funny.

Tim: Oh, that’s when I sat in the college of ed bloc. That one time. It was perfect, ‘cause we were right behind the Florida State band. And, who, who, whatever student, ‘cause that was a student, I’m sure that came up with that.

Cheryl: Yeah.

Tim: Whoever came up to that, hats off to him, bloody brilliant. That was just great. ‘Cause, that, I was so, I just get so sick of their chant. And, I mean that was just perfect. And I just couldn’t let it go. That was, that was great.

Here, it is not enough for Florida State to lose to Florida. To further emasculate them, fans referenced their season record, to bring them down a few rungs. They also subverted the chant that Florida fans, such as Tim, were “sick of.” This type of subversion of opposing teams’ chants and cheers is highly valued, or “bloody brilliant” as Tim puts it. Subversions perhaps come through even more clearly in the case of mascots, since they serve to symbolically represent the team.

Othering Mascots

Because mascots represent proxies for the team but are not real, living beings, they present a safe means for fans to experiment on them without causing physical harm. Therefore, fans may barrage these symbols with more explicitly offensive and violent actions without worrying about the consequences. Like above, othering includes emasculating the mascots through feminizing and sexualizing, but fans also inflict violence on the mascots that would be unacceptable in any other situation.

This becomes problematic, however, because it leaves the door open for racism, as was the case when Florida played the Florida State Seminoles in 2001. In the sports section of the school paper, the *Independent Florida Alligator*, featured the editors' picks, or predictions, for who would win key games for that week. Claiming to be politically correct, the columnists proceeded to describe how they attempted to call the Seminole Indian Casino in Tampa to ask a chief to be the guest pick for the week. As part of the joke they discussed being transferred to "a less than helpful Chief of Information." Deciding that they could not use his pick, they gave theirs, and some jokingly created "Indian" names for themselves, such as "Buffalo with Metal Plate in Nose" and "Dances with Many Wolves" (*Independent Florida Alligator* November 16, 2001). At the time, I wrote the paper a letter discussing how they could have othered Florida State for their lack of political correctness in appropriating a Native American symbol for their mascot rather than buying into the political incorrectness themselves. I never received a reply from the paper.

Of course, this type of othering is not confined to the rivalry between Florida and Florida State in the South. Indeed, many schools and professional teams throughout the nation still use Native American names, symbols, and stereotypes to define the aggressiveness of their teams (King and Springwood 2001).

Mascots provide a safe target for fans to abuse. The line between sexism and racism blurs, however, as opposing teams mix homophobic images with the safe, stereotyped mascots.

Feminizing and Sexualizing Mascots

Feminizing and sexualizing comprise repeating themes in the denigrations aimed at others. This particular type of othering reiterates the notion of a hierarchy based on gender assumptions with extremes of masculinity in a superior position, emasculating and feminizing those below. At UK, a middle class, White, Florida man sitting in a section of Florida alumni joked about Kentucky's mascot:

He commented about UK's mascot, the Wildcats. They go by "Cats" though. So he said, "Who would name their mascot that? Would you want your daughter going there?" I assume this referred to the cats as "pussy" cats. Then later he said, "We'll make the kitty purr."

Interestingly, the man noted that one would not want his or her daughter to attend a university in which she could be referred to as a "pussy." What about a son? This comment further explicates feminine roles in the game, that is, they are not tough enough to weather these offensive comments. Not letting the chance to emasculate the team escape him, he later talked about making the "kitty purr." By calling them the diminutive version of "cat," he constructed them as not mature or fully developed (read: fully men). Finally, his use of "purr" rather

than growl or hiss connotes a more familiar or affectionate, rather than antagonistic or aggressive attitude.

While not all emasculating is sexual in nature, not all sexualizing is feminizing either. Alumni fans discussed sexual deviance as a particular insult:

Donald: What do you think about Bowden [the FSU coach]?

Geoffrey: He's a big pedophile, I know that. [all laugh] I've got to make sure I have it for the Florida State game, a sign that says he's a pedophile. You laugh, but I'm going to make it.

Connie: Don't you leave that on answering machines, too?

Calvin: Oh, all the time.

Geoffrey: Yeah, Chief Osceola's a pedophile, click.

Connie: We're like, "Geoffrey's in town."

Geoffrey: It's just as effective as me saying, "Hi, guys. I'm in town. How are you? What's happening?" [all laughing] "Chief Osceola's a pedophile." Hang up the damn phone and—

Donald: The thing is you probably don't really think that, it's just that's the best slam you could come up with for Florida State.

Geoffrey switched from Bobby Bowden to their mascot, Chief Osceola, without anyone acknowledging the change. In this sense, team members, coaches, mascots, and fans are all interchangeable—they each serve as a representation of “the other.” Furthermore, this illustrates the ways in which the line between sexuality and racism blur.

Donald attempts to excuse Geoffrey's behavior by assuming that he does not truly mean the insults and that he merely says them because of their ultimate offensiveness. In this case, the “best slam” makes use of sexual deviance in the form of pedophilia. Similar to the Southern barbs concerning inbreeding, these comments depend on the assumption of the normal: heterosexual masculinity.

By intimating something other than “normal” sexual relations, fans infer that “the other” is not fully masculine. Here masculinity and sexuality are inextricably tied. Extremes of masculinity also encompass appropriate violence and aggression, which may also be enacted on mascots.

Nooses and Violence Against Mascots

Stuffed animals and plastic toys representing mascots of opposing teams become symbols of the other team. However, they remain inanimate objects and therefore, fans may release their frustrations on the symbol in an acceptable performance of violence. At every game, I would occasionally see fans holding or dragging these symbols in nooses. The following event occurred before the game against UGA:

A White alumnus brought an official, stuffed Georgia bulldog from Athens, per a 16-year tradition. They hung the dog from a noose and carried it around before the game. Gator fans were invited to jump on, spit on, kick, or whatever, the dog. The white dog quickly lost his eyes, nose, and turned a funny shade of grayish brown. Outside, they tried to get people to run over the dog. It's even better to get Georgia fans to accidentally run over their mascot.

In addition to allowing for an acceptable expression of masculine aggression, the actions further solidified the Gator community as individual members came together to inflict violence upon the symbol of the enemy.

While the fans involved perceived this to be just fun, not all fans accept their mascots as mere symbols. Some fans indicated that mascots are them when they would get very upset at the pre-game rituals. An older Georgia alumna lifted the dog, kissed it, and held it to her chest to avoid continued assault. Other people would simply lift the dog off the ground so it would not drag along in the dirt. Regardless, these attempts to end the violence against their symbol shows

a deeper, more emotional attachment. Fan, mascot, and team become one, especially in the face of assault. While othering creates the opposing group to which people compare themselves, those who are othered become more cohesive as a result. In this context, insults to mascots and the team are particularly acrimonious.

Emasculating the Opposing Players and Coaches

As the representatives for the team, players and coaches create the extremes of masculinity which fans gather to consume in the first place. Fans other the opposing team as embodied symbols of power through emasculation, further coalescing the notions of powerful superiority of the home team and its fans. As such, emasculating the opposing players and coaches serves as the most significant way to define the group characteristics and boundaries. Fans construct "their" team as more masculine vis-à-vis the emasculated "other" and, as argued in Chapters 3 and 4, they vicariously connect to these extremes of masculinity and power. This results in an increased sense of superiority by the fans. As already shown above in the cases of the opposing fans and mascots, fans feminize, sexualize, patronize, and mock the opposing players and coaches to construct them as subordinately masculine.

Feminizing and Sexualizing the Opposing Team

In their best attempts to devalue the other team, fans work to maintain the borders between "us" and "them," or "us" and "the other." At the same time, they create and maintain a border between "real men" and all others, including femininity and subordinate forms of masculinity. Fans rely upon homosexual

references and explicit references to female genitalia to emasculate the opposing team.

References to gayness

When asked what it means to be a man, an Iron Man athlete responded, "Not be gay," (Connell 1990, 94). Quite unequivocally, he sums up the often-unchallenged notion that while a man may embody many different characteristics, gay is never one of them. However, what does it mean to "be gay" and, as such, not a man?

As noted above, social stigma exists for those who receive rather than perform sex. In other words, issues of power and control play out sexually by who is literally on top. However, if this was the sole reason that real men cannot be gay, then there would be conditions for acceptable gay relations, that is, one can still be a man in a homosexual interaction so long as he or she controls the situation and never situate himself or herself as the receptacle. In other words, power and gender characteristics based in the active/passive dualism (Almaguer 1992).

Indeed, the number of examples of T-shirts alluding to gay sex with a symbol from the opposing team as the passive receptacle to the active penetration of a symbol of the home team attests to this reading of gayness as a definer of appropriate masculinity. A group of alumni discussed the offensiveness of such a shirt in which Florida coach, Steve Spurrier was the "butt" of the joke:

Calvin: You know I don't even remember what that Florida State guy's T-shirt [said].

Elizabeth: It doesn't have any bad language on it.

Calvin: No, it was offensive. And we had the cops up there. He had the guy take it off. And it was cold, it was freezing. And the guy's like, "No." [The cop told him,] "They say your shirt's offensive. You have to take it off."

Donald: I thought it was Bart Simpson.

Calvin: Oh, that's why he was—

Donald: It was Bart Simpson, "Watch the teeth, dude."

Calvin: And yeah, I'm like, "That is offensive. That is bothering me." Finally the cop got him to turn it inside-out. I'm like, "Yeah!" [all laugh]

Important here, Calvin reconstructed the situation putting himself in a position of power and control by forcing the man to turn his shirt inside-out even if through the police. The rest of the group agreed with this move by laughing at the final outcome, that is, his subversion of the opposing fan's attempt to express the emasculation of the Florida coach. This attests to the fluidity of the claims to masculine superiority. One's masculinity, or lack thereof, is continually contested and can change at any moment.

The officer respected Calvin's offense over the shirt and acted to have it removed because the opposing fan wore a sexually explicit shirt in a public space. To Calvin, however, the actual offense resulted from the fact that the shirt depicted Steve Spurrier, rather than an opposing coach, performing fellatio on Bart Simpson, a popular cartoon character representing a smart-mouthed child. It is extremely important to note how pedophilia and homosexuality can be dangerously conflated in an image such as this. In reality gay men are no more likely than heterosexual men to be pedophiles.

This also illustrates the ideological dimension of these claims, oftentimes not based in anything more real than a cartoon on a T-shirt. As Donald explained in the previous section, fans rarely believe the insults they espouse. However, the consistency with which these insults arise exposes a deeper ideological connection between men and masculinity as well as gay men and femininity. Note that while the shirt presented Steve Spurrier as the sexual object, it did not illustrate Bobby Bowden (the coach for FSU) as the active subject. Instead, it used an outside agent, and one that, because of his status as a cartoon, could not be offended or harmed by the gesture.

Therefore, the subject/object or active/passive dualism only explains part of the gay insult. Returning to the Iron Man quote, that "man" simply equals "not gay," this makes sense if gay represents a set of gendered characteristics rather than merely sexual situations. Ideologically, the gay label devalues men and constructs them as less powerful because it associates them with the characteristics of femininity rather than masculinity.

As such, fans often use "girl" and "gay" interchangeably, as illustrated by a group of students:

Elaine: Yeah, but even like, with flag football around campus, like, you go to flag football games, it's like, "Oh, you run like you're gay." Or stuff like that. It's like, it's, it's not even like important. [laughs] It's just flag football. . . . I'm like, "What game are you watching? And what are you playing like?" "You throw like a girl." Like, it's just, or "You're running like a girl." It's just the same thing.

Laurel: So this isn't offensive, but it's just a part of the game? [all agree] And so if you go to the games you just sort of have to accept it.

Tricia: I mean, if you took it out of context.

Both Elaine and Tricia accept this offensive behavior as just part of the game and as something one must endure to take part in the activities. As Elaine noted, this type of behavior occurs even when the game is "not important," such as intramural flag football games. Apparently, to her the appropriate time to indulge in this particular barrage of insults occurs only in "tough" games against "real" opponents, such as those taking place in the Swamp. Yet again, fans exhibit this type of offensive behavior as a means not just to devalue opposing teams, but also as an end in and of itself. Offensive behavior constitutes masculine behavior, creating a masculine context that these students find acceptable. According to Tricia, if fans use these barbs out of the context of that masculine space, then these participants might label them "sexist" or "homophobic."

Furthermore, Elaine began by saying the different things she had heard that might be considered sexist. In so doing, she explained that "girl" equals "gay," both not equaling "man." Students from a different focus group confirmed this association:

Laurel: Do you ever see sexist cheers or anybody say anything that might be construed as sexist?

Tim: I've seen other teams do that.

Cheryl: Just when they call the players, "You play like girls." Or you know, but that's the usually—

Tim: [singing] "Naaaah, nah, nah, nah, nah Gay Gators!" I went to a Florida State baseball game at FSU one time. They were so funny, they just turned all of ours around. . . .

Cheryl: They say, "Gay Gotors," too.

Tim: Gay Gotors?

Cheryl: Gay Gotors, instead of Go Gators.

Tim: Gay Gators? I haven't heard that one.

Tim commented on the humor in Florida State fans subverting the Florida cheers, constructing Gators as gay. As in other examples, this reflects that gender as an ideology is negotiated and contested. Therefore, Tim finds the humor and appreciates the creativity rather than considering the words personally degrading. On the other hand, below Cheryl finds no humor in the use of the "p" word, unsure even of the offending fans' intent:

Cheryl: Yeah, they, the guys who were in front of me were yelling the "p" word. And I was like, "That's just gross and uncalled for."

Laurel: Referring to a woman's—

Cheryl: Yeah. And I thought that was pretty uncalled for.

Laurel: Is that the first time you've heard that?

Cheryl: At a football game? Yeah. Yelling, a whole section yelling it.

Laurel: Oh, oh.

Tim: What were they yelling? I'm sorry, I missed it.

Cheryl: The "p" word.

Tim: Wow.

Laurel: Calling who that?

Cheryl: The, I guess calling Tennessee. I don't know why.

Laurel: Cause they were beating us?

Cheryl: Yeah. I'm not sure, I'm not sure what they were referencing, but they were yelling that.

"Gay" does not equal "man" simply because of its association with women and femininity. By constructing "us" as not gay and "the other" as gay, fans work to maintain the ideological boundaries of gender and the physical and community

boundaries of Gator. Again, in the litany of possible denigrating remarks to make toward the opposing team, associating "the other" with girls and homosexuality remains a tried and true means for emasculation. However, in the discussion, Cheryl brings in a new insult, the "p" word, associating women's genitalia with "gay" and "girl." Ironically, Florida lost this particular game, therefore, masculinity could not be explicitly tied to winning. Perhaps, the insults were meant to reestablish masculinity in the face of losing the typical relationship to it through the vicarious connection to the players. If referring to the opposing team as gay does not make a clear enough connection to emasculation, constructing the opposing team as women or specific parts of women clarifies the intent.

Comparing the opposing team to women's genitalia

Many men and to a lesser extent women, construct themselves as phalluses: hard, muscle-bound, awe-inspiring, intelligent, and, most of all, powerful. While the penis or penis-like objects often represent the phallus, strictly speaking, it is not a physical thing, but rather a socially constructed code for power (Bordo 1999). The symbolic equivalent to the opposite of the phallus is the oft-shouted term "pussy" along with the corresponding hand gesture (making a diamond with one's hands) used by Florida fans in the win against MSU:

When it becomes even more apparent that Mississippi State is just not going to score, the Florida fans in a student section near me start to raise their hands above their head making a zero with their hands and singing, "Zeeeeero." The hand gestures oscillated between "pussy" and "zero" while other fans simply made a big zero with their arms.

The fans linked the embarrassing loss inflicted on Mississippi State with their status as a pussy. Unlike the example in the last section, in which the pussy gesture may have been used as a way to reformulate masculinity, here it is tied

to the masculine performance of the winning, heroic players. This win was extremely important to Florida fans because the previous year, Mississippi State upset Florida; this game represented the opportunity for retribution and a chance for Florida to reassert and prove their masculine power.

However, every play provides a new opportunity to negotiate masculinity and femininity. The pussy hand gesture was noted at least once during every single game, performed mostly by young, White, male fans. At the game against UGA, "When Georgia did not attempt a fourth down conversion, some young, White men in front of me started to make the 'pussy' hand gesture." In this context, the fans link the gesture to not having "balls," that is, the daring and toughness required to take the risk of a fourth down conversion associated with the extremes of masculinity. Here again, the symbol of female genitalia stands in stark contrast to symbols of male genitalia.

As in all the other cases, these symbols stand for characteristics associated with femininity, extreme heterosexual masculinity, and subordinated masculinities. These categories typically represent clear demarcations, with little overlap. You are either "in" the group or you are "out." However, "out" or "other" not only take on feminized or sexualized dimensions, but also reflect infantile and subservient notions of emasculation.

Mocking and Patronizing the Opposing Team

Similar to the patronizing of opposing fans, Florida and other fans use condescension to belittle. Of course, opposing fans also assault Florida players with this, as I noted while sitting in the alumni section at USC:

At one point, Rex Grossman threw the ball away and got an intentional grounding penalty. Grossman went up to the referee to argue whether the call was fair or not, and a White, teenage girl behind me said, "Awe, Grossman, stop crying to the refs."

That a teenage female would patronize the player takes on particular significance, as she negotiates her level of power vis-à-vis the Heisman contending quarterback, Rex Grossman. By telling him to stop crying, she constructed him as childlike. This type of behavior, that is, crying, is inappropriate for grown men and only acceptable for children and women, yet again indicating the connection between emasculating and femininity.

Both feminizing and patronize aim to suggest that the players are not "man enough." Likewise, mocking also fulfills this goal. Discussing how much fun she had sitting near the opposing team's players, Anne said, "I had fun over there, because we picked on the Vanderbilt people. 'Cause we were like kind of by the side-lines sort of. . . . So you pick on the ones who never got to touch the field. It was funny." Anne made fun of the fact that those not playing did not play a part in the action. So, while Vanderbilt lost the game, at least those participating in the game could be proud that they contributed to an effort to win. On the other hand, those who never play become the targets of assault because they are not man enough to even touch the field. Of course, it does not matter that the fans never touch the field either. These constructions remain ideological, and as such, can contradict.

Anne also expressed the fun of directly connecting and harassing the other team. This does not always occur. Perhaps, Anne felt a sense of safety in harassing the players while a wall separated them and their coaches held them

in check. As argued below, fans typically maintain a considerable social distance between themselves and the anonymous targets of their harassment, while engaging in direct harassment, or ribbing, only to intimates.

Social Distance, Anonymous Othering, and Harassing Intimates

To maintain the boundaries between Gators and “the other” I have shown that community members take advantage of ideological techniques such as sexualizing, feminizing, transferring violence, patronizing, and mocking. While I would not consider these actions of emasculation attempts to dehumanize the opposition, I do suggest that the social distance required for dehumanization does apply here. In other words, in order to maintain ideas about “the others,” people must not get close enough to actually know them as individuals. Furthermore, when othering those one does not know, fans tend to maintain a safe distance between themselves and “the other.” Finally, with respect to opposing fans, in particular, fans tend to attack groups rather than individuals. However, when using the emasculating devices described above on intimates, such as family and friends, no social distance must be maintained. Below, this seeming contradiction is explored and it is shown that both actually aim to define the offender as exemplary in terms of masculinity.

Maintaining Social Distance from Those Othered

Typically, fans harass large groups of fans rather than individuals. It seems that individuals not within the opposing fan section are not part of the collective. Therefore, fans tend to aim anonymous barbs at groups and leave the individuals alone. If lone fans make moves to connect themselves with the rest of their community, they open themselves up to attack. However, most lone fans,

particularly those whose team was losing, would remain relatively sedate, trying not to offend the fans around them.

In general, the following excerpt from my notes from the game against UGA highlights a common trend in othering behavior:

Florida got a first down off a short pass to Earnest Graham. The next play was a touch down. Most of the Florida fans clapped to the fight song. There were some random White men in front of me sticking their middle fingers out at the Georgia fans across the stadium. There were Georgia fans behind us, but they didn't really point to them.

Repeatedly, fans would harass the opposing fan section rather than individuals sitting near or even right next to them. The social distance perhaps performs a protective value, that is, people in a distant section would be less likely to make their way over for a physical confrontation. Further, othering a group of people results in no one person offended, diffusing the responsibility for retaliation. On the other hand, fans physically close together pose more of a physical threat, those personally insulted may be more likely to rebut the slams with physical repercussions, showing just how tough they really are.

Even more plausible, fans sitting next to each other must endure nearly four hours in close proximity. To avoid uncomfortable situations, they likely respect each other's space by not insulting each other directly. Furthermore, as minorities within the larger group, lone fans receive a chance to become more than the mere stereotypes of their group, as a student, Cheryl pointed out:

I felt like before the Tennessee game, you know, I was kind of trash talking a little bit. But during it, there were some Tennessee fans right in front of me, who were the nicest people I'd ever met, and I just couldn't you know. After that, I was like, "I can't do that, they're so nice." Just 'cause of two people.

By getting to know “the other” within, Cheryl gained a new appreciation for Tennessee fans. While originally associating a plethora of bad behaviors with them, the situation forced her to reconsider her behaviors and their appropriateness. Perhaps this is one reason that fans try so ardently to buy and sell tickets in their own section, a phenomenon described in Chapter 3. By bringing outsiders within and allowing them to become more human, othering becomes more difficult. Some fans are unlike Cheryl and harass individuals in close proximity. The two exceptions to this rule of maintaining social distance for anonymous othering include non-threatening, effeminate people as targets and obnoxious fans as offenders.

Non-threatening people as exceptions

As argued above, the behavior of exclusion from the group can be characterized as distinctly masculine in that it creates an unwelcoming space for those not tough enough to withstand the harassment. This in itself reflects notions of power imbalance. Due to the possible fear of physical responses to emasculating attacks, fans who harass “the other” near them tend to do so only to those who do not pose an immediate threat, that is, those representing the powerless in the masculine hierarchy formed in and around the game. From my notes I noted patterns with regards to harassment—gender, disabilities, and age provide cues for people to become non-threatening targets of harassment. In terms of the extremes of masculinity, these types do not qualify as “men” or “man enough.”

Sports spectatorship remains the only sports field in which men and women participate together. As such, some men may feel as if women infringe upon

their territory. By harassing women directly, men create an uncomfortable space, communicating who does and does not belong, a notion explored more fully in the context of sexism in Chapter 7. Indeed, some of the women above noted that they expect a level of obscenity because of the context. Furthermore, because of gender expectations, many male fans do not expect that women, particularly small, feminine women, will fight back at their taunts. Described below is my experience with harassment at a public space the day before the game against UGA:

The night before the game, I went out with four friends. Two were White women, both close to six feet tall. Another was a Japanese/White man around the same height. And the last was a Black man, over six feet tall and 300 pounds. As we entered the door to the Landing (a place with various stores, restaurants, and bars) a White, male Georgia fan in his 20s came up to me and started yelling and pointing in my face about beating us the next day. I was clearly with other people and also clearly the smallest of the group, weighing in at 115 pounds and five foot four inches.

My size, gender, race, and age all factored into this drunk man's split-second decision to harass me, as opposed to any of the other people in my group. While I did not pose a physical threat of retaliation, the friends accompanying me could have. Again, gender may have played a role in that two of my potential defenders were women as well. Race also may have entered in, particularly concerning stereotypes of the emasculated Asian male.

However, a more probable explanation is that men harass women individually because of the gendered expectations of accommodation and deference. An interaction with an alumnus from USC illustrates this point:

Directly behind a friend and me was a White couple (30-40s). For most of the game, many of the opposing fans tried to ignore us. At one point, my friend took her camera out and took a picture of the two of us with our backs to the couple. I heard the man laughing, so I turned around with a

playful smile and asked, “Were you making rabbit ears behind us?” He smiled, made the “bird” sign with both hands, and while he brought his two hands together said, “Well, if you put them together, I guess they’d be bunny ears.”

Clearly, this man was not afraid to use one of the othering techniques described earlier in this chapter directly to my face. However, for the majority of the game he upheld the social distance rule, never saying anything to us, even though he would critique fans and the team across the stadium.

Here, my gendered acquiescence may have served as a way to disarm him, opening me up to “playful” attack. By smiling and joking with him, I showed my feminine weakness. Ironically, I opted for a jovial stance in order to avoid harassment and defuse a possibly awkward situation. While the othering described in the above quote reflects a jovial attitude, relinquishing him from responsibility for his actions by initiating the interaction with him, I opened myself up for future attack—later in the game, he accused us of being bandwagon fans (within the context of Chapter 4, this is one of the ultimate insults).

While values in our society suggest that one should only “pick on someone your own size,” I repeatedly found instances of fans taking advantage of the opportunity to harass fans who tend to devalue the quality of the masculine space with their presence. Women, the very young, the very old, and the physically disabled represent characteristics antithetical to notions of extreme masculinity. By being in the space of the game, they send the message that anybody can do it, making the accomplishments of fans less valuable in terms of masculine exclusion. Fans at the game against UGA both made and broke rules of harassment:

A few White men in front of me started talking about the fans behind me. One turned his back to the game so that he was facing the general direction of the section behind me and said, "They've gotta be handicapped! I can't pick on them; they're handicapped!" However, this didn't stop him from saying, "Denied!" toward that section when Georgia turned the ball back over to Florida in three plays.

The fans clearly establish the inappropriateness of picking on those weaker than them, those who cannot defend themselves. However, at the same time they break the rule. First, they made their comments about the other fans loud enough that the Georgia fans could hear them, othering them by referring to their physical limitations. Then they broke the rule again by directly taunting them about their team.

These were not the only fans to make and then break these types of rules. Alumni band members articulated the rules concerning who to "pick on" and why:

Stan: These people were up on top of the garage, yelling down at some, uh, opposing fans. These people were eighty years old. And they're like all, "You suck! You Tennessee fans suck! You suck!" Yelling and screaming at these eighty year old people. You know, you're thinking, "That's not cool."

Travis: Yeah.

Stan: Football and, and school spirit and everything shouldn't be about that, you know. It's all about, you know, cheer the Gators on, don't, you know knock the other team. But.

Travis: Especially if they're fans.

Stan: Especially their fans who just came to—

Travis: Fuck with the players as they're going on the field or something.

Stan: Right.

George: I don't understand. They heckle the band. It takes a big man to do that.

Travis: Yeah.

Stan: Exactly, pick on band geeks, that's really helpful. [all laugh] So that's one thing that bothers me about football and, and the fact that there are certain people, certain elements that'll take it to that level. . . .They're not supporting the team anymore, they're defaming or, you know, just hurting the other opponents' fans, which is ridiculous. . . .It's one thing if you're talking to a thirty-five year old, who can defend himself. These people were eighty. . . .

Laurel: So you see this a lot in a lot of fans?

George: No.

Stan: No, it's—

George: It's, it's the exception.

Taunting, as a masculine behavior, only makes sense when the target represents a threat, such as the football players. Aiming emasculating taunts at those already emasculated, here the elderly and "band geeks," shows instead that the offender lacks appropriate levels of masculinity. Breaking their own rules, these fans go on to make fun of other fans inappropriately. While these fans and most others often mentioned examples of fans breaking these unwritten rules of fan behavior, they still noted that most fans do not participate. Rather, the exceptions, or the obnoxious fans, serve the function of maintaining boundaries and harassing those who they consider do not belong.

Blaming the obnoxious fans

As described in Chapter 4, the obnoxious fans help to define the entire community. In fact, many fans actively claim obnoxiousness as a part of their Gator identity. However, when discussing the fans that break the rules the alumni band members described, many would point their fingers toward those obnoxious fans, relinquishing themselves from responsibility. At the same time, these obnoxious fans perform the thankless task of continually defining the group

space by harassing the opponents. In general, most fans share the sentiments of the two alumni below:

Lance: Sometimes, you wish you could have people grow up, and I'm not talking about necessarily the students. [Laurel laughs] Uh, but you find that any group of people, large group of people you can't control everybody.

Laurel: So there's a couple of bad apples? So to speak.

Lance: I think people get out of control, um, I see it more with the students, not to be judgmental of the students, but, um, because the students frequently get to walk to games and they're not driving, uh, and there seems to be there's a place to buy beer or alcohol –

Charles: I was going to say, alcohol induced.

Most fans shift the blame to obnoxious fans, and some, as Lance and Charles did, shift the blame away from people and on to alcohol or the context of the game. In a similar manner, some blame bad behaviors on the mentality of the group, in which people begin to lose their judgment while following the group.

In terms of bureaucratic organization, blame shifts to individuals within the group, alcohol, or even groupthink, while the entire group enjoys the benefits. While most fans declared that they abhor the behavior of the few, only one that I interviewed claimed that she took measures to stop that behavior. No fans I observed in the stadium ever attempted to challenge or sanction obnoxious fans. Indeed, as described in Chapter 4, many fans would actually encourage them with laughter or discourage those who attempted to control them (e.g., a young woman who tried to quiet her drunk boyfriend while the men around her told her to leave him alone).

While fans who do not perform the acts may not feel any sense of responsibility, they are nonetheless complicit because they make no attempts to

stop the process. All the while, the obnoxious fans work to create a masculine space by using profanities and insults, as described above, and specifically harassing those who do not measure up to these extreme standards of masculinity. On the other side of the spectrum, harassing intimates also works to maintain the ideals of masculinity.

“Playful Jabbing” of Intimates

Almost all the fans involved in my focus groups described instances of ribbing or harassing friends, intimate partners, family members, and co-workers. All of them denied that these constitute malicious attacks. Instead, George, an alumnus band member noted, “It’s not hatred, I mean, it’s all fun and games.” Men, in particular asserted that it represents how guys bond, as James notes in a student group:

Tricia: We went to high school with a lot of those people, if you, if you grew up in Florida. Like half of my high school went to FSU and the other half went here. So, you know a lot of the people there.

Laurel: Mmm. Is that interesting, like, to have friends that you grew up with being your rivals? What is that like?

Tricia: Hmm.

James: Well, I think, as far as like guys go, especially.

Tricia: Yeah.

James: That for us it just because [it is] a representation of ourselves. . . There's one of the guys I work with who's like thirty-five, used to go to FSU. [Elaine laughs] And we just talk, guys will talk so much smack to each other about sports. And any time that their teams are wrong, the first thing we did when we come in, like going, “Awe, good homecoming game, huh!” [others laugh] You know, that's the first thing we say. And it just goes back, when Auburn loss, the first thing, you know, we had people calling us up leaving messages on our answering machine going, “Oh yeah, great game against Auburn!” That's the first thing that we could look forward to when we came home. And, that, I mean, it's one of those things that, it's

not really, not really mean, but it's just something that we use to pick on each other for. Because we're not in high school anymore, so we can't find the little stuff. [Elaine laughs] So we pick on each other, like, I think our school's really what we use to pick on each other now.

James vicariously connects to the performance of the school's team, enabling others to pick on him in the face of a loss. Once out of high school, the performance of college teams becomes the way that these men compare each other. By picking on each other through the team's losses, they elevate their own sense of self.

At the same time, they do this only with relatively close people, in a manner described as "just fun," creating a safe space to incorporate extreme exemplars of masculinity into their identities. If they were to boast and display their notions of superiority in a serious manner to a non-intimate, that person might hold them accountable for their notions. Therefore, while bragging fans tend to keep the relationships "friendly." Continuing the quote:

Laurel: So this is a friendly?

Tricia: Yeah.

James: Yeah, it's a friendly, like picking on each other type thing.

Laurel: Friendly jabbing. And this shows your friendship? I'm trying to figure this out, 'cause like, usually I don't like my friends to pick on me, so?

James: Yeah, guys, I think guys it's just the way we bond, you know. It's just, we just rag on each other. I mean, we're there for each other, but we still just like to pick on each other, you know, and poke fun at each other all the time.

Tricia: Test the limit.

James: Yeah, the school is just like, the schools are just another thing to add on to that.

Assuring me of the acceptability of his behavior, James asserted that this constitutes typical “guy” behavior, explicitly contrasting it with what I, as a woman, perceive to be normal friendly interaction. Tricia supports this notion adding that it serves to “test the limits,” presumably of their friendships. But what really gets tested are the boundaries of masculine stoicism, for, as shown above in the case of anonymous othering, these slams against each other attempt to break down the weak. Only those who can withstand the assaults remain.

After probing James a little further, I discover that while most people claim that the jabs are playful, in reality, since fans are so closely connected to their team, they do hurt:

Laurel: Well if this is a big part of identity as well, does it hurt when people make fun of you?

James: . . . After watching the Auburn loss. . . . But it was one of those things, it was such an emotional drop. Once we walked out, and then all of a sudden the cell phones start ringing. [others laugh]. And it's our friends who're going, “Oh, great!” You know. And actually, we got really, like, we're going, “Shut the beep, beep, beep up.” And then just hang up on them. [others laugh] We got, we actually got offended by it, you know it's one of those things, that maybe two days later—

Laurel: It would have been better.

James: —And even now, it's, it's funny, it's like, but right when you walk out, and you get it, yeah, actually we were offended by it.

With the loss against AU so temporally near, James and his friends had yet to sever the vicarious connection to the masculine displays of their team. After a few days, he claimed, the barbs would not have affected him as much. Betty, an alumna, gave another example of harassing from friends which came too soon after the loss to AU:

Betty: We were going North, during that game. And all the way, up the state, this was on Friday, I kept saying to [my husband], "We're just going to go right by [AU], I mean, we could turn off and go to that game. I don't know why we're going to go." And he kept saying, "Those people are expecting us for dinner." That was Saturday, the day of the game. "They're expecting us for dinner, and we will be there for dinner." And it was North Georgia, it was [a friend who is a Georgia fan]. I said, "You know, I don't really care if they're waiting for us for dinner or not." He said, "You told them we'd be there for dinner, we're going to go up to dinner. We're not going to go to the ballgame." And I kept begging till we were too far North of the turn-off to even hope to make it. And then we watched it on television, and—

Judith: Not good.

Betty: And those people were all Georgia fans, they weren't nice to us.

Meredith and Laurel: Awe.

Betty: I was sorry I made it for dinner. [all laugh]

With time, Betty was able to recount the story in such a way to make the rest of the group laugh at the experience. But at the time, she explains that the harassment from close friends was painful.

These examples reveal the power that wins and losses represent in the minds and hearts of fans. On the most micro, intimate levels, fans use wins and losses to negotiate relationships of power. While disappointed that Florida did not get to the National Championship game, Lance, an alumnus, explained, "It was a wonderful season. And for those of us here, [Spurrier] taught the Terrapins a lesson. Uh, cause we have to live with the Terrapin fans, too. I mean, they're local." The lesson the Terrapin fans learned was their place in a perceived hierarchy of power. Fans, such as these examples indicate, either experience one end or the other of an immediate use of the vicarious connection between fans and the exploits of their team. Fans take the first opportunity they

find to negotiate their own identities in the safe, relatively non-judgmental spaces of intimate relationships. In effect, they use the masculine examples created through the labors of the team to create and maintain their own notions of power and superiority to use against “the other” created through various means, including those of emasculation described in this chapter.

Summary

In order to maintain the boundaries of the Gator community described in Chapter 3 and the connection between fans and their team described in Chapter 4, fans work to construct themselves and the team as “us” and all others as “them.” At the same time, the process of community boundary maintenance has the latent function of defining and maintaining the boundaries between ideal, extreme masculinity and all else, namely femininity and subordinate masculinities. As fans construct the community boundary they rely upon many methods, and not all rely on the same methods. As described in this chapter, the process of emasculation serves to define “the other” as woman or not fully man, thereby constructing “self” as ideally masculine.

“The other” to which fans compare their community include opposing fans, mascots, and teams. In each case fans engage similar means to emasculate: sexualizing, feminizing, mocking, patronizing, and transferring aggression and violence. While some of these barbs manifest in unique Southern ways, such as the “inbred” comments against opposing fans, the vast majority represent more general assaults that can be used in any setting. In the end, while creating a stronger sense of community, fans also create and rely upon a very gendered and hierarchical ideology of power. Hegemonic notions of masculine emerge as

defined vis-à-vis women, gay men, children, the elderly, and the physically challenged— “man” is simply the opposite of all those others. They are further negotiated, as Chapter 6 will show, to create a notion of hegemonic White masculinity.

As an ideological concept, however, the extreme examples of masculinity applies to specific individuals and also to the space they occupy more generally. The offensiveness of othering serves as harassment, making those not man enough uncomfortable and encouraged to leave. In this way, harassing becomes a way to perform masculinity. While fans typically blame the few obnoxious exceptions for this hostile behavior, this merely provides a way for them to shift responsibility away from themselves. Meanwhile, all fans receive some of the benefits of associating with a heightened, privileged notion of masculinity as a result of the harassment.

Through the interactions between intimates, fans illustrate some of the everyday benefits of associating with the masculine accomplishments not only of the team, but of the masculine harassment of the fans. In the safe, jovial space of friendships and family, fans negotiate notions of power oftentimes over those very intimates. The pain that many fans described when the tide turns and their friends and family rib them reveals the depths to which this connection lies as well as the contestable nature of these claims to masculinity and the feeling of power within it.

As a cultural event, fans as well as the team work to construct ideals, which melded together, form extreme examples of masculinity. The space becomes

electrified with the energy of masculinity emanating from the actions on the field and in the stands. The final way in which some fans solidify notions of hegemonic White masculinity will be looked at in the next chapter. The use of emasculation through sexualization, feminization, and mocking described in this chapter illustrate that, by ideological definition, many people cannot make claims to masculinity. Chapter 6, argues that particular fans make hegemonic White masculinity so specifically defined that even the players laboring on the field become excluded. Therefore, Chapters 7, 8, and 9 describe the ways in which this ideological system and cultural space remain exclusive, relying upon sexism and racism to deny the legitimacy of claims to hegemonic White masculinity, and by extension, power.

CHAPTER 6

“WE ARE THE BOYS FROM OLD FLORIDA”: REFORMULATING HEGEMONIC WHITE MASCULINITY

Chapters 3 and 4 established the ways in which fans forge a vicarious link to the masculinity on the field, while creating notions of masculinity in the stands. Fans work within an energetic community, connecting to those around them and to those on the field. Chapter 5 then explained that, once established, fans often use the vicarious connection to tap into the feelings of extreme masculine power on the field, harassing opposing teams and fans. Furthermore, by othering opposing fans, mascots, and teams, they establish ideals of masculinity in relation to subjugated masculinities and femininities. This chapter shows how some fans, particularly White, middle-class men, reformulate masculinity as an even more exclusive category.

The term “reformulation” is used to describe the process by which fans incorporate masculine exemplars into a more complex notion of masculinity, one that is both hegemonic and White. At the same time, they start to associate masculinity on the field as subjugated or subordinate. So while they associate with privileged forms of masculinity relating to power and control, they create a hierarchy of power with themselves on top and players close to the bottom. Here, the concept Gerschick and Miller (2001) outline with respect to hegemonic masculinity and the ideological work people must do to maintain notions of power, particularly within changing circumstances is borrowed. As such, people

must reformulate their conceptions of masculinity, "shaping it along the lines of their own abilities, perceptions, and strengths, and defining their manhood along these new lines" (111).

I hesitate to attribute the processes described in this chapter only to White, middle-class, male alumni. Likewise, I do not want to imply that *all* White, middle-class men employ these techniques. While many of the quotes tend to come from this category of fan, there is not necessarily a complete, direct correlation. Men and women from all groups help construct and attempt to make claims to hegemonic notions of White masculinity through the course of the game. But, as described in the Chapters 7, 8, and 9, many other people get excluded from the power because of race and gender. However, they make the claims, nonetheless.

By taking ideological expressions of masculinity from the players and then excluding players from enjoying the material benefits associated with hegemonic White masculinity and power, this establishes an exploitative relationship between fans and players. As some fans incorporate the cultural exemplars of masculinity into their own notions of masculine (i.e., powerful) identity, they also attempt to redefine masculinity to reach farther than the physical aspects of the field. To do this, fans begin by placing the game within a larger context in which they can assume the roles of authority and control such as the referee, critic, and cynic. Finally, if the game does not provide enough masculine context, fans simply foreground other masculine aspects.

Contextualizing and Strategizing in the Event

Fans do work to make sense of the varied forms of masculine displays within the context of the game. In doing so, they hierarchically arrange the work they do and the displays they create as well as those of the players on the field. As a part of this process, fans discuss the game as a small part that fits into a larger context. A White male student, James, talked about the game as a “common cause” in which uncommon people come together to participate within their own distinct roles. Context includes, but is not limited to, other games within the season, other games in the history of the team, and other games that affect the outcome of the season.

Before, during, and after a particular game fans will discuss the larger context and the implications with respect to the outcome of the season. As such, fans take part in strategizing about how to attain a winning or championship season. Of course, the implication of a good season translates into opportunities for fans to incorporate winning or championship status into notions of powerful, masculine ideals. But even without the wins, the process of strategizing alone reflects notions of power and control.

As Gerschick and Miller (2001) found with men dealing with masculinity in the face of physical disabilities that some of them reformulated what it meant to be masculine by focusing on the ways in which these men controlled the action surrounding them. While they needed others to move them, clean them, and feed them, these disabled men would talk about how they orchestrated all of these events. Similarly, fans who frame their part in the game as a strategist make moves to establish themselves “above” the action and in control.

Symbols of Strategists

The following example of contextualizing the game occurred in the Florida student section at the Georgia game in Jacksonville, Florida. I sat in the Florida student section, surrounded mostly by White male and female students. Florida fans started to get into the role of strategist even before the game began by connecting the results of other games to the ultimate fate of Florida:

Before the teams even started the first drive, some of the young, White, male fans in front of me were talking about the Oklahoma/Nebraska game. One man had a radio so he could listen to the other game. He told his friend that he was going to find out about the other game.

Not only did these two young men discuss other games, but they also negotiated symbolic objects of authority, in this case a radio.

It may seem strange to a novice football fan to see other fans with radios or handheld televisions at a game as it would seem to separate them from the action in the stadium. Why would someone need to listen to a game on the radio that they could see in front of him or her? But this is not a rare phenomenon, as indicated by my observations from the game at AU:

There are a lot of people near me in the Florida alumni section with either binoculars or radios or both. The woman next to me and her husband have binoculars and two men below me have binoculars and radios. Another woman a few seats away also has a radio. There is no gender order to this, nor is there really an age difference. The woman next to me is in her 50s or 60s and the men in front of me are in their late 20s early 30s. All of these binocular and radio-toting people are White.

Postmodern theorists, such as Gergen (1991), discuss the idea that people associate with signs and symbols as if they were real and that watching a game on the replay board serves to heighten the sense of experiencing the game. While this may be true, by taking examples like that out of context, the meaning

of radios, televisions, and binoculars as symbols of authority or strategy get lost or simply misinterpreted.

Fans listening or watching the game by other means do not merely receive a carbon copy of the game. Nor does the simulated version replace the live version on the field. Instead, as illustrated by the previous quote, these strategic devices allow fans to ascertain information concerning the larger context in which the current game is only one part. In this example, they found out the scores to other games. They could also receive updates from reporters on the field, finding out information concerning injured players or coach's comments. With binoculars they could look more closely at the action on the field or find out which player lies injured on the ground. With replays they could look at the action from a different angle, making judgments concerning the effectiveness of a play or the legitimacy of the call by the referee.

Two Black participants from an all-female student focus group commented on the use of televisions to see the larger context of the game:

Marcy: You need to cheer, but generally, I just rather, just, you know, lay back. That's why I could stay at home and watch the game, it doesn't really matter to me. Yeah, cause I don't have to be in the atmosphere. You know, more than likely, I'm gonna have student tickets. I'd rather not.

Anne: I'd prefer to watch the game on TV, just for the replay and like you can actually see everything, better.

As indicated here, gender, age, and even race do not necessarily correlate to who brings these symbols of authority to the game. However, the seating does matter. Fewer fans in the student section bring TVs, radios, and binoculars, and if they do, these fans are usually older. Participants in focus groups

hypothesized that perhaps that is due to the rowdiness of the student section, but as described below, it is tied more to the role a fan performs.

Contextualizing Conferences and Polls

It is not enough to merely use objects of strategizing. To truly make claims to control and power, fans must understand the information they receive using these strategic objects. Returning to the game against UGA, these same fans in the Florida student section displayed an understanding of the scores from other games through their cheering:

The scores to the other games were posted on the scoreboard. We quickly found out that Oklahoma lost to Nebraska. This meant that yet another undefeated team had one loss, like us. This was important to Florida's hopes of going to the National Championship game. . . . [Later in the game] we noticed that Syracuse beat Virginia Tech. Some of us cheered. Then we joked that we were going to become big Virginia Tech fans for the Miami game.

Here, the discussions surrounding the wins and losses of other teams that Florida never plays in regular season games illustrate knowledge about the bigger context of college football regarding outcomes important to Florida.

Unlike many sports, NCAA Division I-A football does not have a playoff system where all the teams play each other until the best two emerge in the end for the championship. Instead, since 1998, the major I-A conferences and independent teams formed the Bowl Championship Series (BCS) that assesses which teams will go to the prized bowl games. The number one and two teams according to the BCS calculations play for the National Championship. The assignment of other bowl games is based on team rankings in the BCS poll, the champions for the participating conferences, and estimated attendance and viewership (all these games are highly commercial and televised).

Conference loyalty

Bragging rights is not the only thing at stake with the BCS. Certainly, fans discuss the winning feeling associated with a Championship team. However, that does not explain the conference loyalty that many fans display. The following quote from my field notes recorded in the opposing alumni section of the game at USC illustrates this phenomenon of conference loyalty:

An older, White woman sitting next to me told me that her husband keeps up with all the players for USC, but also other players throughout the SEC (Southeastern Conference), so he'll know about the competition. He told me about a website he visits (www.virtualswamp.com) that keeps him up to date on the Gators. . . . He noted that he used to be a FSU fan but became a UF fan when FSU joined the ACC (Atlantic Coast Conference) and USC joined the SEC. We discussed the fact that we all root for conference teams who aren't playing us at the time.

At first glance, this discussion seems to be a means for "enemies" to bond by finding a commonality or by enlarging the sphere of who includes "us" versus the "them" of other conferences. Certainly, I was surrounded by fans of the other team and tried to find some way to defuse a potentially volatile situation. However, I did not initiate this conversation. The wife tried to establish a connection between her husband and myself. In so doing, she provided a space for him and me to contextualize this game within the larger context of SEC and BCS football. While our respective teams were competing on the field at that very moment, we stepped back to look at the bigger picture and acknowledged ourselves as fans in the pursuit of a common goal: SEC dominance. This is why the husband would not root for FSU after USC joined the SEC—FSU and USC are now in rival conferences.

In many ways, this seems like childish notions of in-group and out-group establishment and affiliation. However, the basis for appropriate rooting behavior includes ideological and material assumptions. Ideologically, since Florida and here, USC, play many of the teams in the SEC, it is in their fans' interest that the conference teams all do well to make the wins against each other more legitimately strong—it extends the breadth of masculine bragging. Perhaps this explains why fans so emotionally cheer for rival schools, because they see the connection to their school. It would be one thing to expect fans to rationally understand the implications of other games, but the almost automatic, visceral response of large sections of fans cheering, hugging, and high-fiving reflects a deeper connection as can be seen in the responses of women from a Gator club:

Julie: See, how many people rooted for Miami over Florida State last year?

Betty: I wanted both of them to lose.

Julie: In that game? Well, I did, too. But since you had to have a winner out of that one.

Judith: I could never pull for Florida State for any [pounding fist on table], I mean. I cannot, it doesn't matter what it is. It's the story of, if it's Florida team, bull hockey! No, no.

Meredith: SEC team.

Judith: That's right.

Betty: And SEC team against, I will pull for any SEC team [all agreeing] against anybody except for [us].

The women in this focus group responded almost angrily to my suggestion to root for in-state teams over SEC teams, one physically pounding on the table for extra emphasis. All agreed that part of being a true fan included rooting for the correct other teams.

This again reflects back to the notion of strategy, because the wins of other teams in the SEC reflect better on Florida's strength of schedule. The two students in the focus group cited below further explicate this notion:

Tim: I was disappointed that Tennessee lost [the SEC Championship Game]. I, I know Gator fans would probably be just disgusted for me to say this.

Cheryl: I was going for Tennessee, too.

Tim: I'm going, and I wanted to see them play Miami, and I wanted to see them take it [the National Championship title], you know. [others agree] If we can't take it, that's right, I want the SEC to take it.

Cheryl: For the SEC to do that.

Tim: I want us always to win all our bowl games, unless, it's a game that helps us climb higher in the final poll. You know, we always want to rise as high as we can. But, like if we're going to lose—

Laurel: It never hurts to have an SEC team win.

Cheryl: No, yeah.

Tim: Exactly.

Cheryl: [It will] just make us better next year.

Tim: Exactly, you know, and, and then Tennessee would have been, we would have been able to say, "Well, we lost to the number one team in the nation." You know, and now we can't say that. So I was really disappointed. Really disappointed. And then they lost so badly.

Cheryl: And to a team that we beat.

Bragging rights for the team and the conference and future poll standing were at stake when another team played a game in which Florida did not participate.

Understanding and articulating this connection within the conference further shows one's ability to strategize. Therefore, even though Florida lost to UT, Florida fans could move past the emotional upset of that loss to discover ways in which to extend their sense of pride and power.

In addition to the ideological consequences of SEC loyalty, conferences share the money earned from BCS games, literally millions of dollars split by the athletic programs of all the teams in a conference. Therefore, even if UF does not participate in a big BCS game, if other teams in the conference do, UF still sees a share of the rewards. Undoubtedly, fans may raise other reasons for conference loyalty or in-state rivalry, but in the end most of these reasons rest on an assumption and understanding of the context of college football as a whole.

In-state rivalries

The larger context may not engage the BCS, national-level implications, but may concern competitions closer to home. In particular, in-state rivalries, such as Florida versus FSU or the University of Miami take on renewed significance especially when conference or national championship hopes are lost. For example, while at USC many of the fans consumed in the game against Florida still took time to contextualize the game:

A White man behind me with his wife had on a radio headset and was listening to the Clemson game. While our game was a big game to them, their real archenemy is Clemson. So the younger men behind me would occasionally ask about the Clemson game, rooting for Clemson's opponents.

Similarly, while at UK, Florida fans cheered when they heard that FSU lost a game. This seems to be a common phenomenon relating to in-state rivalries. This can be conceptualized as concentric circles of inclusion, where the largest circle is the national level, then the conference level, and the smallest circle is the state level. While the greatest prestige is at stake at the higher levels, the fiercest rivalries are more local, mostly because fans must invariably interact with fans of opposing teams within the state. Therefore, they want the right to boast

about the their team's masculine accomplishments to their friends and families as noted in Chapter 5.

Sometimes the fans resort to the lower levels of rivalries as a result of losing in the higher levels, as in the following example. Even though some of the South Carolina fans showed concern early in the game about the results of Clemson's performance, many of the fans turned their attentions away from the current game and started looking forward to the Clemson rivalry only after Florida took a substantial lead against South Carolina: "Finally, the fans started resigning to the fact that they were going to lose. They started talking about the important game against Clemson the next week and the White man behind me said that, 'they need to be practicing for Clemson now.'"

In this case, contextualizing the current event within a bigger, even if only state-level, perspective may reflect an attempt to reformulate fans' notions of hegemonic White masculinity by incorporating planning into the future and strategy as exemplars of masculinity. This seeks to de-emphasize notions of masculinity played out on the field, such as physical prowess. In this example of reformulation and others, fans distance themselves from the players by defining different roles for themselves, particularly roles incorporating the control and authority of the "referee," the critic, and the cynic.

Establishing Roles in the Power Hierarchy

Within this larger context fans recognize that people involved in the game all have unique roles in which they labor. As argued in Chapter 4, for most people attending games, being a fan does not involve passively watching an

entertaining game; rather, it entails actively participating in the cultural activity of the game. The roles fans take may reveal notions of power and control.

Participants engage in differing roles and corresponding labor. Their work expressed in the context of the game reflects the larger hierarchy of masculinities and femininities. Discussed below are three examples of roles fans took in the context of the game—referee, critic, and cynic—that correspond with notions of control and authority. While fans play many other roles and many never play these specific roles at all, these three illustrate the ways in which fans reformulate notions of hegemonic White masculinity incorporating the masculine exemplars on the field into a more complex composite of characteristics.

Fan as Referee

As noted in Chapter 4, fans attempt to connect to the action on the field by playing referee, doing hand gestures and yelling out calls against the other team. But, as in the following example from the game at AU, this is contrasted with another form of refereeing:

Florida got a good third down and some of the student Gator fans started to lift their hands in the touchdown sign anticipating the score. The quarterback, Grossman, had passed into heavy coverage in the end zone. The receiver caught the ball but was already out of bounds. An older, White man beside me quietly noted this before the referees made the call.

While the students exuberantly played referee and incorrectly anticipate his call, the older fan portrayed a more relaxed and less showy form of refereeing. Exuberant fans, such as the younger ones described above, tend to referee when the perceived call favors their team and would be a “big” play. Therefore, they still attempt to connect to the physically masculine displays of the players.

On the other hand, reserved fans align with the final decision and authority of the referee, thereby reformulating what it means to be masculine.

Part of the significance of this type of refereeing lies in how the fan shows knowledge and expertise of the game. The exuberant fans demonstrated knowledge by doing hand gestures, however, their knowledge proved only superficial when the referees made their final ruling on the play. The reserved fan exhibited more complete and “unbiased” knowledge, deducing that a touchdown consists of more than catching a ball—the player must also have control of the ball within a specific space. His expert opinion on the action at the game raises him above the play to a level of judging the action (i.e., referee). From this privileged position he and other fans like him contextualize the current play within the larger framework.

At the game in which Florida played ULM at home, another male sitting in the alumni section aligned with the decision of the referees even when many of the other fans in the stadium disagreed: “Rather than booing the referees, as the students were doing, a White, middle-class, man in his 30s watched the replay and said something to the affect of, ‘Yeah, he shouldn’t have done that. That’s a good call.’” Whereas the students booing the referee’s decision blamed the referee, this man did not let the agency slip from the players or the coach, and therefore, blamed the team for doing something wrong. He aligned with the authority of the referees while not necessarily showing an extraordinary amount of specified knowledge.

Perhaps what seems on the surface to be a major difference between the students' boozing and this fan's reaction indicates only a matter of degrees of a very similar conceptualization of power. Fans that boo do not need to even know what happened on the field; many merely hear other people booing and join in the chorus. The student reaction seems to be about challenging the authority of the referees, but by challenging they implicitly acknowledge that the referees embody power and control. This may be associated with age, since many of the alumni would not take part in mass boozing. As young adults, the students may be finding a safe space to rebel against authority. Therefore, many laughed and cheered the few times during the season when players accidentally tackled or ran over referees, toppling the symbols of power.

The older fans, on the other hand, no longer rebel against the authority of the referees, but instead begin to identify with it. This type of role-playing begins to reveal the levels of a hierarchy of power on the field and in the stands. They suggest that control and authority, in addition to or rather than physical dominance, may be more important components within the ideals of masculinity, particularly hegemonic White masculinity associated with power. Fans' critiques of the referees, coaches, and players further establish this hierarchy.

Fan as Critic

Critiquing the actions on the field represents another way that fans contextualize the event displaying their knowledge and power. However, critiquing effectively poses a difficult challenge to maintaining a sense of control and agency. This is because to cast blame sometimes results in losing agency by admitting actions are not under one's control. This can be seen as a fan

semantically constructs a hierarchy of power in the following example from the loss to UT at home in which a White, middle-aged man in a part of the stadium with a mix of alumni and students expressed, "We need a big turnover. They're playing soft!!" By noting that "we" need something, the fan claimed to be a part of a larger community, that is, the Gator community. However, he quickly dissociated from the players by casting blame on "them," that is, the defense. Interestingly, the use of the term "soft" denotes a feminized characteristic rather than the more masculine "tough" or "hard."

The pronouns, verbs, and adjectives fans use to talk about themselves and the action in the game reflects attempts to connect to and separate from the players on the field. As discovered when Florida played ULM at home, this phenomenon seems to have a dimension of maturity that was previously noted with respect to fans as referees:

I was more likely to hear a "conditional we" in the alumni section. For the most part, fans in the student section use personal pronouns that link themselves with the players on the field, regardless of what the players are actually doing. However, I noticed in particular the man sitting right next to me would oscillate between "we" and "they" depending on what was going on down on the field. This man was White, looked fairly educated and middle class, and was probably in his early 30s. Whenever the team would do something wrong, he tended to describe the actions of the team using "they." However, when the team was playing better, he tended to talk about "us" and "we."

Fans work to construct themselves as part of or separate from (and often above) the team through their use of pronouns. They use "we" as an inclusive pronoun to partake in the ideological rewards of a winning team. Then, when playing the critic, fans oscillate to usage of the exclusive term "they," dissociating from the players. This can be seen again in the discussion held by two female students:

Tricia: But then, like, I'm kind of like, sometimes when people say, "Oh yeah, you lost the game." And I was like, "Well, I wasn't on the field." [Elaine and Tricia laugh] "I wasn't playing." I mean, "Yeah, the boys were, but like, I wasn't doing it, so I didn't lose the game. My school. My team at my school lost the game." So.

Elaine: But when you win it's like, "Yeah, we won."

Tricia: Yeah, "We won." [William and Tricia laugh]

Returning to the previous example from the UT game: "The next play was another short pass and the tackle was short of the first down. The man behind me sarcastically yelled to the players, 'Let 'em have that.' Then, to the referees or perhaps the players, 'Give 'em the extra yard.'" He refused to relinquish the team's agency by blaming them for "giving" away yards. As a result, he constructed the opposing team as passive. Therefore, he privileged Florida over UT, even though Florida ultimately lost this game.

Fans aim a great deal of critiquing at the coaches of the team, semantically placing themselves in a position of power above the players. Critiques in the context of the game sound almost like conversations with the coaches in which the coach's correct or incorrect "response" is played out on the field. In an instance at the game lost at AU, the closeness of the game spurred a great deal of hostility toward the coaching abilities of Spurrier. During that game, Earnest Graham, the top running back on the team, was injured and replaced by another running back who was unable to accrue as many yards. However, it seemed that Spurrier did not change the offense to accommodate for the change. The critique from the following middle-aged White woman reflects the end of a series of conversations with Spurrier that she and her husband had initiated: "The White woman sitting next to me said, 'Spurrier is being stubborn and bone-

headed,’ because he kept trying to work the running game.” In the previous one-way conversations this woman and her husband suggested a switch to a passing game. He did not appropriately respond to the request when he continued the same offensive strategy throughout the game.

Particularly in the face of a loss, this semantic move relinquishes responsibility from the fan and squarely places it on the coach who, in this case, was just too stubborn to make the correct changes. Further, it allows the fans to maintain a sense of the larger context, knowledge and expertise, due to their ability to look at the larger context of the game and strategically analyze the changes that should be instituted. In the end, discussions of “if they had just done this” or “if they had just done that” do not merely reflect a case of the “what ifs,” a type of coping behavior. Rather, they illustrate a deeper attendance to strategy on the part of the fans.

The emphasis on strategy and looking beyond the current game to the larger context of the season can be seen in the following example from a middle-aged, White USC alumnus at the game in his stadium:

The man behind me was coaching in general, but he was particularly vocal about the quarterback situation. USC had both White and Black quarterbacks who played during the game. In the first half, the man complained when USC coach, Lou Holtz put in the Black quarterback, “You know he’s going to run when you put him in the game.” At first I just interpreted this as a racist comment suggesting that the man thought that because he was a Black quarterback all he could do was run. However, in the second half, the man started shouting to the field, “Let him do something else besides run or he’ll only know three plays.”

While making my way to enter the stadium, I passed many pre-game celebrations that donned Confederate flags. Therefore, I expected to hear comments concerning the proper place or actions for White and Black players

and my initial reaction that this constituted racism makes more sense. The fan's critiquing of the coaching does not preclude him as a racist; however, it illustrates how winning the game can take precedence over possible racist assumptions.

At that point in the game, the White quarterback had been injured and was possibly questionable for the next game. Regardless of his status for the next game, the fan expressed his concern that the Black quarterback would control the position and should be trained appropriately when the White quarterback graduated in a year. His comments were striking because they suggest that he did not presume that the Black quarterback was unable to learn more complicated plays, just that Holtz's coaching had not allowed him to thus far. Essentially, his critique reflected a context that extended farther than the game on the field and surpassed even questions of the current season. By referring to a larger context, the fan positions himself superior to the coach.

While many of the fans hierarchically construct themselves in positions higher than the players and coaches, as seen in the last section on fans as referees. There exists an uneasy relationship with the referees in terms of power and control. As noted above, most fans accept and articulate the ultimate control of the referees. Returning again to the UT game that started this section, the fan situated the referees in his constructed hierarchy: "And to the referees he yelled, 'Give 'em a better spot [it's supposed to be] where the knee hits the ground.'" Because referees control where the ball is placed on the field at the end of a play, this passage reflects the idea that referees represent the ultimate control over the game, even if their control is misguided or incorrect, benign or malicious.

To summarize the hierarchy presented here, the opposing team players constitute the bottom and Florida players (or the fan's team) are situated above the opposing team. Coaches sit at the next rung of the hierarchy directing the action on the field. After the coaches comes the referee or official judging each play. Again, unspoken but inherent in all of the above critiquing, comes the fan who scrutinizes each play. Further, fans can instigate firing, replacing, or sanctioning coaches and officials, displaying an ultimate level of control and power. The following section shows how fans illustrate their control when they play the role of the cynic.

Fan as Cynic

The third and final role many fans play in the context of the game is that of the cynic. The referee role requires knowledge and expertise of the game but for the most part takes on a matter-of-fact agreement with and respect for the decisions of the referees. Likewise, the critic role requires knowledge, and fans privilege their knowledge over the other experts on the field, namely the coaches and officials. In the case of the cynic, fans background their knowledge and expertise while turning to sarcasm and jokes. In all three cases, fans semantically negotiate issues of power and control and are careful not to relinquish their agency through mere blame.

To do this, fans articulate skepticism in the referees' decision making. Rather than performing their role objectively, fans intimate that referees' biased calls affect the overall outcome of the game. The following example comes from field notes I recorded about a man sitting in the Florida Alumni section at the loss to AU:

There was another penalty flag, and a White man sarcastically asked, "Who's that on?" It ended up being on Auburn, but there was the impression that Florida was receiving all the bad calls and Auburn wasn't getting any calls. . . After a pass interference call against Auburn the same White man said, "Thank you!" to the referees.

The sarcasm here is used to playfully suggest that there may be more important improprieties by the referees. His disdainful thanks to the referees implies that they merely give away penalties whenever they choose rather than when they occur on the field. This indicates that the official, judgmental role of the referee may be subject to a great deal of bias. However, because this cynicism remains merely sarcasm, the fan does not need to claim responsibility for his comments as real indictments on the institutional workings of the game.

At USC, a middle-aged man sitting in the USC alumni section provides another example of this playful cynicism:

A White man was unhappy with the officiating; he argued that there should have been more penalties against Florida. As they left the field at halftime, he noted, "Well, I thought for sure they would have gone into the Florida locker room." Instead they ran off the field in the opposite direction, but right under the bulk of the UF fans. To this he said, "Well, they are running toward the right section."

This fan reiterates an issue already established by the other roles of referee and critic, that is, the perception that referees wield a great deal of power over the outcome of a game. There have been fears concerning the bias of referees and their power in the past, particularly as a home field advantage, that the visiting team often brings referees with them from their conference. However, this was a conference game, so both teams paid the referees.

The fan went a step further and suggested that the Florida alumni actually bribed the referees, a concept more clearly shown in the following quote from a

Florida fan at the loss against AU: “There was a flag on the play and the Gators stay on their feet waiting to hear the referee’s call. A White man behind me yelled, ‘Let’s pay ‘em off.’” Similar to the previous example, this man intimated the subjective nature of officiating. He went a step farther, however, by suggesting that the alumni bribe the referees. By doing so, he reestablished his power, or potential power, over the situation. In this move, he completed the hierarchy established by the fan as referee and critic by asserting that fans, particularly fans with money and influence, ultimately control who gets hired, fired, and recruited into this event.

In this chapter, all three examples of the roles fans play illustrate the ways in which fans can establish themselves in positions of power and authority, redefining or reformulating hegemonic notions of White masculinity. Fans take on roles that reflect their positions of power in the larger context and furthermore make moves to assess the value of the players’ contributions. However, as they position themselves above the players, coaches, and sometimes referees, this leads to the disconnection between what fans’ labor and players’ labor. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 9. However, sometimes the fans simply disconnect from the event altogether, privileging other forms of masculine display.

Backgrounding the Event

The third and final way in which fans reformulate masculinity is to background the event in which the players labor. By doing this, fans prioritize other means for performing masculinity, looking to privileged types of masculine power, such as those described above. They also find other sources of power by

disconnecting. They background the event by exhibiting social class and educational status, socializing, and leaving the game.

Social Class and Education Brought to Foreground

One way to background the game is to show pride in academics as opposed to athletics in a compensatory way. The following insult from a Florida fan occurred after AU beat Florida and proceeded to rush the field to tear down their goal post: “The fans on the field started to lift the goal post up to the stands and the announcer asked them to leave it on the ground so no one would get hurt. A White, male Gator laughed and said, ‘Stupid rednecks.’” The fan expressed that their behavior seems typical of rednecks, referring to social class and educational levels. Therefore, he implied that AU does not or cannot adequately educate these fans, likewise, implying the educational superiority of UF.

The connection between education and social class is more clearly articulated by participants in an alumni focus group:

Calvin: A Gator went to school here, and a Gator fan is just someone who follows the scene.

Connie: Like the redneck driving down the street that you know did not go to college with a big Gator flag. . . .

Geoffrey: A Gator went to college here. A Gator fan wishes they did. [all laugh]

“Redneck” comments are common in the Southeastern Conference. For example, before the game against UT, I saw the following signs at ESPN GameDay: “Cousin Bangers” (i.e., Tennessee fans are inbred); “Vols Smell Funny” (i.e., Tennessee fans practice poor standards of personal hygiene,

reflecting lower class status); and “Go back to Rocky Top, your trailer’s on fire” (i.e., Tennessee fans cannot afford the middle-class standard of a house with a picket fence). Similarly, UGA fans frequently insult Florida fans by chanting, “Gator fans wear jean shorts!” alluding to the agricultural history at the university and the fact that Florida fans do not dress up as nicely for the games as UGA fans do. While the “redneck” insults reflect a particularized case that manifests only in the context of the South, it represents a larger trend to differentiate one’s school and fans academically and socially from other schools and their fans.

Another important aspect about the signs quoted above is that I saw them before Florida lost to Tennessee. This means that they do not represent attempts to compensate for a loss, but rather ways to enhance the sense of privilege fans exhibited when they thought Florida would win the game and go on to the National Championship game. Therefore, fans foreground social class and education in cases of wins and losses, incorporating different aspects of masculinity.

In focus groups, whether of current students or alumni, most fans discussed their school in terms of the athletics and in terms of the excellent academic programs. In a sense, the university is represented as well-rounded not focused on one thing but doing equally well in athletics of all kinds, academics, and social organizations. The participants from the all-female student focus group discussed this notion of pride in one’s school as encompassing more than “just sports.”

Shelia: I think it’s kind of about being at the university, not just about the sport. [agreement from others]

Anne: Education-wise, like if I'm with friends that go to another school, I'm like, "You guys suck. Your education system is the worst." Or they [say] something stupid, like the wrong word, like they try to use a big word and it doesn't fit, it's like, like, "FSU education, oh boy." [laughs]

Laurel: So it's not just about sports, it's about education, it's about all sports, not just football. So it's about—

Marcy: Being a part of it, I think that's what it is to me.

Here, the women discussed football as one part of a larger context of a university community. Similar to the contextualizing described above, they find their place within something football only complements. At the same time, they claim that not all schools balance these different dimensions.

While these women did not explicitly discuss this, notions of quality of education take on a more gendered dimension when discussing FSU. When discussing homophobic cheers with two men from a Gator club, they quickly recalled the patent cheers:

Lance: Sure, FSU, were the girls are girls, and the boys are, too.

Charles: Used to be the Florida State College for Women, that's right. The insult of Florida State as a "girls' school" goes back to the time in which Florida State was the women's teaching college. This gendered insult stings particularly at the masculinity of football, invoking gender to demote the masculine displays of the team. However, since this is also applied to academics, the notion of feminine as lower expands past the stadium walls to mean everything feminine is lower than everything masculine, notions explored in Chapter 5.

Finally, while this phenomenon often occurs during or after a loss, it can happen at any time. As a result, fans may foreground their academic

achievements to dissociate from the players who they may consider "dumb jocks," a label described in Chapter 9. Therefore, in addition to backgrounding the event, fans disconnect from the players.

Socializing Brought to Foreground

As another way to background the event fans socialize with those around them. This occurs when the team wins big or loses big. In both cases, the masculine displays on the field are limited. During big wins and losses the amount of masculine displays decreases. In this case, fans' attentions are often drawn away from the game; they only really focus and respond to exciting and violent plays, and sometimes not even to those. For the team that is winning, the masculine examples decrease because they play conservatively, taking out the first string players. For the team that is losing, decrease occurs as a result of losing the game. In both cases, fans may start socializing as a way to disconnect from the game. Of particular importance is the socializing that takes on masculine overtones.

Masculine drinking

First, drinking is a large part of participating at the game. Many fans drink heavily before, during, and after the games. This adds to the swaggering, manly atmosphere of the stadium. Leaving the game to drink is not merely an act of maintaining a social connection; it may take on masculine aspects. Under these circumstances, the type of drinking is usually "tougher," including doing shots and chugging large amounts of beer.

Flirting and sexual prowess

Another example of masculine expressions of socializing is in flirting. Both men and women tend to flirt with the opposite sex at games. Indeed, sororities and fraternities often mix their blocs of tickets in order to increase the chances of flirtatious interaction. However, the goals of these flirtations may take on very distinct meanings depending on the context. Flirting for the sake of conquest is more masculine than for the sake of forming a relationship. The following example comes from the Florida loss to UT:

Florida scored and were forced to attempt the two-point conversion to tie the game. Just then a middle-aged, White, man in his forties came down the stairs. He was presumably upper-middle class considering he came from the expensive seats. He said to me, "That looks like a nice place to stand." . . . I smiled politely at him and told him that we had to concentrate on the game. He asked me if I was going to school here, and I said, "Yes. I'm in graduate school here." He told me that he, too, went to Florida. He asked me, "So where are you from?" I looked at him, very confused because I had just told him that I was concentrating on the game, and said, "Florida?" He laughed, and said, "Well I know that, but where?" I looked at him, frustrated because the team just came back from the timeout. I said, "Southwest Florida. Really, I've got to watch the game."

Even though I waited on the edge of my seat for the results to see if Florida lost their chance to play in the National Championship game, this man seemed calm and unfazed. While the team attempted to maintain their sense of power with a last minute play, this man made a last minute play showing his masculine sexual aggressiveness.

At the Outback Bowl in Tampa, sexual prowess as a complementary or alternative expression of masculinity was apparent in the airplane banner advertisements for local strip clubs and the provocatively dressed waitresses at

the sports bar, aptly named Hooters. These conflate extreme notions of masculinity (strength and sexuality) into one.

Joking and humor

But some fans turn to more innocuous means, such as humor, to background the event. Oftentimes a few “jokesters” focus attention away from the game and onto themselves, making fun of themselves, other fans for the same team, or their team. The following quote comes from my field notes while seated in the USC alumni section at Florida’s win:

The South Carolina fans started emptying out during the third quarter. By the fourth quarter, the majority of them had left. Then a White, middle aged man to the right of me started screaming about loyalty to the team and started getting even more into cheering for the team. But he did this in a comical way, making everyone around us laugh. That was the first time during the whole game that I felt completely safe, like the majority of the anger in the other fans had dissipated....Toward the end of the game, Florida intercepted a pass and ran in for a touchdown. The man to the right of me started cheering and said, “Now, I would have been upset if that defensive man hadn’t gotten the touchdown!”

This incident illustrates two important points. First, the fans around me turned to humor to distract themselves from the loss while at the same time playfully invoking notions of loyalty (described in Chapter 4). In this case, however, the fan used sarcasm to release his frustration, allowing him to say things while not being held responsible for them.

Second, I noted a feeling of security that came with the humor. During much of the game I feared that Florida might lose and that I would be in physical jeopardy as a result of rowdy opposing fans surrounding me. This is an example of vicarious connection to masculinity. Fans tend to exhibit more violence after a win than a loss. For example, AU fans rushed the field and tore down the goal

post when they won, while as cited above, the fans at USC joked about their loss. In general, there seem to be four stages in accepting a loss: (1) loud and aggressive; (2) angry and assigning blame; (3) quiet and despondent; and (4) joking and obnoxious. For some people, the process just ends in dissociating from the team to other sources of positive identity formation, but for others it leads to them attempting to take action to remedy the situation.

By turning to socialization in the forms of drinking, flirting, or joking fans transform ideals of masculinity away from what occurs primarily on the field. They disconnect from big losses and big wins as not masculine enough and start to incorporate other aspects of masculinity, such as sexuality and humor. At the same time, they disconnect from the event and the players still involved with that event.

Leaving the Context of the Game

The final and ultimate means for disconnecting lies in simply leaving the game. Leaving signifies disconnecting from the event and the players laboring within it. Again, this tends to occur when the team wins big or loses big. Fans remain at close games until the very end. However, as soon as the game is lost, most of the fans leave. On the other hand, when the team wins, many fans stay to the very end to celebrate with the team. However, if the team is winning by a large margin, many fans leave, as in the homecoming win against VU: “At halftime, the student section was only half full as many had already left to go across the street to the bars. The North end zone was only one quarter full.”

Of course, what people do once they leave the stadium can also reflect claims to power and control. In the above example, fans engaged in socializing

outside the context of the game. In the case of a loss, however, fans may plot how they will get the coach or referees fired, trumping the power of the authorities on the field. Tim, a student, described some of the ways in which fans exercised power after Florida's loss to UT:

Monday was amazing, because I work at the College of [Education], so I work with a lot of faculty. And, um, I mean, there were people that were talking about how they, they have friends and relatives and on chat rooms on the Internet how that they were calling for, you know, um, Spurrier's job was even called for. And the defensive coach, you know, they called for his job. And how, you know. So then it turned into anger, by Monday. It was, "How could we let this go?" You know. I mean, "How could we lose, you know, to Tennessee?" . . . It became angry then. People were so upset, you know.

This reflects the notion of contextualizing the event discussed in the first half of this chapter. After disconnecting from the loss by leaving the stadium, some fans reformulated notions of power and control and focused on who to blame so that something could be done to prevent a loss like this in the future. It was the last game for some of the players on the team, and their hopes of SEC and National Championship victories were crushed. However, for fans there is always next year. Within the larger context, fans can always maintain power, whether through the vicarious connections with the players or by reformulating notions of masculinity to hegemonic White masculinity.

Summary

By reformulating privileged, hegemonic White masculinity to include notions of expertise, control, and authority, fans locate themselves as doing a specific privileged labor within a larger context. At the same time, they identify with the continued masculine displays of strength, stoicism, aggression, and violence performed by their team. All three examples of the roles fans play show the

ways in which fans can establish themselves in positions of power and authority, redefining or reformulating hegemonic notions of White masculinity. Fans take on roles that reflect their positions of power in the larger context and also make moves to assess the value of the players' contributions. However, as they position themselves above the players, coaches, and sometimes referees, this leads to a distinction between how fans labor and players labor.

This research indicates that within the context of football, privilege begins to be associated with strategy, authority, and control. However, the masculinity of football players, notably, their physical contributions, are not cast aside. As argued in Chapters 3 and 4, fans vicariously connect to the players and incorporate their notions of masculinity into the reformulated definitions described in this chapter. The hierarchy described in this chapter deals with competing masculinities. Implicit in notions of masculinity is the notion of superiority over femininity discussed in Chapter 5. This hierarchy, created ideologically, can be used to justify the system of oppression within football or that which exists far past the stadium walls.

Moreover, the football players are not the only people whose attempts at constructing notions of power are subverted by the ideological reformulations described here. As described in Chapters 7 and 8, White women, Black women, and Black men also face challenges when attempting to tap into the power of the constructs of hegemonic White masculinity through their fan behavior.

CHAPTER 7

“WHERE THE GIRLS ARE THE FAIREST”: MAINTAINING GENDER BOUNDARIES

As explained in Chapter 5, insulting opposing fans, mascots, and teams through emasculation results in establishing an ideological dichotomy privileging masculinity and devaluing femininity. At the same time, it establishes the space of the event as masculine and those who cannot handle it as weak. Discussed in what follows is the different ways in which gender boundaries are established and then maintained with harassment ultimately maintaining extreme notions of masculinity. The argument from Chapter 5 which asserts that fans use sexism and heterosexism to create and maintain a masculine space is extended upon. By harassing, fans make women uncomfortable, intimidated, unwelcome, and ultimately, nonexistent (Benokratis and Feagin 1995, Lorber 1994). Harassers communicate to their targets that they do not belong in a particular space. This consists of yet another way to maintain boundaries.

This chapter shows how the dichotomy that attributes value to masculine and devalues feminine encompasses more than mere mindlessly-uttered rhetoric and is actually used to make women, particularly White women and to a lesser extent Black women, feel like less of fans. Of course, not all these attempts to harass women out of the space are successful, and those women who remain become the exceptions that prove that no barriers to fandom exist. This chapter, addresses the expectations regarding knowledge of the game and specific

gender roles in the event. Then the women who constitute exceptions are examined. In all three cases, it is also shown how harassment is used to contain women in a secondary status.

While below and in Chapter 8 gender and race are separated into two unique categories, that is a bit arbitrary. Differences also persist between White and Black women as well as male and female Black fans. Because of the small sample size, generalizable claims about the associations found here cannot be made, although a few trends were noted. Mostly explored are the patterns that emerge concerning ways in which women are excluded from making successful claims to masculinity, and thus, power, control, and authority. Also analyzed is how the fans with whom I talked actively participate in or rebel against the controlling discourses and actions.

There exists a notion of the American Dream and the Protestant work ethic in performing as a fan. The fans with whom I talked asserted that equal opportunities exist for both men and women to achieve being a fan at the same levels if they just work hard enough. Sports and sports heroes more generally are often used to emphasize the level playing field metaphor (Andrews 1996), but as the following fans point out, the field has opened even in the stands. There is no doubt that even with Title IX (legislation meant to equalize participation in sports between men and women in high school and college), women typically do not participate on the same field or court with men. However, fan participation provides a unique opportunity for men and women to participate together. Informal counts I compiled from the games reveal that at least 30 to 40 percent of

the crowd consists of women. Most of the fans with whom I talked see the field as open as a result of coeducation at UF:

Laurel: So sometimes you feel like there's a certain, like there's a standard Gator fan. And like men and women can both reach that. You don't necessarily have to be a man to be a Gator fan.

Anne: Definitely not.

Shelia: It's part of like, the university and there's guys and girls in the university, I think. Part of it now.

Part of the standard fan repertoire includes knowledge of the game, as Chapter 6 showed is necessary in order to establish authority and a sense of control in the larger context. As the primary resource for asserting one's self as a fan, knowledge and the expectations surrounding it differ for women and men. For some women, lowered expectations allow them some relief from the constraints of masculinity. Men, on the other hand, must assert levels of knowledge to maintain their sense of masculinity, particularly when around male friends. In a sense, the lowered expectations concerning football knowledge serve to harass women who attempt to participate.

Women are not expected to know about the games, however, some are expected to participate in very gendered ways. Women are expected to attend games to socialize and do emotional work. Those women who do not fit into these roles are subtly and even overtly reminded of their correct behavior by men and other women. Ironically, women are sanctioned for not being woman enough *and* for not performing as a masculine enough fan. By upholding both a masculine and feminine standard for women, fans maintain the overall level of intimidation of the stands. Those who live up to these idealized notions prove

that it can occur. However, even those women are harassed to conform to feminine ideals.

Even though the women in the group above claim equality of opportunity, they describe a situation that is much more at odds with equality of participation. In the end, women can be excluded simply because they are women and therefore, not men, ideologically tying masculinity to biology. Women discussing themselves as corporeally tied to their gender through sexual objectification or even discussions of limitations due to pregnancy remind everyone that they are women after all, and therefore, cannot participate equally. As Melissa explained, "I guess that's sexist, probably. [laughs] I'm trying to remember, um. Like if I'd be like, 'Oh, I want to be a football player; I want to play,' whatever. [My boyfriend would] say, 'Whatever, you're a girl.' Like, he's never very kind when it comes to like that."

Rules like this are constructed and reformulated within the context of the game and enforced through gender harassment. Below men and women discuss knowledge of the game, specific roles of women, and the seeming exceptions to the rules. Each time, it is shown how these three issues are set up to make women feel as if they can never fully participate. Furthermore, they articulate a dichotomy of valued behavior established in Chapter 5, in which all that is feminine is deemed less valuable than masculine.

Knowledge of the Game: It Is *What You Know*

As discussed in Chapter 6, knowledge of the game, strategies, players, and the larger context of the game are resources used to establish a dominant notion of masculine power and control. Likewise, knowledge, as opposed to physical

skills, seems on the surface to be a part of achieved status rather than ascribed. Therefore, women may theoretically attain similar levels of fan participation if they learn enough about the game. However, women I interviewed, while not always feeling inadequate, discussed ways in which assumptions concerning knowledge worked in their favor. At the same time, many described how differential knowledge conceptions serve to harass them when they attempt to learn more.

Different Standards: Female Advantage?

Generally speaking, women are not expected to know about the rules of the game, strategies, or information regarding the players. While a few claimed to at one point or another to have that type of knowledge, none expressed that she always had to know. Furthermore, women did not trust their knowledge. While claiming to be a true fan, Anne expressed doubt in her knowledge while attending a game with other female students. She told the group, "Like there's a play, a call, like, I still don't, we still don't know the answer. . . .I'm like, 'Why isn't he at the twenty yard line?' It's like penalty because it went out of bounds. I still don't understand that." I attempted to explain what I thought the ruling must have been and she replied, "Hmm. See that was the conclusion we came to, but we're like, 'I don't know if that's the fact.' We're like, 'Maybe he called a penalty for pushing or something and we didn't see it or hear it.'" Anne was still uncertain of the answer possibly because it comes from me, another woman.

However, most women expressed this decreased expectation as an advantage of being a woman, as do the following alumnae:

Meredith: I mean, my, well the fact that my thirteen year old can tell you every number of every player and where he's from, what position, and, you know, whether he's a senior or a sophomore or if he was red-shirted, and— [others laugh] I used to have to know all that, cause I got drilled all the way up there. [others laugh] And now that [my husband's] got the boys, they get it. They have to do it, I don't.

Betty: You get relief.

Here the women expressed that having differential expectations is a benefit for them—they have less pressure on them than men. In a sense, woman then have a choice as to how masculine they want to act at football games, where as men must engage in extremes of masculinity or face sanctioning from other men and women. In essence, this is one of the ways in which women can “bargain” within a sexist system (Kandiyoti 1988). Therefore, these women expressed relief from the strict standards and expectations of the game.

This is also an example of what some researchers might label as women participating in their own oppression. However, these women do not describe this as oppressive, but instead talk about choices and options. Therefore, some woman believe the structure of the games and fan behavior give them an advantage, that is, the expectations can work in their favor.

Likewise, a group students discussed a similar feeling of relief. I asked them if they ever felt inadequate because of their level of knowledge and they responded:

Anne: When I first started watching it. But now. . .

Shelia: I never felt inadequate. It didn't make me feel bad, I just didn't know about it.

Laurel: You just didn't know?

Shelia: Yeah.

Anne: If I didn't know, I just asked, "Why did that happen?" And then that's how I learned. So.

Susan: I think guys expect girls not to know and have to explain it and stuff. I'm still learning. I mean I question it all the time, like every little detail that I don't quite understand. I think for a guy it is understandable. You would probably think something is wrong. It's like this innate ability, like to understand sports.

Laurel: Right, it's on the Y chromosome. [all laugh]

Susan: Yeah, I don't know, sometimes I feel like a nuisance, especially at the games, 'cause like my boyfriend's all into it, does not want to be disturbed. And I'm always just like, "What happened? What happened?" 'Cause, like, I don't know it's too fast for me sometimes, so I question it, makes me feel like a bother, but I don't know.

Laurel: So—

Susan: I'll never learn it all.

While Shelia and Anne said they do not feel inadequate because they have learned a lot, Susan went on to say that she does not feel inadequate simply because she is held to a different standard in which she will "never learn it all."

While I jokingly allude to football knowledge on the male chromosome, their laughing assent reveals that there is an almost unchallenged belief that real men know everything about football. Indeed, two students discussed this very issue:

Melissa: If I, um, I ask my boyfriend, "Oh, what was that? I didn't know that existed." He'll explain it to me. Whereas if a guy asked, he'll be like, "How come you don't know that?" You know, something like that. 'Cause he kind of expects me not to know that, you know what I mean, like not to know those plays or whatever. And he'll like explain it over and over again. He won't grow impatient explaining it. . . I guess it's because they think, you know, you're not supposed to know football, like, oh, you know, screaming. You're supposed to be nice whatever. Like girls are, they don't like football. And a lot of times, you know, a lot of girls are like, "Why are you watching that?". . . But I don't think it's because they don't like the game it's just because of the way they socialize, they never, like, you know. But when they do start watching it, they kind of get into it. . . But I definitely think that's something that, um, that women aren't supposed to know about the games and it's just a man thing. You know, men are supposed to know

everything. And it's just cause women never play football. I mean, that's rare that you find a girl playing football, I don't know if they do. And I think that has something to do with it. It's because girls don't play football, you don't expect them to know. You know. It's a male thing. . .Last time I was actually watching it with a couple of girls. [The friends watching] were like, "Uh, Melissa, what is wrong with you? Why are you doing that?" . . .I think that was interesting when you think about it.

Laurel: Yeah, that is interesting. What, what do you think?

William: Oh, I think she's right. 'Cause one time, when I was watching football with my brother, I think they were going to do a blitz on the other team, I was like, "What are you doing?" He was like, "You don't know what they're doing, man? Come on. You know. It's a blitz." I was, "Oh. Okay, yeah, it's a blitz." [all laugh] So, you know, that makes sense, like she was saying.

Both William and Melissa explained how friends and family of the same gender harass them into behaving in strict gendered ways. Melissa said that women are expected to be ignorant, not play the game, and generally be "nice." On the other hand, William described a situation in which he had to hide his ignorance in order to maintain his masculinity. Clearly, it is far easier for women to maintain their femininity as situations arise. This is in clear contrast to the pressures placed on men. Within this context it is much easier to see the reduced expectations as a distinctly female advantage, though a far cry from privilege.

Standards as Harassment: Male Privilege

Some women interpret the differential standard as an insult to the hard work they put into the game, particularly when coming from men. Anne explained, "I watched the game with a group of guys before. And they're like, like I was talking in football terminology, and they're like, 'What do you know about football?' Like, 'What is that supposed to mean?'" This is an example of lowering expectations as a form of gender harassment. Men do not simply dumb

things down to help women; they also show surprise when women actually know about the game. Furthermore, it becomes an uncomfortable and annoying process in which women are made to feel like there is something wrong with them because they do not fit into the proper mode of exhibiting gender. In another group, Lucy explained how the condescension makes her feel:

Lucy: I have a general knowledge of football, but there's like certain things that I don't know. So like especially, my boyfriend, if I'm watching a game with him and I'll ask a question, or even my dad, like not necessarily Gator football, but just football in general. They have to go over, like, the entire spectrum of like the game of football: how you play it, like, you know, general knowledge, things I already know anyway. I mean, I can follow the game, but they, you know, to explain one little thing, they have to like go into detail about, like, everything. I guess they just assume that I don't get it. . . . And I start getting annoyed, too. And I'm like, "I understand that. I wasn't asking that. I was asking about, you know, why did they throw the flag. Like I don't understand why they threw a flag." You know. And I'll ask that and then they'll like go over something that I already know.

Laurel: And how does it make you feel when they talk like that? Do you get mad at them?

Lucy: I just get aggravated and I'll, sometimes I'll yell at them. [laughs] [I'll] just say, "I know what that is, I know what you're talking about, I just asked, you know. Just answer the question that I asked."

Even though Lucy fights the stereotypes, "yelling" at the men who patronize her abilities, they persist in their condescension. As Susan stated earlier, sometimes she feels like a nuisance when she continually asks questions. In some cases, women may simply stop asking questions.

As Melissa pointed out, since women typically do not play football they do not have the experience to supply them with knowledge of the game. If they are made to feel uncomfortable at all and stop asking questions, they will never learn it all, as Susan pointed out with respect to her skills. Therefore, subtle harassment, whether intentional or not, serves to maintain the knowledge

discrepancy between women and men buttressing the seemingly "natural" connection between gender and sports.

Gendered Roles: Femininity within the Event

Since women are not expected to know about the game, the established roles for women in the setting of the event tend to maintain notions of femininity, characteristics such as socializing and emotional work. Again, women and men monitor and harass each other to maintain strict gendered roles for fans. Meanwhile, the accountability process reiterates a dichotomy of value for the space with masculine as superior and feminine as inferior.

Socializing and Family Bonding

Betty, an alumna noted, "There is a difference, you know, as a young woman there, just dating around, and then as a young woman there dating the person I eventually married." Women in college, White women in particular, typically use the game as a social event to solidify relationships with friends and to meet men. While women mature and leave college, their relationships with men and families change. The literature on fan behavior notes that women tend to participate as a way to negotiate family bonding time with husbands, fathers, children, or boyfriends (Bahk 2000). While my research illustrates this to some extent, that is not all that is going on in the context of the game.

Almost all the women in the alumnae focus group discussed family bonding, while none of the alumni men ever mentioned it. For example, Jennifer explained:

Every football season we go to every game. And it's probably the most quality time that I spend with [my husband], is in that [laughs] time driving up there and back. . . .That's probably the longest period of time that we get

to spend together is going up there. And then we just enjoy being up in Gainesville.

While this seems superficially to support Bahk's (2000) findings that women are more interested in games as a means to build familial bonds, it is different because more of the women also value the games without the family time. It seems less like they merely go to the games to spend time with family, but instead justify going to the games by discussing how they also spend quality time with their families. Another alumna, Meredith, discussed how the games are a part of her family life:

It's just how our family spends our time. I mean, I grew up there. . . .And, we've been going since we met. And we have college friends that we bought our season tickets together for about eighteen years. And we see them at every game and see their kids. And, you know, it's our, it's our time we see them. We'll go from January till August without seeing them. We'll call them, but we won't see them sometimes. Then we'll see them every weekend.

Meredith also discussed how the trips to away games are structured to be educational opportunities for their sons to learn more about the country. Clearly, these women find it important to go to the games. Perhaps societal expectations concerning motherhood and responsibilities to children encourage them to shape their narratives around family.

However, not all women saw this as an opportunity to spend time with family, such as Betty: "The idea of your kids ending up there, you know we didn't ever take our children when they were young, ever. Not one time. It was our special place. Where you have included your family, we did not."

While alumnae socialize and bond with family, young women in college use the opportunity to socialize with their friends and also to find potential mates, in

stark contrast to the masculine flirting described in Chapter 6. Sororities will oftentimes join with a different fraternity each week to mingle with the men in them, and have joint functions before and after the game.

This socializing leads to both women and men noting a difference in participating at the games with men and women, as these students discussed:

Shelia: I think it's more fun to go with guys, cause they're more excited about the game. With girls you. Like, I've gone with my girlfriends, we'll just sit there and talk.

Anne: We're into it, so.

Shelia: Something will happen, we'll be like, "Oh! [clapping] What happened? Alright! [all laugh] Oh, okay." And then you know, keep talking. But you know when I'm with my boyfriend, I'm like, "Awe!" all into it. So I guess, 'cause he is.

Laurel: But you do it, too.

Anne: We pay attention, and we're like screaming, crazy.

While many of the fans in the groups asserted that college women tend to be more interested in socializing than participating fully as fans, Anne attempted to contradict the hegemonic notions of feminine participation. There may be a relationship to race in that Black women may place less emphasis than White women on worrying about being too masculine. Some research indicates Black women are less likely to conform to notions of femininity that require them to be submissive and demure (Collins 1991). Indeed, the four Black women in this study were more likely to contradict the feminine roles the White women constructed.

However, Anne, who is Black, also explained in the preceding section that even she is limited as well because she goes to games with women who do not

know enough about the game. Therefore, even though she attempts equal participation she still acknowledges certain constraints within the system.

She and the rest of her group also started to establish a value system that James, a student in a different group, articulated very well:

James: This year's the first year I've actually sat with my girlfriend. . . . The tickets can range anywhere between, they'll be twelve of us to be like maybe five of us. . . . I was used to like sitting with like forty, fifty guys, like all at once. . . . And I think the biggest was we were there right before kick-off. I mean we were always there. And now, my girlfriend, I have to beat them and drag them and just to get them in the car. [others laughing]. . . . Like I'm literally dragging them through the crowd, I go, "I am not missing the beginning." You know. It's like, [in a high pitched voice] "Oh, look there's so and so." [others laughing] And—

Tricia: I agree.

James: —it's, it's very much like a social event for them. And I think, I actually lose a little bit because, like, when I go to the games, like I still get dressed up in orange and blue, stuff like that. But when I'm with the guys, like, that's when I become one of the obnoxious fans. . . . I would never have done that if I was just out with the girls, cause the girls kind of put on the little outfits and get a little bit dressed up, but that's about it. But if they throw on a stamp on their face, that's some, like the guys are just like, "Arghhhh!" You know, and, and I think that's just the way we bond. Like, doing it like that. So, I think I lack not sitting with them. . . .

Elaine: I would love to know what it feels like to be there before kick-off, I really would, cause I've never been there, my friends will not, like. Like, my first game this year, like I was dying to get there before kick-off, and they wanted to stop at the Hub and buy matching shirts, and do all this stuff, and I was just like, "I'm missing kick-off. I'm hearing it, I'm hearing it." And like, they just didn't care.

James noted that the way men participate is better, hence, he loses something by going with his girlfriend and her female friends. As a result, he misses parts of the game due to their socializing and loses the masculine bonding from dressing and acting "obnoxious," as described in Chapter 4. However, the women also value the way in which men participate, and as Elaine claims, would "love" to be

able to participate in that way. Unfortunately, she remains constrained because of her female friends. While women's role as socializers is devalued by many fans, their emotional work often goes unnoticed.

Emotional Work

Some fans note that sports is the one venue in which men can be emotional and therefore are more emotional than women. As Lucy notes, "I just think guys are just more emotional about sports." James supported this notion but extrapolated further: "Being on the guys side, so we get so passionate about it. There's so many crazy little stories of people breaking out in fights and over their team. . . . I've had friends who've gotten into full-on fist fights." Therefore, this is an acceptable space to show feelings, however, men tend to do so in a distinctly masculine way, such as getting into fights or being very stoic as a lot of women noted about their husbands' reactions to games.

However, this over-the-top behavior in terms of fighting means that there is emotional work for women at the games (Hochschild 1983). Women often have the responsibility for "taking care" of their men so they do not get into trouble as an alumna, Meredith, pointed out:

[Since we started attending games, my husband] and I have always been married, so, but [Jennifer's husband] wasn't married when I first started going. And I would go, [my husband] and I would go to his little group of friends, and go with them. It's a lot different when you're not married, cause. I think [my husband] knew he had me to take care of him.

As another example, an "obnoxious" fan with his girlfriend at the game against UGA was described in Chapter 4. She consistently made attempts to calm him down, keeping him out of fights.

Furthermore some women take on the responsibility of comforting their male companions. I recorded this trend while sitting in the Florida alumni section during the loss at AU:

Because Florida was losing, it looked like many women were comforting the men. They would silently put their arms around them and rub their backs. The White, middle-aged woman next to me said things like, "Come on, you can pull it together," to the players on the field. "Get your mind back on the game." So she was doing supportive behavior rather than strategic, instrumental talk like, "What we need to do now is strengthen our defense," which the men said.

However, when I asked a group of alumnae about this trend of comforting men, they rebutted:

Betty: No. I, uh, he's got to comfort himself. I—

Judith: That's right. [all laugh] Comfort himself.

Betty: Every man for himself.

These fans contradict what Meredith implied earlier in the group when she said her husband expected her to "take care of him."

Instead, they explain their emotional role in a different manner when discussing how they participate as fans differently than the men:

Meredith: I don't smoke cigars after the game. [all laugh]

Nicole: I've done that before. Victory cigar.

Judith: The only difference I know is, it seems to me like, I notice some crazy men Gators our there, but it seems like the women go nuts. I know I do.

Meredith: Men don't yell as much. . . .

Jennifer: I think we show it more than the guys.

Betty: I think we show a lot more. . . .

Julie: If you go to [Nicole]'s house to go to a Gator party—

Nicole: If we're not at the game we have a party at our house.

Julie: —you better, you better hope that we win, cause if you don't she kicks you out.

Judith: You know, I get that way, too.

Nicole: Yep, when they start losing I'm getting pissed off. And I'm clearing off the food and you're gone.

Judith: Don't get near me. Don't get near me. And people don't understand that. They think it's just a game, but it's not. You know. [chuckles]

These women establish an important connection that students associate more with men. When "grown up" women tend to show how they feel more than the men who, as shown in Chapter 6, remain more reserved and in control of their emotions as well as the situation.

Further, even though most of these women talked about performing as fans and the alumnae discussed being more "crazy" than men, their participation is still gendered. Feminine cheering is less aggressive and violence-oriented and more concerned with the physical realities of the players. Marcy explained that she does not enjoy the student section because of the general obnoxious and obscene atmosphere described in Chapters 4 and 5. I asked her what fans are trying to do by acting in that manner and she replied:

Marcy: Be obnoxious.

Laurel: Just be obnoxious?

Marcy: Yeah, I mean really, 'cause you have no point in it, you're not, you know, proclaiming to be a Gator fan, you're just cussing....

Anne: At the, uh, Vanderbilt game, they were like, there was this one guy, he's like, "Break his legs. Tear his ACL." Like, all these crazy things. I'm like, "What? You don't wish that on anybody." You know. [all laugh] Okay, you might get him on this play, no yardage or something, you know. Don't tear his ACL.

Susan: Yeah.

Here, these fans articulate something others had noted in Chapter 5 concerning appropriate harassing behavior. However, the men discussed harassing players as appropriate targets and harassment just something that players know they must endure. On the other hand, these women showed concern for the players' bodies and futures. Typically, when discussing violent actions, masculinity dictates the exclusion of "soft" thinking about the possibility of causalities (Cohn 1993). Anne's friendships with players may have contributed to her attitude, but Susan, a White woman with no intimate connections to the team agrees with the inappropriateness of harm to players.

Therefore, women in the stadium take on responsibilities for taking care of loved ones and the players while practicing more emotional fan behavior. This coupled with the social bonding correspond with the roles women play out at the game. Those not fitting properly into their roles are harassed through sanctioning.

Sanctioning and Surveillance: Gender Disciplining

Of course, not all women express a controlled notion of aggressiveness as do Marcy, Susan, and Anne. While they defined their own limits of fan behavior, other women must be sanctioned to fit into the feminine standards. As I sat in the alumni Gator section at the UK game, I noted the following interaction:

There was a White, middle-class woman in her 30s in a group with all White men. She was very loud cheering all the time. This wouldn't be at all unusual in the student section of the Swamp, but no one around us was really getting into the game like that. So she kind of stood out. At one point, she yelled, "Now that's what I'm talking about, baby!" The woman next to me said, "Does anyone have any caffeine to give her?" Everyone laughed at the louder woman and someone added, "How about some

Ritalin?" She was apparently too enthusiastic and even apologized to other fans around her later in the game, saying it just wasn't the same if she didn't cheer.

Other fans jokingly attempted to hold the fan accountable for her breach of feminine etiquette. Notably, the first person to mention something was a woman. Because she apologized, it is evident that even the woman breaching the appropriate female behavior knew she was doing something "wrong." However, she was really trying to recreate the masculine intensity of the Swamp. This also suggests a tension between maintaining appropriate feminine behavior and the masculine energy of the space, that as explained in Chapter 3, works to allow connectivity to masculinity and the larger community. The next quote, recorded in the opposing alumni section from the game at LSU, also illustrates this tension:

A young, White woman behind me rooting for LSU said something to the affect of, "Take your finger and shove it up your ass." And she yelled at our player, "You suck, number 20." Some of the White, male fans were saying something about, "What would your husband say?" A couple of women (this woman and another White woman behind us) were talking to each other during the game, and a White man said, "Quit gossiping and watch the game. This isn't Jenny Jones."

By bringing up her husband as someone who judges and controls her behavior, these men suggested that she is supposed to be feminine and not curse. At the same time they argued that she should also pay attention and not gossip in order to maintain the effectiveness of the masculine cheering. This tension between harassing women to be masculine and feminine can be better understood through the notion of surveillance.

Both women and men are carefully watched to make certain they perform correctly. Just as women are harassed to not be too masculine, men are the

victims of gender harassment in order to maintain notions of masculinity. This has been noted concerning men in jobs considered feminine and how both men and women work to get them out of those positions back into positions of authority (Williams 1995). A group of students provided an example:

Elaine: [Football at UF is like] getting trained, you've [got] to learn to like the game.

James: Yeah, you learn your reactions from friends. I didn't know what it was like to even like sports, or how you're suppose to react or these yelling out, or dressing up, and all this stuff. Who can wear the little tattoos and who can't wear the little tattoos. All these things that, that go along with that. I actually made the mistake of buying one of the tattoos. [laughter]

Tricia: Oh no.

James: [My friends were like], "What are you doing?"

Tricia: "Only girls do that! Take it off!"

Laurel: Did you put it on your arm?

James: Yeah, well, but I've got large—

Tricia: At least he didn't have it on his cheek! . . . On a guy it would look really odd on the cheek.

In this example, all of the participants (including me) worked together to talk about the rules of the game, specifically the rules concerning how to be a fan. By breaching a rule, James cast light on the component parts of it. His male friends were the first ones to teach him about the rules but, as the example indicates, all of those involved in the focus group also knew about the rule. Therefore, it was not just a rule created by his group of friends, but one in which they perpetuated through socializing and sanctioning his behavior.

The rule also has gender dimensions. He was the only male in the focus group, and all the women joked with him for his breach and agreed that only

women can wear tattoos. However, in trying to help make sense of his actions we fall back upon gender assumptions. He was not attempting to be a woman by wearing the tattoos on his cheek, but rather he wore them in a masculine way, on his self-reported large arms. The rule existed but was recreated and in a sense modified through our discussion. James wanted to maintain a distinctly masculine impression and to manage that he had to make sense of his embarrassing mistake of breaching femininity. To do this, we helped him with conditional statements about his behavior: "At least he didn't have it on his cheek."

While we in the group and James with his friends worked to maintain the gender rules in the game, on the surface some sanctioning and harassment seems to break down gender barriers, as these students illustrate:

Shelia: Yeah, I do the cheers, like, not, you know, off and on throughout the game. But, one of the last games, my boyfriend had had a little bit too much to drink when we went to the game. And he told me that I was going to have to leave if I didn't do the cheers. He's like, "No, you've gotta go if you're not going to cheer." [all laugh] 'Cause it was the part where they run to the ball and they're all "Uhhhh!" You know, that part?

Anne: Oh, okay.

Shelia: He was mad at me 'cause I wasn't doing it, I was just clapping. [laughs]

Shelia was expected to live up to the masculine standard of the twelfth man, explained in Chapter 4. By telling her that she had to leave if she did not perform, her boyfriend maintained a distinctly masculine space by getting rid of those who did not perform correctly or adequately. When contextualized, Anne agreed with the sentiments of Shelia's boyfriend, accepting that particular standard as something you just have to do within that space.

Thus, men actually encourage women to participate in levels that help to maintain the tough, masculine space. The following student group started by constructing the rules and conditions in which fans cuss. This crude type of behavior appears to be only allowed for men and a couple of women who have too much to drink. However, their discussion reveals more about the policing that all fans, here specifically women fans, experience:

Laurel: Okay, that leads to another question, what's it like to be a woman in the stadium? Do you think that it's a unique experience or do you just feel like you fit in?

Marcy: Fit in. [others agree]

Laurel: [You are] never made to feel uncomfortable at all?

Marcy: For being a woman? No.

Susan: I usually go with a group of, with my boyfriend's friends. So I kind of feel like I have to live up to like, the level of enthusiasm they have. So I always have to like, be on guard. 'Cause last time we went, they were like checking on me to make sure I was cheering and clapping. My hands were hurting. It was getting to the point where it was becoming painful to like clap all the time.

Of course the greatest irony about this surveillance is that these fans go to the game ostensibly to watch the players, but are very much involved in watching and checking up on each other. But it does not end in merely watching each other. Whereas, fans can sanction players by booing, they have far greater control over the people sitting next to them. So surveillance of fans by fans has the added element of potential sanctioning.

Part of this surveillance is in terms of being properly socialized. Susan's boyfriend and his friends made sure that she was being a fan properly, with the correct amount of "enthusiasm." As noted in Chapter 4, a rule of the game at UF

is that when in the student section fans must never sit down. Furthermore, fans must make noise to distract the other team when they control the ball. Susan clearly described the policing of these rules of fandom and she expressed the pressure to live up to these non-sex specific expectations.

However, her anxiety also reflects another aspect of surveillance, that is, the fear of imminent failure. Even though she was not sanctioned by her boyfriend and his friends, she had the fear that she had to live up to some ideal, that she must be "on guard." She intimated that someone is always watching and judging her behavior (Foucault 1977). As a result she constantly lives up to what she perceives this ideal to be. If she fails, that failure reflects back to gendered expectations of fan behavior. Ironically, she explained that she feels compelled to live up to these gender-neutral norms, but that in reality she is expected to fail, upholding gender differences.

Women are further surveilled when they are constructed as sexual objects in the space of the stands. As seen below, Shelia minimized her feelings of objectification, thinking she is merely paranoid:

I wore a skirt to the last game, er, like a little jean dress. And it was right above my knee, it wasn't really that short, but I remember walking up the stairs. I was like, "Uh, oh." [all laugh] You know, trying to like pull it down. I was afraid, cause like, you know, people watch people coming up the stairs. I don't think they were just looking at me, but then I got all nervous that you could see up my skirt. I don't know, maybe that's harassment, but, probably not. [laughing] It's me just being insecure.

Bartky (1990) suggests that this paranoia is a result of the continued objectification of women such that they no longer need complete surveillance from men; now their own gazes turn to each other and inward maintaining gender discipline.

While Shelia minimizes her fears claiming that she is just being insecure, women are not just paranoid—men *do* construct them as sexual objects. As I noted at the game against MSU while in a section with a combination of student and alumni seats: “There were three White men in their 20s cheering for a cheerleader as she lifted her leg. They yelled out, ‘Thank you!’ Furthermore, the camera seemed to pan the well-endowed women who would shake for the camera.”

Susan offered another example of sexual objectification:

Susan: Actually. [all laugh] Last game I went to there was some really, really tall guy, walked right by and looked straight down my shirt, like so blatantly. I was so glad that my boyfriend was not next to me. Like I was walking out of the bathroom, and the man was just like, stood there like. I’m like, “Excuse me.” . . .

Laurel: So [your boyfriend] would have been a little upset?

Susan: Yeah, he would have been a lot upset. Because. That’s the extent of it though.

By suggesting that her boyfriend would have been “a lot upset,” Susan intimated that there could have been an altercation as a result of the her sexual objectification by another fan. As his girlfriend, one would assume that he would attempt to protect her from the advances of another man. Furthermore, this would be a chance for him to assert his toughness in another means aside from being a fan and also her chance to exhibit feminine qualities by taking care of him and keeping him out of trouble.

Other examples of men “protecting” their women were also noted. For example, during the game at LSU, “There was a fight between two LSU fans because some of them were standing and some were not standing. A man

defended his wife when another man spilled a drink on her." This constructs women not as actors in the masculine space of the stands, but as mere objects, albeit, valuable objects in need of protecting. Notably, all these examples came from White women. It seems that in the space of the games Black women also experience harassment as women but they seemed to discuss their participation as actors rather than passive objects.

Men and women, Black and White find women in men's positions problematic. Women are allowed on the field as sexual objects, formally in the role of cheerleaders or informally as Jill Arrington a reporter for CBS sports who I heard referred to as the "CBS chic" and ogled at by male fans at many of the games. Typically, women not in these sexualized roles seem odd or outright unwelcome to men (Disch and Kane 1996). Melissa pointed out that not only men find women in men's roles strange and want them out of the space:

Melissa: Okay, I think we had a female commentator on TV. And my friend was actually like, "I don't like that woman. She don't sound right. I don't think women have, you know, the voice, you know, for a game. I just think it sounds better with men." And I was like, "What are you talking about? That's very sexist."

William: Wow.

Melissa: She's like, "No it's not. I just think." And this is coming from a girl. By noting that a woman made these comments, Melissa suggested that women oftentimes work just as hard as men to maintain the gender hierarchy by forcing these exceptions or tokens to settle back into their proper place in that hierarchy.

Gender Tokens: Exceptions to Strict Roles

Even though men and women work to maintain the gendered norms, there is not a perfect correlation. Notably there exist women who prove the rule.

Further, their “equal” participation justifies the American Dream ideology and notions that masculine is better than feminine. In order to succeed, one must think, look, and act like a stereotypical man. For example, Young and White (1995) argue that women entering male-dominated sports are encouraged to uphold masculine values, especially with respect to tolerating and expecting physical pain. The same can be seen with respect to my respondents who endured the pain of sore hands and aching vocal chords.

Examples of exceptional women establish a dichotomy between masculine and feminine ways of performing as fans, which was discussed in the last section in terms of the roles at the game. At the same time, these exceptional women as symbols of equal opportunity are subtly harassed to conform to more feminine means of participation. Considering that both women and men degrade the feminine type of participation, enforcing women in feminine roles forces women into devalued positions.

Exceptions Establish the Good/Bad Fan Dichotomy

There seems to be a type of self-selection in participation such that women who attend games as alumnae are more genuine fans than they were as students. The women and men who discussed women as alumnae, therefore, tended to be more the exceptions. Furthermore, men and women showed a sense of pride in women who were the exceptions. There tends to be a conceptualization such that the women’s way of performing as a fan is subordinate to that of the masculine way of performing as a fan. A man cannot “do fan” in a feminine way, as the quote concerning James’ use of tattoos in the

previous section illustrates. On the other hand, it is much more acceptable for women to be fans in a more masculine way.

This sets up a dichotomy of value such that what is associated with feminine (i.e., socializing) is devalued as trifling. According to participants in my focus groups, as women fans mature, they learn to appreciate the game. Therefore, their original behavior is viewed as infantile, demeaning women's participation unless they attempt to act like the "guys," as these alumni discussed:

Lance: Coeds, when I was a student, generally didn't know anything about the game, didn't care anything about the game. It was, you know, how they were dressed and what fraternity party they were going to that was probably more important. . . .We have women that come to the games, uh, by themselves, without their husbands. They're interested in the game, and it is a knowledge level that they, they're more aware, that they're less interested in trifling things that would have been of importance to them when they were younger. . . .I have friends who are living in Florida and have season tickets and the wives will go to the away games. The husbands don't fly away, but the wives will. In fact they had an effort to make sure they had been to each one of the SEC stadiums.

Charles: Oh cool.

Laurel: Awesome.

Lance: They go to a new one. But they don't go with their husbands. Their husbands said, "No. Going to Gainesville is enough, we're not going to fly around." . . .In the case of one of these women, who I knew as an undergraduate, uh, she went shopping on game days in Gainesville when she was an undergraduate.

Charles: Ohhhh, she can appreciate the games.

Here, Lance, Charles, and I showed pride and excitement when women learned to prioritize and appreciate the game over socializing.

As the following students acknowledge, some female students, in addition to the alumnae, exhibit exceptional behavior:

James: Well, it depends on the woman. Like, I do have, some of the girls who used to sit with us in the bloc were as obnoxious if not more obnoxious than the guys were.

Tricia: Yeah.

James: Like they were exact opposite. . . . They're with us at [a local restaurant] when we lost [to Auburn], and they took it harder than the guys did. They didn't want to go out. They were just like, "Oh, this is horrible." So, that. But, I would say the majority of the girls that I know on a whole, it's more of a social thing.

James describes two "exact opposite" types of ways that women can try to be a fan, again reflecting the underlying dichotomy of value in terms of gender and fan behavior. While women have the freedom, although somewhat limited, to perform as fans "appropriately" (i.e., in a masculine way), men do not have the freedom to act more feminine in performing as fans.

Some of the exceptions are explained by or blamed on outside influences, such as boyfriends or alcohol. After a group agreed that men are the only ones who cuss at games, I asked if they had ever heard women cuss and Marcy replied, "We've got a few. [others agree] A few who have had a little bit too much to drink. And they're usually with their boyfriends, 'cause he's doing it, you know." Or, as Lucy and Melissa discussed in a different group:

Lucy: Just by observing guys, I think they're more into it. But, I don't know, her. [laughs] She's like a guy.

Melissa: I'm like a guy. I never used to be, you know, that much into UF, but my boyfriend was, and when I started dating him, I really got more into it. I still always watched the games, and I used to scream, but not as much.

While Melissa was initially influenced by her boyfriend, she and Lucy now consider her to be "like a guy" because of her participation, again reflecting the either/or dichotomy. However, an important semantic issue is that both say "is

"like" rather than "is," denoting that she performs, rather than exists as masculine. Therefore, as people who act in masculine ways, women are often harassed to act feminine.

Exceptions Harassed to Conform

Men and women are expected to know the gender rules of fandom. As discussed above, one of the apparent rules is that women do not completely understand the rules of football. In a group with female students the sole man, William, made some observations regarding differential expectations between men and women with respect to knowledge of the game:

I think it was last year, I had some girls come over to watch football with me and some of my friends. And the girl was saying, like, was saying all these different, like, different strategies and stuff about football. And my friend was like, "How do you know that, you're a girl?" You know, "You're not supposed to know that stuff. It's guy stuff." Whatever. I was surprised about that one.

William explained the surprise his friends displayed when a woman friend showed her competency. His friend explained the rules of fandom to the girl, telling her that football is a man's space. Note that he said she *is* rather than *is like* a girl, constructing gendered behavior as a naturalized notion tied to biology. The friend went a step further than explaining the rules; his comments enforced the rules, telling her that she is not supposed to know about football strategies.

However, we cannot jump to the conclusion that the woman's actions, and those similar to hers, fundamentally undermine the dichotomy of gender expectations. Instead, she is understood as a minority by this man's friend, an exception to the rule that women have no knowledge of the game. What is dangerous about this is that the exception projects the idea that if she can do it,

other women could if they really wanted to. Therefore, since most women do not seem to know much about football, women really do not want to be serious (i.e., be masculine) fans. In reality women are harassed to conform to the feminine, as three alumnae discussed below:

Betty: [My husband] hunts, and he will hunt in some of those November games, and I had people actually say to me, "You're going to the game, by yourself?"

Judith: Mm, hmm.

Betty: "Yes!"

Meredith: You go to away games by yourself, too?

Betty: Oh, sometimes, you know. I, it doesn't bother me at all.

Meredith: My sisters and I went to Auburn this year. [My husband] just couldn't believe I was going to a game without him. But we had to go to a funeral up there, and he didn't want to go to my uncle's funeral, so. When we realized it was only thirty miles from Auburn, we were like, "We're going." [all laughed] "Going to the game."

Meredith and Betty exuded pride over their independence as well as their superiority with respect to devotion in going to away games. However, both these token women noted their exceptional behavior, Meredith, showing surprise that she is not the only one who goes to games without her husband. At the same time, Meredith realized her exceptional status as a result of subtle harassment from her jealous husband. As exceptions, they are notable because they dare to go to games, masculine events, without men. In essence, they challenge the boundaries of the all-male space. Harassment serves to protect that space from encroaching women.

Summary

This chapter relied upon the narratives of the men and women who participated in focus groups and some examples recorded at games to illustrate some of the means by which the space in and around the fan experience remains a bastion of masculinity. I do not claim that men consciously intend to exclude White and Black women. Furthermore, I doubt that these are the only ways in which sexism works to create a hostile environment. While all the fans above obviously receive some benefits from their participation in the extended community described in Chapter 4, it also becomes clear that not all people benefit in the same manner. At the same time that they attempt to forge a connection to this community, there are subtle and overt moves that make women feel slightly on edge in the stadium.

With respect to knowledge, gender harassment reinforces boundaries of participation. Men hold both White and Black women to a lower standard for knowledge concerning the game. While some women find relief in the lowered standard, many express exasperation when repeatedly reminded that they *should* not know as much as they do.

Similarly, gendered roles in the event more clearly articulate the proper place of fans with respect to gender. White women in particular enact a particular type of fan, more feminine than the way in which men are fans. Women socialize and perform emotional work. Men and women closely watch each other to assure that people are performing correctly. In a paradox, women are expected to uphold both a female and male standard for acting as fans. However, the fans in this study reveal that the expectations to enact the part of

male fan may really be ways to articulate the supremacy of masculinity, while justifying the close scrutiny under which women must perform.

These strict roles are not perfectly maintained and exceptions exist with respect to gender. Generally speaking, gender exceptions suggest a level playing field truly exists such that sexism no longer restricts men and women. These exceptions actually prove the rule of sexism. Token women reveal the notion that the masculine way of being a fan is the superior way. At the same time, men and women harass these exceptional women to conform to the female gender patterns.

In all these cases, these issues create a setting that leaves White and Black women potentially uncomfortable, feeling unwelcome and unwanted. The result of continual and sustained harassment is to wear down the resolve of many of these fans to challenge this distinctly male space. As observed through informal counts of female fans attending games, they are disproportionately low compared to their representation at the university. While there are a multitude of reasons why the majority of university students do not attend the games, the fact that the space remains hostile with respect to gender cannot be dismissed as a major possibility.

There are many implications that this is the case. Certainly, gender harassment attempts to invalidate any claims made by female fans to hegemonic notions of White masculinity. However, even more problematic is that some of the more gender-neutral benefits of the fan experience may become less powerful for female and Black fans. The simple song “We Are the Boys,” the

ritual surrounding it, and the values of community it endeavors to instill may be lost because of harassment. Women's groups at UF previously protested the phrase used in the title "where the girls are the fairest" to no avail.

Thus, the positive functions of the Gator community outlined in Chapter 3 and to some extent in Chapter 4 are not felt equally. Likewise, the processes used to preserve the masculinity of the event play out with regards to race. In this case, however, the space is defined as White and is protected from the encroachment of Black fans, a phenomenon described next in Chapter 8.

CHAPTER 8

“FIGHT GATORS FIGHT, ‘CAUSE DIXIE’S RIGHTLY PROUD OF YOU’: MAINTAINING RACIAL BOUNDARIES

After Tricia, a female student described an incident of a football player harassing a friend, the rest of the group discussed what it meant for their participation as fans:

James: I think the interesting thing with that is that we all see that, and we can, you know, say, “Oh, well, you know.” And have these ideals, but we still root and support for them for everything else.

Tricia and Elaine: Right.

James: When they’re, when they’re on the field.

Elaine: But off the field.

James: It doesn’t become, like, an individual thing, or even like the bad stereotypes, it almost becomes like a cause. It’s like, someone said something last night that, you know, everyone made fun of Bush when he got into, but you don’t make fun of a president during wartime.

Elaine: Right.

James: You don’t pick on them. It’s kind of like [Laurel laughs], well, to some extent. But it’s just one of those things that you know—

Tricia: Different levels of respect.

James: —It’s that almost when something’s going on, it can transcend that now there’s exceptions to the rule. It’s like, when I, when I see ‘em around campus or at club, stuff like that, I don’t really have a high opinion of baseball players and football players because of stories like that, but when I see ‘em and watch ‘em during the games, then I root and support for them, like I’d be their best friend.

James, Elaine, and Tricia discussed notions of knowledge, roles, and exceptionalism with respect to race. This chapter looks at how the process of

boundary construction and harassment outlined in Chapter 7 is mirrored with respect to racial boundaries and harassment. Knowledge of players and knowledge as players link Black women and men to the field in special ways. Harassment tells Black men and women that their proper place is not in the stands, but closer to the field. The limited roles of Blacks on and off the field further discourage Black fans from even connecting to the institution of football. Finally, Black fans sense that White fans like Black players only as exceptions to a normally racist world view.

Similar to how fans in the beginning of the Chapter 7 noted that the field of fan participation opened as a result of the university's coeducation status for the last fifty years, the notion of a level playing field in sports receives the most coverage with respect to race (Brooks and Althouse 2000, Smith and Henderson 2000, Lewis 1995, Hoose 1989, Jones, et al. 1987, Schneider and Eitzen 1986, Eitzen and Sanford 1975). With a disproportionate amount of Blacks in football, it appears to be a space in which racial discrimination no longer factors into participation and opportunity. This is not the case. What about the stands—do they appear to be a level playing field as well? Taking informal counts of the racial composition of the stands at games revealed that a low proportion of the crowd consists of Black fans. Oftentimes, I did not record any Blacks in the stands. While two times a larger group of Blacks was noted, particularly in the seating reserved for players' family members, in general, the crowd contained less than one percent Black fans.

As a result, just as the space in the stands is established and maintained as masculine, it is further constructed as White, while on the field Black is acceptable and normal. Therefore, there are appropriate spaces for Blacks and Whites, and harassment serves to keep people in their proper place. The crucial difference between gender and racial harassment is that while women can make moves to act like men in order to maintain the masculinity of the space, there is nothing Black fans can do to make themselves more White. Therefore, the harassment of Black fans is much more acute.

While other races are present at the games, the participants only discussed issues in terms of Black and White. Therefore, focus has been placed on the ways in which the space becomes inhospitable to the Black fans who attend the university and attempt to participate at the games.

Because the university is located in the South, UF fans have an assortment of historically racially intimidating signs and practices at their disposal. For example, the line in this chapter's heading comes from the fight song, "Orange and Blue," invoking nostalgic images of Dixie, the slave South. As a result, the space surrounding the games remains racist and intimidating for Black fans. Melissa, a Black student described the fear the Confederate flag invoked when she went to Tennessee:

I went to Tennessee this weekend. And there was, I mean there was Confederate flags everywhere. It's weird, um, because all these people, they love the football games, they love these players and they want these players to play, but yet, they're still racist. And they like know all these like kind of, I don't know, kind of vicious. And I was literally scared of going into some stores because there were Confederate flags everywhere. And I was like, "Oh gosh. You know. I would like to go in, but I can't." Um, so I was like, I just wondered. . .what is really bringing them together?

Melissa used this example to raise the contradiction in the notion of racist Whites coming together to watch and cheer for Black players. She, her group, and the other student groups eventually come to the notion of exceptionalism, as described more below.

Melissa explains how the flag alone kept her from entering certain spaces out of fear for her personal safety. While many Southerners argue that the flag merely symbolizes their heritage and not racism, to many Blacks it symbolizes something much more violent and intimidating.

After Melissa discussed her experience in Tennessee, she and William noted that Gainesville is not immune to the racism of the South:

William: I've seen it once, by the Reitz Union. Some guy was tailgating and I saw his flag. I was kind of scared walking right at it, I didn't want look at him. I thought he was gonna maybe yell at me or something. I was just like, you know, ignore him and just keep walking.

Melissa: The worst incident I've seen in Gainesville is during. . .that Tennessee game that we had at the Swamp. There was this guy, who was, um, it was like on Stadium Road, you know that road across the stadium that like goes toward Shands [Hospital]. He was right there, and he had Tee Martin [the Black Tennessee quarterback] as a dummy, hanging on a rope, um, at the, right in front of the road, he was like, on the tree. You know. And I was like, "Oh, my god. No he didn't do that." You know. So I was just like, trying not to look at it. And then like, I was on a lunch break 'cause I was working at the Health Science Center, and then I was coming back, on my way back I saw some cops telling him to put it down, whatever. And he was just so upset, you know, like. You know, whatever. And I guess he felt like that was his right. But I was like, you know, we're supposed to be open-minded, and all these things. And look at the kind of stuff he's doing.

William explained the fear he felt as a result of seeing the flag, unsure of how to act around the person displaying it and ultimately, he just tried to get away from it unharmed. This reminded Melissa of an incident on campus in which fans invoked the racist history of lynching in hanging an effigy of a Black quarterback.

Chapter 5 discussed how fans often put mascots on nooses as a safe target of violence. However, this is the only example I have heard or seen in which a model of a player was the target. Notably, the player is a Black man in a position of power on the opposing team. While there could be many ways of reading the racism in that situation, Melissa expressed fear and disbelief because of her assumption that people attending and graduating from the university are supposed to be "open-minded."

Ironically, most people assume that racist offenders comprise only a minority of the population and that they tend to be uneducated and from the lower-class (Feagin and Vera 1995). However, the majority of people attending games either attend or graduated from the university, coming mostly from the middle- and upper-middle classes. As such, Melissa and William expressed their frustration since the university campus is supposed to be a safe space, free from the racism of less educated communities. They and other Black fans have instead discovered that it is anything but racism-free, and rather, systematically employs racist images to create and maintain a White space.

More often, the racial harassment remains much more hidden, employing means which mirror those methods explored in Chapter 7 with respect to gender harassment. White fans often connect Black men and women to the players, suggesting that their proper space is on the field and not in the stands. Meanwhile, the lack of Blacks in leadership positions on the field indicates to Black fans that even the field is not as level as most would assume. Finally, Black fans read the connections that White fans make to Black players as

exceptions to White racist ideas, exceptions from which they are excluded because they are not the stars on the team. All three of these trends work to make Black fans feel uncomfortable in the stadium and more generally with their school. Ultimately, this type of racial harassment is problematic because there are few Black fans and because of the affect it may have on attendance and graduation rates of Black students.

How White fans intend their actions to be read is not explored below. While an important area of study, it is irrelevant to the understanding of how Black fans feel harassed in a White space. Investigated instead are the ways in which Black fans challenge the ubiquity of a White space with their very presence while reconciling their sense of self-doubt regarding supporting a team and a school in which racism persists.

Knowledge of or as Players: It's Not What You Know, But *Who You Know*

The increased connection of Black fans with the disproportionately Black team decreases some Black fans' connection to the more general fan community. However, this occurs differently for men and women. As noted in the previous chapter outlining gender harassment, all of the Black women expressed themselves as fans in a fairly unrestrained manner, not worrying so much about the constraints of gender. Of course gender remained a factor in terms of the amount of knowledge the women exhibited.

Aside from their connection to the event based on knowledge and participation, many fans feel personally connected to the team. All of the Black women with whom I talked maintain friendships with either Black football or basketball players. In comparison, only one White woman discussed her

intimate relationship with a White baseball player. Likewise, only one White man described a friendly relationship with Black players in a few of his classes, but discussed this more as awe than friendship.

The Black female fans are more likely to know the players more personally. This provides them with an intense and special connection to the team for which many fans long, as described in Chapter 4. However, even with those benefits they occasionally feel a sense of disconnectedness from the mostly-White crowd based on race. When I asked Anne if she felt connected to the field she responded:

To the field? I know most of the players on the field. So, so, yeah. I definitely feel a connection, but for the crowd? I don't know, the crowd is iffy. Like in the third quarter when we sing, "Ol' Florida," every time. Stupid song, "boys are the squarest." [laughs] I don't know, but um, like you know, you're supposed to go like this. [Holds out arms and sways.] I don't know. [Looks around at the rest of the group.] I can say it, I guess. Like most of the population is Caucasian, and like, it's me and my three friends, and we're Black, and they're like, "Uh?" [all laugh] You can see, you know, they're like iffy about, should they, if they want to sing the song with us or whatever, so. That was just one time, though.

Anne ridiculed one of the favorite parts of the experience for many White fans. Ironically, this song invokes the values of community and togetherness, despite differences. In this moment, in which the crowd is supposed to act as one cohesive unit, Anne and her friends experienced racism, noting that the White fans around her acted as if they did not want to touch her. Although she qualified this experience as only one incidence, it still affected her overall connection to the community. As one of the most positive functions of the football experience, it is problematic that subtle harassment of Black fans makes them feel as if they are not a valid part of the community.

On the other hand, some Black men face a different type of discrimination. Particularly for Black men who are large or physically fit, some White fans connect them to the players, not as friends. This trend was noted while at the Landing, a shopping area with restaurants in Jacksonville before the game against UGA when I was with a group of friends:

Many people would stop and talk to Melvin. He was a football player in college, and is rather large and broad. He wears his hair in cornrows for his job as an undercover cop in California. He is in his early 30s. People from both teams would often pat his back as they passed him. At least two people during the night asked him if he was playing the next day. He told the first man (a White male Georgia fan in his 20s) that he was too busy drinking beers to play. The man responded that it was, "A waste of your body."

The pats on the back throughout the night at the Landing were examples of subtle and friendly harassment, as White fans attempted to feel a connection to a person they believe to be a player. Certainly, over time this can wear down many fans, such as Melvin, turning from friendliness to racist harassment.

The remarks by the Georgia fan went a step further to outright harassment directed at establishing Black men's place in football. The Georgia fan angrily shook his head, accusing Melvin of wasting his body, sounding much like a sexist man telling a professional woman that she is wasting her beauty. Both attempt to articulate appropriate places for women, men, Whites, and Blacks.

During the game fans in the stands made similar comments to Melvin. A colleague noted the interaction between Melvin and a young, White obnoxious male fan in front of him:

The same White guy in front of me who was swearing and yelling at the other fans would constantly turn to Melvin and apologize to him. He repeated over and over how he wouldn't want to make the guy mad. He never directly mentioned race, but he seemed to be somewhat intimidated

by him. He also said that Melvin should be out on the field blocking for the Gators, not sitting in the stands.

Again, the fan attempted to show that the proper place for Black men is on the field not in the stands. Perhaps this man was simply joking and trying to find some way to bond with a person who was intimidating to him. Whether intended or not, this repeated association by multiple fans with Black male fans and players serves as a type of harassment. However, what about Black men who do not look the part of player? While not necessarily associated as players, all Black fans find the limited roles of Black players another reason for a decreased connection to the Gator community.

Racial Roles: Lack of Black Representation

The place of Blacks on the field is limited and it makes some Black fans uncomfortable and unwelcome. When discussing stereotypes about race and players, Anne noted, "Like, I heard about, um, quarterbacking, like, 'Steve [Spurrier] will never get a Black quarterback.' Um, why? Like, I really wish we had Michael Vick [the Virginia Tech Black quarterback]. Uh, it would have been beautiful if we had Michael Vick." Under his tenure as head coach, Steve Spurrier never did have a Black quarterback. The year Ron Zook took over the position there was one Black quarterback on the roster. Zook has also recruited the top quarterback in the nation for the 2003 season, a player who is also Black.

While Anne seemed to suggest that the team would be better with a Black quarterback, other Black students in another group noted the lack of role models in positions of power on the field:

Melissa: The other thing that was interesting, 'cause I always wonder, why we never have a Black cheerleader. I was always like, you know it's so

weird, we never have a Black cheerleader. And I look at all the other teams and they have a Black cheerleader. I'm like, "Am I really rooting for the right team?" You know. I wonder about, you know, our football team. You know, I mean, like, just our school in general. It kind of makes me wonder, you know, because I'm like, well, I don't know. But yet, I still root for them. So it's kind of like, what really is it that's pushing me to fit in, you know, even though I see that and I think about that. But I still love the Gators and I wonder what the football players, you know.

Laurel: Like what? What do you mean?

Melissa: Like, I wonder about how they feel, like you know. I mean, how they feel. Do they feel like if they are really appreciated or like if it's just a football team? You know, are they really looking at them as a person or something like that? You know.

William: Yeah, I also noticed that there's not, like a, a Black quarterback.

Melissa: Yeah.

William: There's never been a Black quarterback at UF. So, well that kind of really touched me there. I don't know what's going on.

Melissa noted "Am I rooting for the right team?" The lack of representation caused her to question her own school, its team, and her support for them. These are questions with which many Black students at traditionally White institutions must grapple. Some decide that the racism and exploitation in college sports are irreconcilable and they refuse to attend. This may be one reason for the disproportionately low percentages of Black fans counted at games.

Those who continue to participate as consumers in this space must continually ponder their own role in the process. Melissa discussed wondering how the lack of Black cheerleaders makes the players feel. She perceives that they must negotiate these mixed feelings as well, wondering how the crowd views them, that is, if the players feel exploited by racists.

Then William raised the issue of quarterbacks that Anne mentioned. He explicitly stated that it reduces his connection to the team and school:

William: I think it's okay, for me.

Laurel: The school or the team?

William: The team is okay. But, I, I would like it to have, like, a Black quarterback for once. That would make me feel a lot more better.

William noted that he would like to have Blacks in positions of power on the team as positive role models and as a symbolic move to reduce racism on the team.

In essence, these Black fans simply want the team to reflect them and their desires. However, these fans quickly noted that the relationship between the White racist fans and Black players is much different than with them as fans. Even with powerful Black players, such as UT quarterback, Tee Martin, racism still persists, as Melissa so pointedly observed with respect to the general racist atmosphere in Tennessee.

Racial Tokens: Exceptions and Racial Transcendence

George, one of the alumni band members told me flatly, "And you mentioned that part of your thing is about race. No one cares. It's, the main thing is whether you perform on the field." To George, race does not matter as long as the players win games for the crowd. Of course, this is a change from before desegregation, but it is not a complete dissolution of racism and discrimination. All of the student groups discussed the notion of players as temporary exceptions to racist ideology. While trying to make sense of the treatment that Black players receive by fans who "love" them because of their performance on the field, Melissa noted that this might be an advantage:

Melissa: I think the thing is that they have like extra status as football players put on them, too. So you're overlooking, like, if he'd overlook other races in that community it's just like, you ignore that when you're looking at the football players.

Laurel: Right, right. So it's almost like a star status.

Melissa: Yeah, it's almost like that status overrides racial discrimination.

Laurel: Right, right.

Melissa: That could be one of their privileges.

The next chapter shows how racism against players has not disappeared, but this notion that fans "love" people with whom they would not normally associate in another context remains. It is important precisely because it leaves many Black fans feeling as "the other" from which the players are exceptions.

James, a White student attempted to clarify the enigmatic relationship:

James: My best example is this: My friend, Jerry, he's my old roommate. He is what I call, um, a group racist, where in other words, he doesn't say anything until he's actually around a group of people, and then he acts like he's a racist, and "I hate Black people. And I hate Mexicans. And I hate this and that." But every time Jerry would go out, he would see a basketball, uh, basketball or football player and he would go, "Oh hey, what's up?" [others laugh] You know, and just, like ten minutes before he'll be in the car going, "N this, N that, duh, duh." Soon as he sees a basketball player, it's like, race has nothing to do with it, because this is you know, someone that he looks up to. . . .He saw Alex Brown [a Black defensive player], like a year ago, when he came here, and he gave him a hug. [others laugh] He runs up to him and gives him a hug, and it was just like one of those things. And then, you know, ten minutes later, he'll be back to "N this, N that." You know, all over again. It's just like, he doesn't, it's just very odd to me.

Laurel: Why do you think he does that?

James: I don't know. Whenever that's used, I always rag on him. But, Jerry, the way he does that, I just never really understand why. Like we rag on him about it, all the time. We're like going, like going, "Either you're racist or you're not a racist. A few seconds ago you're going, 'That's Alex Brown, man! That's Alex Brown!'". . .But that's when he transcends me as a fan, because I look at them, you know as football players, like that. But

when I see 'em riding around on the scooters, or like, I had Brock Berlin in my class, I'm like, "Oh, there's a football player." You know, and that's, that's as far. It doesn't like, I don't want to run up to him and get his autograph, or, you know. I don't even think, I'd really say like, "Good game" or you know anything like that.

Laurel: So for him, it's almost like they're an exception.

James: Yeah, they're an exception to like his, his ideology. It's like all of a sudden, since they're a sports player, it's like a completely different.

The other two people in the group, one a Black woman, laughed at the ridiculousness of a racist hugging a Black man. The extreme affection Jerry has for stars of a group he despises seems unimaginable. The only way James can make sense of the behavior is through Jerry's transcendence as a fan and his conceptualizing Black players as different than other Blacks (Andrews 1996).

Yet, while players may be seen as exceptions, Black fans, as those transcended, are left to feel not welcome in the stands, an example Melissa shared:

I think it was the Mississippi State game. But, um, it was weird because, like, there was these people sitting behind me, and like, they were pure Gator fans, so they were rooting for the Gators. Like they knew every player's name, whatever. But then there was this Black guy, who came, I don't know, he was kind of acting a little weird or whatever, like they kind of, "Oh what are you doing here?" Whatever. And then, I don't think they made a racial comment, but I think they feel like, "What's he doing here?" You know. But yet, they were like, "Oh, you know, look at this guy go." Then they were like. Did they separate the Gators from the rest of the Black people? I wasn't sure. I was like, okay. I don't like this, time to move. You know. And then, I was just like. I mean, 'cause I feel really uncomfortable in situations like that, and I was just wondering, "Oh, now he's rooting for [a Black player] now after he made a touchdown, but just a minute ago he was what are you doing here [to a Black fan]."

Because of her discomfort at the discrepancy between how White fans thought or felt about Black players and Black fans, Melissa actually moved to another section. This is an example of harassment maintaining a White space. While not

all Black fans move or leave, some eventually do either because they do not want to deal with an uncomfortable situation or because they actually fear for their safety. So, how do White fans, like Jerry, reconcile this discrepancy? Are Black players really different in their eyes? The next chapter addresses this in the context of ways in which fans disconnect from the players.

Summary

Above, it is shown how race mirrors the process of boundary maintenance, described in Chapter 7. With respect to knowledge, gender and racial harassment reinforces boundaries of participation. Black fans' knowledge of the players or the assumption by Whites that Black fans are players links them to the field. As a result, White fans periodically remind Blacks that they belong on the field and not in the stands.

Similarly, gendered and racial roles in the event more clearly articulate the proper place of fans with respect to gender and race. Perhaps because of their close association with the players, Black fans scrutinize the lack of representation outside the typical Black roles. As a result, they come to doubt their own association with the university.

However, these strict roles are not perfectly maintained, and exceptions exist with respect to both gender and race. Generally speaking, gender and race exceptions suggest that a level playing field truly exists such that sexism and racism no longer restricts men and women. However, these exceptions actually prove the rules of sexism and racism. Fans in this study read Black players as tokens transcending racism and actually receiving benefits in the form of love from White fans. Both examples of tokenism suggest to women and Blacks that

"the others" who exceptions transcend remain the subordinate, not fully embraced groups.

Thus, the positive functions of the Gator community outlined in Chapter 3 and to some extent in Chapter 4 are not felt equally. However, what about the players? As Melissa astutely questioned, do they feel as if they are really appreciated? Of course the best way to answer this question would be to ask the players. However, next chapter investigates this question in a different manner by turning the question on its head. By detailing the ways in which fans objectify and disconnect from the players, using racism as a convenient means for objectification, it is suggested that players are not really appreciated. It is argued that they are exploited for the ideological values they create through their performances on the field.

CHAPTER 9

“WE DON’T WANT DOCTORS, WE WANT FOOTBALL PLAYERS”: OBJECTIFICATION AND EXPLOITATION OF FOOTBALL PLAYERS

As has been detailed throughout all the previous chapters, one of the main reasons fans attend and participate in games is to connect to the masculine exemplars created by the players on the field. However, within and outside the context of the game, some fans do ideological work to disconnect from the players while taking aspects of the players' masculine exemplars with them. As noted in Chapter 6, these fans then incorporate the exemplars from the context of the game into their hegemonic notions of White masculinity. Furthermore, as outlined in Chapters 7 and 8, this becomes an even more an exclusive, White notion of masculine, excluding subordinated masculinities and femininities. In this process fans merge the exemplars with other privileged forms of masculine power to construct a notion of hegemonic White masculinity, which they may attempt to apply to themselves in terms of identity work.

At its root, this process is exploitative. Masculine examples on the field, such as aggressive defensive plays, big hits, exciting passes, and touchdowns, become ideological forms in the context of the game. They compose characteristics of pure masculinity. The fans consume these characteristics as ideological products, produced by the laboring players. Fans can then incorporate these products of masculine exemplars into privileged notions of masculinity. In other words, hegemonic notions of White masculinity can be

understood as a cultural product that many different types of people work to construct in an assembly line manner. Just as in an assembly line, each person adds one part to the larger whole that only those with economic privilege can access.

Crucial to this process of ideological exploitation is the element of disconnection. In other words, something has to be taken from the players without compensation. Even though the concepts of reformulation and disconnection were put into separate chapters, they are not necessarily distinct, that is, they oftentimes occur simultaneously. Indeed, the discussion of reformulation ended with examples of backgrounding that fundamentally works to disconnect fans from the event and the players within it.

Kelman and Hamilton (1989) describe the role of dehumanization in bureaucratic relationships. In order to relinquish one's self from guilt associated with the physical manifestations of exploitation, including death and suffering, a person must dissociate from the person or group of people exploited. People do this by dehumanizing their victims. In football, fans dehumanize the players by constructing them as objects rather than individuals, multi-dimensional people. Ironically, as noted in Chapter 4, fans often make moves to humanize the players in order to connect to them. Again, this contradiction reflects the constantly fluctuating nature of ideology.

As discussed below, within the context of the game, particularly in the South, race and racism make it easy for fans to disconnect from the players and the very real, human suffering they face through the violence of the game

(Kelman and Hamilton 1989). While fans connect to the violence in the games as an expression of exemplar masculinity, at the same time many attempt to disconnect from the players for a variety of reasons. As shown in Chapter 6, fans may endeavor to disconnect from the players as a way of maintaining masculinity in the face of a loss or poor performance. In these cases fans condemn the poor playing of individual players, parts of the team, or the bad decisions of the coaches or referees. In their condemnations, these fans explain how they would do the job better. This move maintains a sense of agency because they do not conceded that the other team is better, just that poor playing within the current game led to defeat. Furthermore, this allows for an untestable display of their expertise—“if only the team had done what I said.”

On the other hand, fans may attempt to disconnect from the physical realities that violence manifests in the form of injured players. This can be done linguistically, by using terms that disguise the true meaning. For example, “injured” is often substituted with “shaken up.” By disguising the realities of the players, fans enjoy the excitement and power of violence over the safety of the players without coming to grips with the pain and suffering the players often incur.

Finally, another perhaps latent function of disconnecting from the players is to stop the return flow of ideological constructs of masculinity creating an exploitative relationship. As the quote in this chapter’s title (taken from www.fireronzook.com) explains, when it comes down to it, many fans only value players for what they contribute to the game, not what they can do for

themselves, their communities, or society. However, fans rarely describe this openly, either because of their awareness of political correctness or because they really do not anticipate or intend to exploit the players. Clearly, there might be elements of both operating simultaneously. Regardless of whether or not exploitation is deliberate or inadvertent, the end result is that it exists. The following includes the means with which many fans dissociate from the players by objectifying them and how race is a particularized form of objectification.

Extricating Pain from Violence

As discussed in Chapter 3, fans enjoy the physically tough plays that help draw them into the action. As indicated in the following example from the homecoming game against VU, fans show almost as much excitement when their own players suffer from the violence of the game: "The receiver, Reche Caldwell, ran fifty yards and the crowd moaned, 'Oh!' when the defender hit him down."

Likewise, a Hispanic, male student made remarks concerning violence and injury during the home game against Marshall:

When the Gators receive a fifteen-yard penalty for unsportsman-like conduct, he said, "That's the way to be aggressive."

Earlier in the game, one of our defensive players took an extra long time to get up after a play and he yelled, "Get up!"

For this student violence took precedence over the safety of team members. To sever the connection between players and fans, fans discuss the players as objects present to amuse the fans. As a result, the players have instrumental value within the fans' strategic contextualized reality, as discussed in Chapter 6. In other words, where fans conceptualize their labor in a position of authority and

control, they subsequently construct the players' labor as situated in the particular game, drive, and play. The players become objects, some doing similar labor, and thus are analyzed as interchangeable parts in the whole of the game.

Further, the examples demonstrate that fans construct the injuries players suffer as additional evidence of their masculine displays. If no one ever got hurt on the field, then the sport really would not seem that daring and extraordinary. The heroes laboring on the field who put their bodies in jeopardy, suffer injuries, play hurt, or come back to finish a game, all show exemplars of masculine strength and stoicism (Messner 1990). The following example from the homecoming game against VU illustrates this point:

On another play, wide receiver, Taylor Jacobs, got hurt and was taken off the field and out of the stadium. Many people didn't notice at first because they were celebrating the first down, but there was a White man standing with his fingers crossed up in the air until he saw Jacobs get up. Everyone clapped when he got up. . . . When Jacobs came back into the stadium toward the end of the game the fans started to clap and cheer for him, which eventually turned into a standing ovation.

There was initially very little concern over his body and what may have happened to it, focusing first and foremost on the masculine display of scoring or achieving a first down. Meanwhile, the incident turned into an opportunity to show how players epitomize and maintain manliness, hence the standing ovation when Jacobs returned after getting hurt.

This quote exemplifies the ways in which fans ignore the physical pains players incur and, additionally, it points to the issue of objectification and physical exploitation. Oftentimes, fans merely want to make sure that the important players remain uninjured because their absence might affect the outcome of the

game. The man crossing his fingers may have been genuinely worried about Taylor as a human being, but often fans will discuss in these contexts the importance the player embodies in terms of whether or not the team will effectively produce for the rest of the game. Here, when Florida won substantially, the win without his play mitigated the fans' concerns.

Assessing Instrumental Value of Players

Under circumstances in which the game is close, fans start to discuss which player can replace the injured player. This results from the desire to contextualize the events and the maintenance of masculinity within them as a way of reformulating masculinity. In this way fans may speculate about future games and how the team's performance may be affected. Returning to the remarks of the USC fan as critic in Chapter 6, he discussed his frustration with the abilities of the Black quarterback and Lou Holtz not training him adequately. His concern reflects the notion that players often appear interchangeable, such that players become mere objects in the strategic plan of the fans.

Fans might take into consideration the unique contributions players make to the team's performance. Still, these concessions often lead to objectifying the players' bodies and abilities. As such, fans may want the second and third string players to get experience. First, the chance always exists that the star players may receive injuries leaving the back-up players to substitute for them. Second, as the USC example demonstrated, the star players eventually graduate and will be replaced by those sitting on the bench. In essence, the structure of college football makes it such that players are always replaceable.

Fans identify individual players by their numbers and sometimes names, and in the case of USC, they only wear numbers to build a sense of team camaraderie and interdependence rather than individual showboating. Regardless, players represent bodies that fill a specific position. As such their bodies become a subject of fan discussion, as in the following example from the loss at AU: “A White man behind me said, ‘Robert Gillespie has finesse,’ as opposed to Earnest Graham, who has more power. Graham was injured and unable to play.”

Within this context, fans discuss each player’s statistics to sum up his usefulness in a particular event. In the game cited above, fans critiqued the offensive strategy of coach, Steve Spurrier, because he continued to work a running game rather than turn to a passing game. While the critiquing constitutes a move to express expertise, discussions about the individual players utilize notions of players as objects, or pawns, to be controlled within the larger contextualizations fans design.

In the case of the two running backs, Gillespie and Graham, fans compared and contrasted the two players with respect to their heights, weights, speed, strength, and maneuverability—all physical traits. By doing so, fans typify characteristics ideal for specific positions and the players who fill those positions. Certainly, there is nothing wrong with identifying what characteristics seem to work well within a position to improve the chances that the team will win. The by-product of this results in players embodying their statistics rather than human

status. This dehumanization is inevitable in any bureaucratic system in which jobs (here, positions) become extremely specialized and routinized.

As a bureaucratic system, fans literally sit above the players. This position above players comes about as a necessity in order to contextualize and strategize the game. Some of the alumnae participants discussed seating perspective:

Meredith: And um, when the kids come, even for this year, I sit up high with one boy and [my husband] sits down behind the team with the other boy and at half time they swap. And that way they both get to be close to the team. And then if it's a game that's a runaway or a nobody, then I go down at halftime and sit with them cause there are seats by then. And I just like to look at the players up close. [all laugh] Oh my gosh!

Nicole: [Meredith]'s going to pass out thinking about it.

Meredith: They look different up close than they look in the eighty-fourth row. [all agree]

Judith: I've sat behind them, too.

Meredith: And it's, it's amazing the difference. But if I had my, if I had to choose, I would sit up high.

Judith: Would you really?

Meredith: Because I can see the plays.

Betty: Oh, yeah, because you can see how the play's working.

Meredith: When they're on the thirty-yard line you can hear them call the play, you know, you're there. But if it's down in the South end zone you don't even know what happened till you watch the big screen.

Sitting close to the team allows this fan to feel close to the team and even admire and sexually objectify their bodies. However, in order to get a feel for the larger context requires that she sit higher or with a view of the big screen that shows the replays. From a distance, fans with whom I talked generally agreed that the players lose their individuality to the point that fans do not recognize them out of

uniform. They literally become numbers or at best jerseys with their names; they are not individuals recognizable or appreciable outside the stadium.

Essentially, fans value players only instrumentally. The player's body and health only remain important when considering his role in winning the game. Perhaps, his value lies not in the context of the current game, but in future games. For example, during a winning game, there may be a desire to relieve the starting players and allow the bench players get a chance in the game. In some cases this may be an opportunity to let all the players have their turn and gain more experience in the positions they may ultimately hold, but it usually represents a way of protecting the physical bodies of the more valuable players.

This mentality of protecting bodies relates back to the times of slavery. For example, Irish and Chinese immigrants predominantly constructed the main railroad lines. This was not because they worked better or harder than slaves. After the Atlantic Slave Trade officially ended, slave owners assessed their slaves as too expensive to "waste" on the dangerous work of railroad building and would not allow their slaves to be used for the labor, encouraging the migration and subsequent exploitation of the Irish and Chinese (Takaki 1993). Fans regard the players in a similar way; players embody instrumental value that must be protected.

Othering Opposing Players

When referencing the other team, fans more clearly display the notion of players as objects, as in this quote taken field notes from the Florida and UGA game played in Jacksonville:

There was an injured Georgia player on the field. Many of the Florida fans were oblivious to the injury, or they just didn't care, because they kept barking at the Georgia (Bulldog) fans and started to chant, "It's great to be a Florida Gator." One White man did notice and yelled to the field, "Take him out of here."

Certainly, fans are more likely to vividly describe the other team's players as objects because of the tendency to dehumanize the other team, as discussed in Chapter 5.

Furthermore, not all people harshly objectify any of the players purposely. In the last quote, most of the players simply did not recognize that a player lie injured. A similar situation occurred at the game played at USC:

The UF got another touchdown and the fans started cheering, "SEC." But at the same time a key USC player was injured on the field. A young, White woman to my left started pointing to the Gator section and said, "That's what's wrong with them! We have a man down on the field and they're still cheering. . . .Our players will get down on their knees and pray for their teammate." I then turned to a friend who hadn't noticed the injured USC player and told her not to cheer. She showed genuine concern and we both clapped when he was carried off the field. . . .

After Grossman made his 300 yards passing, Spurrier pulled him out of the game. . . .But when he took Grossman out of the game, a couple of White men in a couple rows behind us yelled, "Hey, give us one more chance at him."

This seems somewhat like gendered behavior in which women show more concern over physical harm than men, a trend noted in Chapter 7 as a specifically feminine type of participation. This might very well be the case, particularly when male fans make objectifying comments regarding the opposing team's players.

The connection between violence, masculinity, and the lack of regard for players as suffering human bodies still remains important. The female fan attempted to humanize the players of her team by discussing how they pray for

each other as an earnest expression of human respect. Further, my friend and I showed concern for the injured player even though he was not on our team. Therefore, our distress did not reflect anxiety over who would fill his position; it reflected our concern with his actual suffering and future as a person.

Finally, the comments by the men behind me at this particular game return to the notion of players as objects—bodies in or on which exemplars of masculinity are performed. The men not obtusely declared the intention to hurt the Florida quarterback, Rex Grossman. Certainly, they jokingly made the suggestion, in part because South Carolina was losing the game at that point. Instead of watching the game for the masculine goal of winning, they continued to participate in order to vicariously connect to the masculine displays of violence enacted on the body of Grossman, among others. Of course, objectification along the lines of team affiliation would be expected considering the need for group boundary maintenance, described in Chapter 5. However, more troubling is how race and racism affect the process of objectification.

Race in the Process of Objectification

Racism and race constitute a particularly insidious means for creating a sense of separation between the players and the fans. Within the context of Southern football at UF, in which the majority of players on the team (63% in 2001) and the vast majority of starters on the field (on average, 72% in 2001) are Black, the process of disconnecting takes on racial dimensions. Race and racist stereotypes make it easier to detach from the players by dehumanizing them. However, the relationship remains more complex than simple racist remarks, although they certainly exist. For the most part, many of the comments made by

fans do not reflect a conscious effort to disparage Black players and may actually take the form of complimenting their abilities. All the same, race becomes another factor in which fans incorporate and reformulate hegemonic notions of White masculinity in comparison to subjugated, Black masculinities. White fans align with Whiteness and other Blackness.

Aligning with Whiteness

Oftentimes, fans associate with "token" White players who do well against the odds in positions that are most often assigned to Black players. These players not only support their team, but also legitimize the power of Whiteness. Todd Johnson, the only White free safety on the Florida defense in the 2001 season, and oftentimes the only White defensive player on the field, embodied an example of spectacular accomplishments of White players. This is seen in the following excerpt taken from the Florida game at AU:

Auburn scored a touchdown. However, it was called back because of a flag on the play. Auburn fumbled and the Gators recovered the ball. In a relaxed, almost bragging tone, a young White man said to his friends, "Todd Johnson got that."

As often the only White player on the field for Florida during defense, Johnson represents the "Great White Hope." His performance takes on significance because his actions reflect on all Whites, and he becomes all the more extraordinary because he is the only White in a "Black" space. In a context in which Black skill is assumed to be hereditary and White actions come only from hard work and perseverance, White accomplishments signify greater stocks of character (Sailes 2000).

The following quote provides another example at the LSU game:

The young, White, female, LSU fan next to me said, “Go White boy, go White boy.” She was referring to the White quarterback who replaced the injured Black quarterback. The White quarterback ran more and the Black quarterback threw more.

While Whites often fill quarterback positions, this example relays the assumptions fans make concerning the abilities of Black and White players within that position. Generally speaking, fans get very excited when a White quarterback runs the ball because according to the stereotypes Whites throw the ball (requiring contextualizing all the players, similar to fans) while Blacks run the ball (requiring innate athleticism and strength). By showing her excitement with a White quarterback who runs, she reveals the stereotype of which this player is an exception.

Fans in focus groups also articulated these racial assumptions. The following was taken from students' discussion on their perceptions of players' abilities:

Anne: Well, in my opinion, like, most of the team are, most of the team is African-American or Black or whatever—

Marcy: Yeah.

Anne: So.

Susan: White players just aren't good.

Marcy: You kind of get that connotation.

Anne: No, yeah. . . . There were White kids and like, Todd Johnson, I guess this was like his breakout year. And he had interception, like two interceptions that game. And they're like, “Yes! [throwing arms in air] The White man's back!!” I was like, just laughing.

In the discussion it becomes apparent that not only do people expect Black players to be better than White players. However, when a White player does

perform above the racial expectations White fans tend to associate with his performance more than similar performances of Black players. This increases the level of disconnectedness between Black and White.

Furthermore, as compared to Black players, White players are more likely to be described in terms of their leadership, hard work, or exceptionalism among the "naturally" talented Black players. White players tend to hold positions in which few fans notice their performance (offensive line) or in which they play the central role (quarterback or kicker). Even criticisms of White players separate them fundamentally from Black players. For example, fans recall the performance of the White quarterback, Doug Johnson, as poor because of his lack of intelligence or motivation, never because of his physical abilities.

Further, fans tend to construct the White players as more complete humans, with aspects aside from playing football. In the context of discussing players, many participants would name a few who exemplified a good mix of athlete, student, and leader. Tellingly, every time participants named exemplary players individually they listed White players. Conversely, more generalized discussions of the players revolved around their bodies, their limited intelligence, or their sexual prowess. Considering that many fans assume that most of the players are Black, general discussions can be decoded as speaking of Blacks.

Othering Blackness

By associating with White players and the privilege they represent, the distance between fans and Black players becomes more glaring. In the face of the "natural" skills of their Black teammates, "White" becomes a signifier of exceptional power. As detailed above, fans generally tend to describe and

analyze players in terms of their bodies and physical abilities. However, race affects the chances of being scrutinized physically. What makes the relationship between race and objectification difficult to assess is that position oftentimes masks racism. This is due to the fact that at UF and at many other schools in which positions are very rarely racially mixed, with either Whites or Blacks dominating most positions. For example, out of thirteen wide receivers, only 15.4% are White. On the other hand, out of nineteen offensive linemen, only 36.8% are Black. Remembering again that Black players compose nearly 63 percent of the team, the assignment of positions is significantly disproportionate.

As other studies suggest, fans, coaches, and the media typically discuss Black players in terms of their size, speed, strength, and other "innate" abilities (Bass 2002, Sailes 2000). This research indicates this trend as well. Returning to the quote concerning the comparison between Robert Gillespie and Earnest Graham from earlier in this chapter, an important element not mentioned was the fact that both players are Black. While fans focused on different aspects of their physicality, none raised mental or personality characteristics that may play a part in their position.

In a similar incident, noted from a focus group with student fans, some of the participants discussed the players they knew personally from their class:

James: [Player one], no offense. To me, he just doesn't look like a football player—

Tricia: No he doesn't, he doesn't have the frame.

James: —comparatively. Like, if you guys were in class yesterday. . . one of the football players, just came in, I mean [Player two] was a big boy. I mean, you know, I'm six-one, but when I see, like, you know, six-one, three hundred, I automatically go, "Football player." [others agree]. . . I didn't even

know [Player one] was on the football team, just cause, you know, he's got a good build to him, but he's just not like a big guy.

Laurel: And then there's another guy, [Player three] in the class.

James: Yeah, [he's] short.

Laurel: He came up to me yesterday, and I was almost taller him, but granted I had four inch heels on. [women laugh]

Again, the players who were under inspection in this discussion are Black. This results in the objectification of Black players more often than White players, reminiscent of Whites discussing the physical attributes of Black men and women on the slave auction blocks. Black players are dehumanized as more innate and animalistic characteristics are emphasized.

Race does not act alone in the ways fans describe players, however. The position a player holds impacts the types of description fans will make of him. As seen in the following quote, students conveyed the assumptions of each role and how they relate to race:

Tricia: Yeah, [imitating] You don't throw it to the White guy, he can't run.

James: Yeah, you know, or, or, I think we played someone who had a Black kicker and we're like going, "Awe, a Black kicker, it's not going in." You know, it's just almost like, you know, I think, I think, certain roles, like quarterback—

Tricia: Quarterback seems to always be White.

James: —be the White guy, but like, it's not as, I think almost like, if a Black guy takes it, you almost expect him to actually run the ball in more, or, or be able to scramble if there's pressure. Then, you know, to slack off on it.

Tricia: Just 'cause of stereotypes.

James: Running backs, you almost expect to be Black. Like kickers you almost always expect to be White. So, it's, it's just interesting the way that is.

While Tricia offers a partial critique of this analysis by suggestion that racial stereotypes affect our assumptions of players' abilities, James was less critical, noting merely that fan's assumptions based on stereotypes are interesting.

Black players typically occupy positions that emphasize their physical roles, such as defense (aggressiveness), running back (power and/or agility), and wide receiver (speed). Therefore, fans can discuss Black players in what could be considered racist in any other context. As is evident in a common racist joke: why are Blacks so good at basketball? Because they can run (from the police), steal (from people's homes), and shoot (each other).

This plays out in the context of the game as well. For example, fans sometimes urge a Black defensive player to "steal," or intercept, a pass. Or, as noted in previous chapters, fans occasionally encourage a Black cornerback to "kill" the quarterback, an aggressive action toward players that would be clearly unacceptable outside the stadium. While these commands relate to the characteristics associated with a position, since Black players likely fill these positions race becomes an underlying issue allowed to remain hidden. Not coincidentally, both of these examples associate Black players with crime and violence.

Here, images of Blacks constructed and reconstructed in the game intersect with those already existing outside the context of the event. The media exaggerate the representation of Blacks who commit violent crimes (Russell 1998, Feagin and Vera 1995). Public perceptions concerning race repeatedly indicate the widespread misconception that Blacks commit more violent crime

than Whites. Explanations for this misperception of crime often rely upon racist or individualistic assumptions rather than structural explanations. Therefore, many fans may enter the stadium linking crime and violence as something inherent to Blacks, including some of their prized players.

The following example from the game at UK shows how some fans invoke racist notions of crime as a way of dissociating from a player:

While Chad Scott, a Black, UK running back was still down on the field, they put his picture and statistics up on the screen. . . .A loud White man behind me joked that it looked like a mug shot and said, "5-10. Assault and battery." . . . Then as two trainers carried Scott off the field, the male Gator yelled, "Just drag him off the field." The fans around him laughed at this joke.

First, by releasing Scott's statistics on the board, the announcer drew attention to certain aspects of him as a player, for example, his height and weight and his total carries and total yards. This along with the comments by the male Florida fan make no mention of race and do not rely upon racist assumptions, but rather, draw upon notions of players as objects. However, the joke coded within the fan's comments relies upon racist stereotypes of Blacks as criminals. Note that he does not suggest shoplifting as a type of crime in which a mug shot could be taken. Instead, the crimes chosen reflect notions of violence and aggression, rooted deep in the American psyche regarding "the criminalblackman" (Russell 1998). By using stereotypes such as these, racism further dissociates players as objects.

Ironically, a now common rib against FSU is to call it "Free Shoe University" or the "Criminals" rather than the "Seminoles" most notably because of the shoplifting case against Peter Warrick, a Black running back who made a run for

the Heisman trophy in 1999. There is a dangerous line here between joking and racism. By linking Black players with crime there becomes a notion that without the control and structure of football (and sometimes even despite this influence) these young men would be involved in lives of crime. Again, Whites made similar arguments concerning the release of slaves, in that Blacks compose a dangerous element that must be controlled by slave masters in particular and White society more generally (Feagin 2000; Takaki 1993). Today, this paternalism resurfaces in fans' claims to hegemonic White masculinity and objectification of Black players.

Additionally, fans in the focus groups often cited the sexual perks players receive from their star status. Of course, fans assumed that players must receive these perks, but none relayed actual examples. Fans conflate privileges associated with the extremes of masculinity. Since they perform well physically on the field, they must also perform well with the ladies. However, fans do not make assumptions that players also perform well in the classroom. The masculine characteristics they lump together with the players relate only to more base, instinctual behaviors such as violence and sexuality.

The examples above do not merely reflect objectifying players from the opposing teams. By looking at what fans say about their own players, race again comes to focus, as in the following example from the game at UK:

One of the UK defensive players is named Mohammed Abdul and his name was called after he tackled a UF player. A White male UK fan made fun of the name saying, "Mohammed Abudubabubba."

As the first game I attended after the September 11th attacks, this comment highlighted the way in which a fan used race and religion to create a social space

between himself and the player. Not at all a difficult name to pronounce, and one heard repeatedly throughout the game, the fan took the opportunity to show the foreignness of the name by purposely mispronouncing it.

Names represent a distinct means for inclusion, exclusion, and objectification. As noted above, racial objectification often takes on a paternalistic flair. In particular, fans often call players, specifically Black players, “boy,” as in the following example in which Florida beat MSU at home. At this game I was sitting near alumni:

A White man in his 30s said, “Come on boy,” to Earnest Graham, a running back. This same man called the quarterback, “Rex.” However, sometimes he called him, “Grossman.” There was not really a pattern to who he called by first or last names.

It is difficult to figure out the attribution of the term “boy.” One would have to do a longitudinal analysis of football announcing from before integration to discover the root of this term’s use. Many fans referred to the Black players as “boy,” but would also occasionally call White players “boy.” It could be that because so many of the players on the field are Black and even more of the players who carry the ball are Black that the term now seems ubiquitous. Historically, Whites have used the term “boy” to degrade Blacks and highlight space in an overarching racist hierarchy. Occasionally it now carries over to the White players as well (Hine et al. 2003).

As the above quote indicates, some fans call the players by their first names. As discussed in Chapter 4, using first names rather than last names indicates a level of closeness between the fans and the player. By calling the

White players by their first names more often than the Black players, fans create a stronger connection to the White players.

Fans do not merely call Black players “boy” or make fun of their names. Another racial move to objectify Black players manifests in the racist epithets used. At the game against the UGA in Jacksonville, a colleague collecting data for this project noticed:

Race came up in different contexts. Comments about African American players on the other team were common (at another game for example, they were calling one Black player “Buckwheat”). Many times, White men would call out advice or admonitions in what I assume they meant to be Black vernacular. Many comments directed at Black players included the term, “boy.”

By using what many call Ebonics to shout to the players, fans create distance between themselves and the players by using what is commonly assumed to be a different language. By extension, Blacks constitute an entirely different group with their own culture, including unique names, hairstyles (hence the Buckwheat comment), and language. Racist assumptions conclude that Blacks are, as a group, distinct from Whites, generally more athletic, aggressive, and violent. Within the context of the game this distinction is dangerous enough but, as shown, with fans bringing stereotypes to the game from other contexts it is clear that there is no wall between these contexts in terms of using stereotypes. Therefore, these same stereotypes are used outside the game with respect to Black non-athletes and athletes alike.

Racial Exploitation and Educational Opportunities

The racial dimension of fan's understanding of the players can be seen in the following quote by an alumnus, Lance, who condemned the exploitation of players:

I would like to think that the university has high standards for who they are going to offer scholarships. . . . Um, and that is the role of the university. And it might be in some ways making an excuse for my participation at times, but I think that's what the university is really supposed to be about. And I love it that we win, but I know it's more important that we're educating young people who are going to be future leaders of this country. And you want them to go on to be contributing members of our society, and not to just end up being used by the university. I, I have a great deal of problems with looking at basketball teams that are all Black in a university that's all White. And I know that the University of Florida is considered to be racially, properly mixed because we actually have more. A higher percentage of our undergraduate students are minority students than there are a percentage of the population of the state. And, I'm personally proud that that sort of thing is important.

Lance very clearly noted that if UF does not provide a real education, the university is exploiting its students. Furthermore, they will not be able to contribute to society after they leave the university. He also admits that his ideology may merely mask the exploitation and relinquish him of his guilt due to his part in the system. This is exactly the type of exploitation explicit in this chapter's title quote, "We don't want doctors, we want football players." However, Lance also showed an implicit racial dimension in that many of the men laboring for the team are Black, a fact many other fans leave unspoken.

Unfortunately, Lance deluded himself more than he knew. As stated in Chapter 1, the team's racial composition is grossly disproportionate (63% of the team is Black while only 6.5% of the student body is Black). Second, while UF has not recently violated any of the NCAA academic regulations, they are by no

means paving the way for excellence of academics in football. Very few of the players (less than 10%) major in “difficult” majors, such as the physical sciences or business, and most are concentrated in general social and behavior sciences, recreation and leisure, or other majors in the liberal arts. This perpetuates the stereotype of the “dumb jock,” as shown in the following quote from Stan, an alumnus:

That's, I have a big, big problem with that, too. And I know, and our players are not, are not angels, nor are they academic geniuses. . .I mean, I, I do, I have a moral dilemma in that a lot of the players are not, you know, they got in here academically, but barely, and they're probably not making it academically without a lot of help.

Of course, this implies that within the context of the game, fans note that most players do not need intelligence, merely physical traits. In fact, during the 2002 Florida homecoming game against USC, ESPN commentators argued that players should not be let into the larger context about which coaches and fans strategize. The commentators expressed their concern that the players could not emotionally handle the responsibility and their physical performance would be negatively affected.

Summary

The processes of disconnection and reformulation work together in an almost inextricable feedback loop. As shown in Chapter 6, by reformulating privileged, hegemonic White masculinity to include notions of expertise, control, and authority, fans locate themselves as doing a specific privileged labor within a larger context. Add to this the discussion from this chapter, in which players labor within that context as pawns performing the continued masculine displays of strength, stoicism, aggression, and violence. At the same time, the differing

roles within the event work to establish a bureaucratic separation between the fans and the players. By doing so, players become constructed as objects or parts that can be scrutinized and replaced as such. Race and racism become important means in which fans distance themselves from players. While not all fans perform all aspects of disconnection at all times, the production of the game as a social event allows for fans to work together to maintain these processes.

Disconnecting from players represents the final step in the process, which begins with fans attempting to vicariously connect to masculinity through notions of energy and community, as discussed in Chapter 3. The overall sense of community allows for the connection in which, as noted in Chapter 4, vicarious links to the players can be established through fans' responsibilities and personal linkages to the event. While fans ostensibly denigrate opposing fans, mascots, and teams as a means for maintaining the connectivity of the Gator community, the sexist and homophobic taunts detailed in Chapter 5 also serve to illustrate the beginning of a hierarchy that devalues femininity. Chapter 7 further explicates the boundaries between men and women in the context of the game and how maintaining these boundaries through gender harassment ideologically supports a dichotomy of value. Racial harassment and racial objectification, discussed in Chapters 8 and 9 respectively, illustrates the notion of multiple masculinities in which some forms of masculinity are clearly subjugated to hegemonic White masculinity. Finally, Chapter 6 demonstrates that through all the ideological work of the game, many White male fans exploit the masculine exemplars of the players through their vicarious connection and incorporate them

into their reformulated notions of masculinity. In Chapter 10, explains how the process of fans solidifying a hierarchy of power over femininity and subjugated masculinities fits into and bridges the current literature. It also explains the implications in terms of policy and future research

CHAPTER 10 CONCLUSION

The previous chapters explored the following process: (1) the ways in which fans connect to masculine exemplars on the field and in the stands, (2) the means for maintaining and reformulating notions of masculinity, and (3) how that connection becomes severed. This chapter attempts to explain how this process builds an institution of oppression and privilege within the context of the game. At the same time, it explains where this work fits into the existing empirical and theoretical literature on sports, race, and gender. Working backwards each chapter will be revisited to show the specific contributions of each in terms of the following concepts: ideological exploitation, intersections of race and gender in both structure and ideology, sexism and racism in sports, and feminist-functional conceptions of social change. It is then explained that we must remain attentive to these issues in affecting social change and formulating new research agendas.

Cultural Appropriation as Ideological Exploitation

Chapter 9 addressed the research question: How are football players exploited ideologically? To truly address this question, ideology must first be defined and then what it means to be exploited in such a manner must be explained. Specifically, ideological exploitation is a process in which laborers produce ideas about masculinity that are appropriated by others. Those who

exploit then disconnect from the ideological laborers refuse the reciprocal flow of structural repercussions of the ideological system of power.

Marx and Engels (1846) argued that through abstracting and universalizing ideas historians do not describe the material conditions or class relations that operate to create history. In turn, history and ideology actually mask those material conditions. Marx did not attempt to come up with a theory of ideology; rather, he uses it as a concept to understand the continuation of oppression. In this vein, his notion of “false consciousness” as a type of ideology reads as follows:

Hitherto men have constantly made up for themselves false conceptions about themselves, about what they are and what they ought to be. . . . The phantoms of their brains have got out of their hands. They, the creators, have bowed down before their creations (Marx and Engels 1846).

Therefore, in this conceptualization he proposed that ideology springs from economic conditions; it reflects the need to conceal the economic operations in social life. Further, in the minds of the oppressed, that ideology takes on a life of its own which gives it a sense of legitimacy.

While Marx never took his analysis further than economic determinism, this research has shown that ideology, as a thing of its own, becomes another dimension of exploitation. Cultural spaces become the “factories” in which “laborers” (performers and spectators respectively) create ideological notions concerning race and gender. The process takes on an exploitative dimension when ideological mechanisms prohibit the backward flow of masculine power back to the laborers.

Football games comprise a modern site of ideological production, however, their roots lie in nineteenth century Blackface minstrel shows. In the antebellum U.S., these shows became spectacles of racism, misogyny, and class solidification. Hypotheses used to explain White participation in these shows range from notions of false consciousness of White workers (Cox 1948) to the psychological wage of Whiteness (Allen 1994, Takaki 1993, Roediger 1991, Du Bois 1935).

However, Lott (1995) argued that Whites were not merely imitating Blacks to create the notion of themselves as Whites vis-à-vis “the other.” Minstrel shows gave Whites an outlet to express all the characteristics that Whites were not supposed to encompass. Participation as a spectator in the minstrel show was a vehicle of masculinity in which men could swear, spit, and fight with impunity. The crowds could vicariously connect to the characters on the stage, but the Black face allowed them to separate from the characteristics at the end. In this way Whites could fulfill their desires for Blackness as a cultural commodity through cultural appropriation and playing with the images and stereotypes of Blackness. The key elements of this type of exploitation are the appropriation of culturally constructed ideas concerning Blackness and a means for disconnecting from Blackness, essentially enacting the contradictions of love and hate.

Football games are not unlike the Blackface minstrel shows of the nineteenth century. As King and Springwood (2001) noted, fans at many schools can dress up in “Redface” playing with the nostalgic stereotypes of “noble” Native Americans. Alternatively, the venue allows for certain types of aggressive

behavior that are unacceptable in most parts of U.S. life. For example, Patterson (1999) argued that Euro-American culture has "always exhibited a perverse fascination with violence" explored and valorized in football (242). Since overt, aggressive violence remains unacceptable and often illegal in most parts of "civilized" society, football violence allows spectators to project this fascination in a safe fashion since their bodies are rarely at risk of harm.

The players on the field again provide masculine stereotypes with which men (and to a lesser extent women) can vicariously identify. That many of the players are a different race from that of the crowd allows for a distancing from that violence while still enjoying it, an aspect of vicarious connection paramount in the entire discussion of this research. Football provides the modern day context for crowds to interactively play out notions of race and gender. This research adds to the literature on ideological exploitation by demonstrating the process in which fans connect and then disconnect from the players through objectification and more specifically, racism.

As shown in the Chapter 9, in the cultural realm of the game the players (i.e., laborers) achieve access to the masculine displays they create in only a limited manner and significantly have no access to the larger notions of hegemonic White masculinity as a whole. On the other hand, the fans described in Chapter 6 associate with exemplars of extreme masculinity as a result of their vicarious connection to the team, while dissociating from the team and not allowing the individual players to make those same claims.

Of course, the claim here is not that ideological exploitation comprises the only dimension in which athletics exploits young players. Indeed there are many levels of exploitation in athletics including ideological, economic, political, and physical. For example, the somatic price that players pay for access to the ideological system of masculinity equates to the average life expectancy of U.S. professional football players at fifty-six years, about fifteen years shorter than the average life expectancy for all men in the U.S. (Messner 1990).

The violence perpetrated against male bodies in sports also contains a racial dimension. While football crowds are predominantly White, football teams have a disproportionate number of Black players. Therefore, while White, middle-class audiences can sit back to watch and enjoy the violent expressions of masculinity on the field, they do this at the expense of mostly Black male bodies. This results in a new brand of somatic exploitation—Black men toiling now on football fields instead of in the cotton fields.

In essence, the exploitation of football players encompasses one of the most complete and complex forms of exploitation involving many different dimensions. As such, researchers need to be attentive to all dimensions. For example, focusing on discrimination in terms of exclusion ignores the ideological exploitation of players that occurs often as a result of their crossing the color-line. The implications of this will be discussed further at the end of this chapter, but first the attention will be turned to what exactly fans exploit ideologically from players.

Connecting Structure and Ideology

Chapter 6 explored the following research question: How are ideals of masculinity reformulated for use by certain members only? Certainly, ideological exploitation includes appropriation of players' masculine exemplars in big plays and wins. However, as shown in Chapter 6, fans do not simply play out these notions as the athletes do. Instead, they reformulate what it means to be masculine in the context of the game. However, it is crucial to remember that the importance in examining ideology is to discover the underlying structure of the oppression it justifies or obscures.

Current literature on race and gender show that there still exists a structure of oppression in our society in which White women and people of color are continually denied access to many of the rewards and resources that White men enjoy (Anderson and Collins 2001, Baca Zinn, et al. 2000, Benokraitis and Feagin 1995, Feagin and Sikes 1994, Gallagher 1999). This structure of privilege and oppression has been characterized by Collins (1991) as a matrix of domination in which people experience specific types of discrimination and privilege depending on where they fit in the interlocking of race, gender, and other types of privilege and oppression. The hierarchy of privilege and power within football reflects the hierarchy within the larger society. On the one hand, it mirrors the overall social structure, and on the other hand, it helps to justify that structure. In this sense, the performance of men on the field is exploited for its ideological value and that ideology is then returned to them as a justification for their structural oppression (Feagin 2000).

Thus, the structure of society cannot be conceptualized as arranged hierarchically according to gender or race alone. Drawing on the tradition of Black feminist thought, Collins (1991) argued that privilege and oppression are experienced through an interlocking matrix of domination. She avoided some of the additive problems associated with conceptualizing patriarchy overlaying racial oppression, or vice versa (Spelman 1988). Instead, these systems of oppression intersect in very specific ways. As such, the data discussed in Chapters 7 and 8 illustrate that patterns of exclusion and harassment work differently for White women, Black women, and Black men. While certain general gender and racial themes were observed in this research, the patterns cannot be generalized to *all* women or *all* Blacks.

While Collins helps to explain the structure of oppression, Connell's (1987) work elucidates the ideological support of oppression. Gendered and racial stereotypes, specifically masculinities and femininities, serve to justify and order the social matrix. As ideology, it can be reformulated to fit the changing structures of society. For example, as shown in Chapter 6, with the increasing number of Black football players, many White fans associate power not with the players, but ultimately in the notions of control and authority of the referees. The constantly changing nature of ideological notions of power in masculinity makes power evasive for those deemed "the other," including White and Black women and Black men as highlighted in Chapters 7, 8, and 9.

Further, as a symbol of power, rather than actual power, men and women as well as Blacks and Whites all attempt to connect to at the very least a *feeling*

of power. Many of the fans interviewed for this research articulated how they felt powerful as a result of their participation as fans of such a winning team. Some even indicated that their participation linked them to structural rewards through networking. While more research needs to be conducted to determine the extent to which association with hegemonic White masculinity translates to structural privilege, this research provides some support that subordinated masculinities and femininities are systematically and institutionally excluded. Below, the attempts at gender and racial boundary maintenance within the sociology of sport literature are situated.

Sexism and Racism in Sports

The literature on race and gender in sport highlights the exclusion, desegregation, and reformulation of sports in terms of gender and race. While fans are not athletes in the conventional sense, this research is situated in the sports literature because, as has been shown, fans work with the team in a combined effort of the cultural event. As such, spectatorship can and should be analyzed as participation in a sport. Therefore, literature on sports is bridged to fan literature to help by showing how sexism and racism work to maintain a White masculine space. This addresses both the second and fourth research questions: How is the vicarious link maintained vis-à-vis the other team? And how are gender and race used to deny claims to hegemonic White masculinity? Therefore, while remaining attentive to the notion of intersectionality, the literature concerning the intersections of ideology and structure in sport can be expanded.

Black Versus White Men and Sports: Competing Masculinities

Most of the literature on race analyzes the discrimination of Black players in relation to White players. It was not until Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier in the 1940s that the idea of interracial sports teams was even broached (Watterson 2000, Wiggins 2000). Today, Black people on various fields and courts are commonplace. However, although minorities have access to the playing field it is far from level, and it is actually structurally stacked, the process of placing White men in positions of leadership and control (Smith and Henderson 2000, Hoose 1989). This structural segregation also relates to financial rewards and only gets more intense as one looks up along the hierarchy (Brooks and Althouse 2000, Eitzen and Sanford 1975, Jones, et al. 1987, Lewis 1995, Schneider and Eitzen 1986).

Ideologically, Black participation has shifted from exclusion that justified the superiority of White athleticism, to inclusion that perpetuates the notion of the animal-like nature of Blacks, all while casting the illusion that racism no longer exists (Feagin 2000, King and Springwood 2001, Sailes 2000). Essentially, the ideology of race in sports constructs a dichotomy of Black and White. On the one hand, athletes are associated with biological notions of physical dominance in which they are "naturally able." On the other hand, White athletes are exceptional because their participation in sports reveals the results of hard work against the odds (Murrell and Curtis 1994, Lumpkin and Williams 1991, Sailes 1991, Rainville and McCormick 1977). Discriminatory practices, such as stacking and pay discrepancies are justified using racist stereotypes that invoke an ideology of "natural" difference.

Significantly, research suggests that stacking is not a response to the essential nature of the races, that is, players are not necessarily allocated to a position because of their abilities, but rather, because of the stereotyping of ability by race (Braddock 1978, Johnson 1988, Rainville et al. 1978). Therefore, there is an interplay between the structure of oppression and its justification, such that stereotypes legitimate current discrimination and perpetuate future discrimination.

Where do Black fans fit into this dichotomy of natural abilities and hard work? As reported in Chapter 8, both Black and White fans discussed the notion of athletic transcendence in which athletes momentarily rise above the racist contempt of many White fans (Andrews 1996). However, that creates a new dichotomy in which Black fans constitute the despised group that the athletes transcend. This in-between status, along with the realization of racial exploitation and discrimination on the team, cause many Black fans to feel the effects of ideology in a tension between participating and withdrawing from the event. While similar patterns persist with respect to gender, the meanings behind the dichotomies created in the context of the game notably differs, working to create and perpetuate an overall structure of privilege and oppression in unique ways.

Women Negotiating with Masculinity and Sports

Liberal feminists studying sports documented that women were historically and are presently excluded from this arena (Messner and Sabo 1990). In a sense, women have been denied access to an equal playing field because they have been denied access to playing fields altogether. Title IX stipulates that because state institutions house most sports programs of all levels, they must

make some effort at equality in order to receive federal funds. This translates into an *attempt* of equal spending in athletics in general.

Furthermore, the notion of separate but equal rather than integration remains as an underlying element of allocation of funds for separate men's and women's teams. Even with an increase of funding for women's sports, athletic departments maintain gender segregation through designating men's sports and women's sports (Lorber 1993). While men participate in football, women play soccer and volleyball. However, the segregation is most obvious for sports such as basketball with separate teams within the same sport. In most other institutions, segregation would be considered blatantly sexist, yet when applied to sports it seems natural to many people. Perhaps this is because of the ideology of natural or essential physical differences between men and women.

Women's sports oftentimes become feminized versions of their masculine counterparts, such that female athletes are frequently described as graceful or delicate-looking while male athletes are described as strong, aggressive, and powerful. At their best, stereotypes of women in sports portray them as balancing the masculinized demands of competitive sport with femininity in other spheres of life.

As this research indicates, the dichotomy of feminine vis-à-vis masculine is value-laden. Chapter 5 suggested that one of the primary means for maintaining the boundaries between teams is to rely upon feminizing and sexualizing the other team. By invoking sexist and homophobic language and symbols, fans also create a distinctly masculine, tough space. As the data in Chapter 7

indicate, women's participation in the game compromises the masculinity of the space (Bryson 1990). By enforcing strict roles of masculine performance or harassing women out of the space, men preserve the stronghold of masculinity. Clearly, feminine equals less power, while masculine equals more power.

While feminist scholars have problematized the essentialistic notions of men's and women's natural abilities, they tend to interpret women's abilities as boundless such that gender is merely a veneer that can be stripped away to find the essential human (i.e., man) inside all of us (Crawley 1998; Young 1980). While simplifying the arguments somewhat, this is still problematic because it continues to devalue femininity. Instead, this research indicates that many women value certain aspects of femininity. What is problematic is that men and women refuse to allow femininity to coexist comfortably within the hypermasculine space of football.

Football is an interesting event to analyze precisely because women have not been able to enter as players in large numbers, thus, it remains the last bastion of pure masculinity. On the other hand, the arena of spectator behavior is a field wide enough to include varying types of women and men in terms of gender expression. This affords an opportunity to narratively challenge the gender order, as women attempt to act as masculine versions of fan.

Alternatively, spectatorship also allows men and women the space to maintain dichotomized and privileged or oppressive gender characteristics. As noted in Chapter 7, women perceive some stake in the perpetuation of the status quo (Kandiyoti 1988). Within the patriarchal system of oppression, women are

able to bargain for certain rewards, just as Black men are able to benefit from masculinity though not to the same extent as White men. While the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house, it is possible for women (as well as Black men) to gain at least perceived benefits from a system that oppresses them.

These three things work in conjunction to build an institution of race and gender privilege and oppression. The structure and the ideology of the game work in a constant feedback loop: power is assigned to those able to negotiate hegemonic notions of White masculinity for themselves while exploiting the players' labor and denying power to those who cannot or do not claim hegemonic White masculinity. Most of this research illustrates the ways in which the game as an ideology-producing cultural event functions, whether manifestly or latently, to reproduce a structure of privilege and oppression. By looking at the functions of the game from a feminist perspective, ways to negotiate social change might be found.

Feminism, Functionalism, and Power

Taking charge of throwing a non-sexist, feminist bachelor party, Schultz (2001) noted his friends' reactions at the absence of a stripper at the party:

The problem was that we had no ideas of what a different kind of bachelor party might look like. Merely eliminating the old ways of relating (i.e., the female sex workers) left a gap, an empty space which in many ways *felt* worse than the sexist connection that existed there before; we felt passive and powerless (496).

While football games are not bachelor parties and players are not sex workers, the similarities in terms of functionality exist. As a violent space (rather than a

sexual space), the game functions to provide bonding opportunities for fans, particularly White, middle-class, heterosexual men.

In Chapter 5, James discussed the ways in which men bond by ribbing each other about the teams with which they affiliate. Indeed, Chapter 3 and to a lesser extent Chapter 4 illustrate the community bonding created around the event of football games. Clearly, the psychological and social benefits all the fans in this study reported cannot be denied. While Schultz does not mention functionalism with respect to the bachelor party, he nevertheless referred to the needs or wants that a stripper fulfills in the masculine space of a bachelor party.

Likewise, sociologists and feminists need not shy away from functionalism as a means of analysis. As Johnson (1993) observed:

In general, my own position is that functional analyses are not inherently conservative if one specifies, functional for whom or what? If one asks this question, there is nothing to prevent one from using a functional analysis in connection with an explicitly emancipatory aim (119).

I agree, but add two critical questions for analysis. In addition to addressing for *whom* do systems function in terms of power relations and inequality, researchers need to remain attentive to (1) *why* things function to fulfill needs or wants of individuals or systems and (2) *how* the processes function. Part of my contribution to this effort has been to show the process, detailing how the ideological systems at work in and around the game function.

Furthermore, in attempting to change parts of a system, researchers should attempt to maintain the positive functions while getting rid of the negative functions such as racism, sexism, and homophobia. While football games are not really important to all people, they do function in different ways for a variety of

people. Not all people experience or participate in the game similarly. For example, those reformulating hegemonic White masculinity along the lines of control and authority tended to be White, middle-class, middle-aged men, but not all fans within that category engage in that behavior which excludes many women and people of color. By simply removing football from America's cultural landscape, though practically speaking impossible, a functional vacuum would be created in which fans would be required to search for alternative structures to fill the void. Furthermore, removing the institution of football would not guarantee that fans would not find alternative structures that would function to perpetuate racism and sexism.

A more fruitful policy question would be to think about how the negative consequences of positive changes can be anticipated. For example, the ideological and structural dimensions of racism changed but did not disappear with the desegregation of sports. How could that have been anticipated and curtailed? Outlined below are some of the necessary components of positive changes in college football and, in turn, how this research informs future research.

Implications for Policy Suggestions

This chapter attempts to explore how this research complements the broader research and theory concerning sports and interactions of ideology and structure in terms of gender and race. It is argued that the cultural space of football functions to create notions of masculinity to which some people are able to connect and exploit. These ideological constructs serve as justifications for

inequality in terms of resource and power distribution within the game but can also be used outside the stadium.

Specifically, this research suggested that (1) ideology is another dimension in which people can be exploited, (2) the role of hegemonic White masculinity is to perpetuate the structure of oppression and privilege, (3) the role of fans as active participants in sports, and (4) football is a social system that functions in many ways including the perpetuation of racial and gender inequality. In terms of changing this structure of unequal oppression and privilege, all four of these issues must be simultaneously addressed.

The University of Mississippi provides an example of failed attempts at change because of an incomplete solution. After coaches lamented the fact that overt Southern racism in the sanctioned use of the Confederate flag at games hurt recruiting, school administrators banned the use of the flag (King and Springwood 2001). This solution acknowledged how the ideology of Southern heritage functions to dissuade Black athletes from participating in their program, possibly losing money for the program and school. Implicit in this analysis is a linking of structure and ideology. However, lost on the administrators were the important ways in which the images of Southern aristocracy functioned to develop hegemonic notions of power and White masculinity important to the fans. Likewise, the power of fans as contributors to the cultural event was shown as many fans continued to bring flags to the events to maintain the ideology and racial intimidation of the space.

Similarly, one of the major negative functions detailed in Chapter 9 is that of the ideological exploitation of the players. A complete solution would incorporate all these themes. First, policymakers should understand the complex exploitative nature of football and address all these levels. For example, in an attempt to regulate the physical toll on athletes, NCAA regulations allow for only 20 hours a week of physical practice. This does not include weight training, meetings, and watching game videos. In reality, student athletes are often expected to work the equivalent of a full-time job while attending classes full time (Spence 2000). Furthermore, because of the constraints of afternoon and evening practices, many athletes cannot attend afternoon classes. Many science and engineering courses hold laboratories in the afternoons, making it particularly difficult for athletes to take advantage of all the educational opportunities the university offers. Thus referring back to the title of Chapter 9, football players often cannot become doctors whether fans want them or not.

Second, because of their intense schedules many athletes form cliques, making integration with the larger college community difficult (Jackson et al. 2000; Spence 2000). Indeed, many of the fans in this study discussed the sense of awe they felt toward student athletes, making it difficult to engage in normal relationships with them. Because athletes remain stars to fans, students and alumni rarely get to know the athletes as three-dimensional beings. As a result, knowledge between athletes and fans remains on the level of stereotypes. Without a better understanding of the athletes, fans are able to negotiate notions of hegemonic White masculinity in their favor by objectifying the players.

To address both these issues, I suggest a two-fold system. First, players should have the real opportunity to attend school with demands equaling that of normal students. If athletes were given scholarships to attend the university after a tour as athletes for the team, they could devote four years to their sport and then choose if they want to attend the university. As a result, fewer "dumb jocks" would attend the university, and athletes who do attend would be able to invest more time into becoming engaged students, decreasing the stereotype of the unintelligent athlete, which is invariably linked to race.

UF already has instituted programs to allow traditional students to meet and get to know the real student athletes. I commend these efforts as an attempt to demystify the star status of athletes while showing the multiple dimensions of and demands upon athletes. However, these efforts should be more broad and far reaching.

The second part of the system should deal with both the structure and ideology of the inequality of opportunities for athletes, paying attention to how the fans play a strong role in the interpretation of athletes' academic abilities and opportunities. This more complex solution would come closer to alleviating some of the exploitative aspects of college football while maintaining some of the positive elements of the football experience. Of course, policymakers must also remain aware of how the ideologies of athletes and fans subtly shift as a result of policy changes in order to maintain some of the negative functions of the system. Therefore, continued research in these areas is crucial.

Areas of Future Research

This research uses an analysis of focus groups and participant observation to detail the process of connection, maintenance, and disconnection from masculinity. While the research questions explored informed the qualitative methods used, there is no doubt that this is a process that needs further exploration, including more generalizable methodology.

First, one critique of the data is that they come from the South. Many will argue that the patterns observed exist only in this racist part of the world. Of course, the literature on racism in sports attests that racism is a nationwide epidemic, not merely a Southern strain of the virus. Still, future research should compare and contrast Southern football with other sports and football in other regions. For example, one could compare UF with its predominantly Black team to a Midwestern university with a predominantly White team. Alternatively, comparing football in the South to hockey in the Northeast would provide a similar contrast. These studies would answer three questions. First, do fans still attempt to privilege their definitions of masculinity over that of the players? Second, do fans still disconnect from the players, exploiting their labor? If the answer to these two question is “yes,” then the third question would be to ascertain if race remains a factor in ideological exploitation.

A second area of research would be to compare fans to non-fans. Chapters 7 and 8 discussed the possibility that racism and sexism effectively harass specific fans out of the space, reducing the amount of White women and Black women and men in attendance. This could be addressed by conducting focus groups with those who do not claim to be fans, assessing the following

questions: Are non-fans fundamentally different people than people who attend and participate in games? Do they have similar needs to fulfill? If so, what structures function to fulfill their needs and could that be transferred to fans as well? Do non-fans cite an unwelcoming and harassing atmosphere as a reason for not participating?

Finally, while not explicitly investigated in this research, class issues remain an implicit issue of power. Therefore, more research needs to be conducted assessing the connection between ideology and power particularly in terms of decision-making. In-depth, key informant interviews with some of the more prestigious fans would provide answers concerning how racial and gender notions from the games influence the decisions they make with regards to resources and power, for example, in hiring.

While this research indicates that the institution of college football functions to create and perpetuate notions of power inequality with regards to gender and race, I have also outlined the theoretical and empirical tools needed to more carefully investigate and change this system. Most troubling is that the ideology that justifies power and control, that is, hegemonic White masculinity, seems to be a rather elusive goal which many men and women can never attain. Hegemonic White masculinity, as a type of ideology, is at its core a constantly morphing system of justification. As Steinem (2001) noted:

[T]he power justifications could probably go on forever.

If we let them (367).

APPENDIX
DEMOGRAPHICS AND PSEUDONYMS FOR FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Table A-1. Demographics of focus group participants

Group	Name	Race	Gender	Age
Student 1	Anne	Black	Female	18-25
	Shelia	White	Female	18-25
	Marcy	Black	Female	18-25
	Susan	White	Female	18-25
Student 2	James	White	Male	18-25
	Tricia	White	Female	18-25
	Elaine	Black	Female	18-25
Student 3	Melissa	Black	Female	18-25
	William	Black	Male	18-25
	Lucy	White	Female	18-25
Student 4	Cheryl	White	Female	18-25
	Tim	White	Male	25-40
Alumni 1	Donald	White	Male	25-40
	Connie	White	Female	25-40
	Calvin	White	Male	25-40
	Francis	White	Female	25-40
	Taylor	White	Male	25-40
	Ben	White	Male	25-40
	John	Hispanic	Male	25-40
	Geoffrey	White	Male	25-40
	Elizabeth	White	Female	25-40
Alumni Band	Stan	White	Male	25-40
	Travis	White	Male	25-40
	George	White	Male	25-40
	Eric	White	Male	25-40
Gator Club 1	Lance	White	Male	40-55
	Charles	White	Male	40-55
Gator Club 2	Judith	White	Female	40-55
	Betty	White	Female	55-65
	Meredith	White	Female	40-55
	Julie	White	Female	40-55
	Nicole	White	Female	40-55
	Jennifer	White	Female	40-55

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

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Upon graduation from Rollins, Laurel matriculated for 1 year to the graduate program in the Sociology Department at the University of Hawaii, Manoa. Her desire to study race and ethnicity (particularly as it plays out in the South) brought her back to Florida in 1997 to begin studies at the University of Florida under Joe R. Feagin. She received a M.A. in Sociology in 1999 and a Ph.D. in Sociology in 2003.