# Retro Accents and Carnival Pleasures: The Cultural Role of the Ballpark in the Renewing American City

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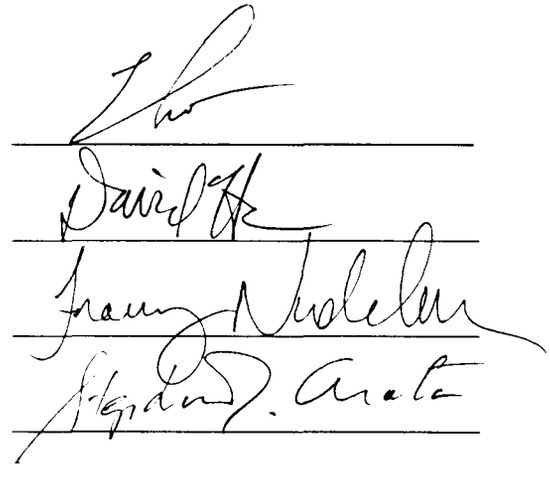

## Abstract

This project examines the cultural and economic role of trendy retro ballparks in the contemporary American City. Since 1992, when the first of these *new old* stadiums — Baltimore's Oriole Park at Camden Yards — opened its gates, they have come to be seen as necessary components of downtown redevelopment. By 1998, five retro parks, or parks at least outfitted with accents of the past, were in operation. Additionally, a staggering eight more have been scheduled to open by 2003.

As part of this project, I discuss the political economy of stadium construction as well as the recent economic history of the American downtown. By the beginning of the century's final decade, in places like Cleveland — where most of my research takes place — the transformation of the economic base from manufacturing to service and tourism, along with racist and classist neglect, had left local municipalities desperate to find quick fixes to the problems associated with a decaying urban infrastructure. Decades of factory closings, race riots and suburban flight had impoverished and segregated city centers to such an extent that many local governments literally were going belly up. Out of the rubble, retro stadiums have emerged as anchors to urban renewal. In the process they have become central symbols in the transformation of the city from livable space

to one which has as its primary function the packaging of "urban" experiences to visitors eager for a dose of city energy. Throughout the early part of this project, I describe some of the enormous packages of corporate welfare given to owners of sports franchises aiding in this transformation.

Yet my primary focus is cultural. Each of my chapters examines the cultural cachet of "retro authenticity" as well as the psycho-social problems associated with such large scale reenactments of the old. To a large degree, these reenactments involve the employment of a commemorative culture, requiring a replacement of urbanites of the past with mere symbols paying homage to them. For example, in Cleveland's "Gateway," the faux historical name given to the area around the ballpark by its developers, blacks who for thirty years had lived, worked and shopped there, have been replaced by "blackness." In other words, as gentrification prices out the more economically marginal locals, a host of commemorative cultural forms — in Cleveland's case hip-hop mascots, rap music blasted over the loudspeakers and gift-shop items like Jackie Robinson replica jerseys — emerge to compensate for their absence.

In short, the primary thrust of this project involves an examination of how the movement of retro authenticity in ballpark construction mirrors larger, more troubling cultural trends helping negotiate many of the ironies and inconsistencies of gentrification. At the turn of the millennium, when a 'new urbanist' ethos has achieved a toe hold in American culture, when a generation of people who fled the city beginning in the middle part of this century look back nostalgically to urban

life as a way to reconstitute the 'real' or the 'authentic,' retro baseball stadiums have emerged to provide them comfortable access to the old city in simulated form.

## Contents

# Acknowledgments

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# Introduction

As a child, I was a passionate Baltimore Orioles fan. Growing up in the Maryland suburbs I would punctuate long summer days of front yard baseball or soccer by flicking on the local station to catch the inevitable late-game heroics of my beloved "Birds." Back then, in the early and mid 1970s, baseball's blue-collar team, lead by crafty manager Earl Weaver and his flock of homespun overachievers, Boog Powell, Brooks Robinson and Mark Belanger et al, always seemed to be able to pull a fast one on their more highly-paid opponents. Their "Orioles' Way" entailed combining a deep farm system with organizational endurance and managerial moxie. This savior faire routinely enabled the workaday "Birds," baseball's model small-market franchise, to find a way to best the free-spending, yet undisciplined Yankees and their other more glamorous American League East rivals.

On a very profound level however, my connection with the underdog Orioles was stronger than simple fandom. As is the case with many children, identification with a sports team helped me shape my own identity. Even though I grew up in an upper middle class suburban Washington neighborhood, I *believed* myself to be spiritually linked to both the Orioles and the blue collar town they

represented. While around me, the Maryland suburbs were becoming more upscale — consumer paradises where suddenly one could buy brie cheese and Scandinavian furniture — my image of Baltimore as a final refuge of authenticity, and thus of myself as authentic and real, remained tied up with the images and sounds on the Television screen showing Orioles games. In those days, ex-Oriole great Brooks Robinson who had stayed with the organization as color commentator would punctuate the low-budget broadcasts by reading the corny pitches of local sponsors Ball Park Franks ("They plump when you cook 'em") and National Bohemian Beer ("Baltimore's finest: Natty Boh"). "Forget Heineken and fancy meals," I reasoned, "cheap beer and dogs were good enough for me." It was as if these consumer choices, like my love of baseball's hardest working team, could somehow endow me with a kind of reverse class status.

My occasional trips to cavernous, concrete Memorial Stadium to see the team play live helped reinforce this status — in my own mind at least. Over time, because the stadium was tucked inside a densely populated neighborhood, with scanty parking and poorly-marked streets, I was able to develop an *insider's* knowledge helping me make the best of the experience. Even before I was old enough to drive, I gained great pleasure from guiding my father and other older chaperones through the many short cuts en route to the park. Then, once in the vicinity, my insider's knowledge allowed me to lead them to hidden parking spaces, find the cheapest scalped tickets and uncover the lowest prices on

concessions and baseball paraphernalia from the many unauthorized and renegade local vendors and scalpers who set up shop just off the beaten track.

Once within the gate of the stadium, this sense of being *on the inside* only intensified. I led my gang to the sections with the most lax ushers allowing us to sneak into practically whichever seats we chose; I exchanged friendly banter with the other regulars; I showed off to my friends by reliably predicting the seemingly eccentric moves of Manager Weaver. I was just like the Orioles, I told myself, just like the ball club which year after year assembled a collection of journeymen and budget-priced castoffs into a regular contender. Instead of undervalued *players*, however, I took *objects* that few coveted (below face value resold tickets, etc.) and used them to form a priceless experience.

This brand of what John Fiske calls "productive pleasures," or the generation of meanings somehow in opposition to authorized prescriptions for one's experience, was clearly both a product of my hegemonic conceit as well an outgrowth of my personal psycho-drama (Fiske 49). Thinking myself both "on the inside" as well as more "Baltimore" than "Washington" to a large degree helped me come to grips with guilt over economic privilege. Although I grew up amidst green space, in a safe neighborhood with big lawns and well-funded public schools, I still had waking fantasies of living in the gritty and real streets of Baltimore row houses. From an early age I dreamed of moving to the city where community life unfolded on vibrant street corners, where I could mix with folks from widely disparate backgrounds, where I might be able to share with my

neighbors a sense of class, ethnic or racial solidarity ignored in the upper-middle class white suburbs. Looking back on those days, I have come to realize how the longing I negotiated through my cathexis with the "Birds" and Baltimore stimulated me to undertake this project. To a large degree, I began my research of stadium culture out of a desire to understand some of the class and race implications of the pressure I felt to be simultaneously outside and inside, part of an oppositional culture.

Much of my interest in the subject also derived from genuine nostalgia for the old Orioles. "Oriole's Magic," a term indebted to the legacy and memories of the gritty and resourceful club of the 1970s now signifies differently. By the late eighties, the composition of the organization had changed dramatically. Like the notorious junk bond traders of the Reagan years, Orioles management began to sacrifice the team's future for short term fixes. Years of trading prospects for aging stars left the team old, slow, under-motivated and lacking in crucial team chemistry. Questionable personnel decisions left the farm system, once the envy of all big league teams, the most denuded in the major leagues.[1]

This new approach backfired terribly on the field. In 1987, the Orioles, just five years removed from their last World Series victory, set a record for early season futility, losing a staggering twenty one consecutive games to begin the season. Meanwhile, my passion for the game and for the Orioles began to abate as well. I went off to college and hence could not follow the team on the local

stations anymore. Without Brooks telling me about where to find the best crab cakes in Baltimore or giving me inside information on the long-standing feud between Weaver and his star pitcher, Jim Palmer, I simply lost interest.

But in 1988, after I graduated and moved back home, the ball club quite unexpectedly began to show signs of life again. Just one year removed from the infamy of a 107 loss season, the team decided to return to its roots, to trade older players for prospects, to rebuild through youth and pitching and enthusiasm. The team's chase for the division crown that year was among the most thrilling I had ever experienced. A group of no names and cast-offs, rookies and hustling journeymen under the tutelage of Oriole legend Frank Robinson, scrapped and clawed and hustled their way to the top of the American League East. Though they lost the division on the final weekend of the season to the high-priced Toronto Blue Jays (playing in their new, decadent Sky Dome), the young "Birds" brought back the magic to their old stadium on 33rd street.

But, even more thrilling than their success on the field that year was a midseason announcement that the ball club would soon be moving into a venue that seemed to me at the time to fit the organization to a tee. With great fanfare, architects unveiled plans for what would eventually become Oriole Park at Camden Yards. Touted as the first "retro" park in the majors, incorporating architectural elements of the game's and the city's past, the stadium promised to bring the urban pastoral sport downtown to a setting which would be just as

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[1] In fact, at the time of writing this, the Oriole's farm system still has not produced an everyday

thrilling as the action on the field. In the middle of the next year, the resurgent club broke ground on a spot situated wittily behind the long-deserted brick C&O train warehouse which had served as a border to the renovation of the city's Inner Harbor redevelopment district for the past few decades. Although I loved Memorial Stadium for its familiarity and it memories, I could not wait to see this *new old* park. It seemed to me at the time to be one of those rare cases when architects would be able to capture the essence of what was graceful and enduring about both their building's future tenants as well as its location. The Orioles and Baltimore, a ball club with such a glorious and memorable past and a charming big city of small neighborhoods respectively, seemed to me highly deserving of a venue with such promise of heart and soul. In short, it struck me as the perfect place to rekindle that old "Oriole's Magic."

Architectural models of the stadium suggested that it would be everything that Memorial Stadium was not. It was to be cozy and small, seating just 45,000 people and putting them close to the action. It was to be constructed of "warm" materials — brick, wrought iron and expressed steel left exposed to remind patrons of the girders forming the skeletons of the downtown skyscrapers, themselves constructed during an era of theretofore unprecedented economic prosperity. The architects would create asymmetrical playing dimensions, including a short porch in right field to remind patrons of old Ebbets Field in Brooklyn and Fenway Park in Boston, two of the most revered venues in

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player since Cal Ripken, Jr. made the *show* in 1982.

baseball's history. They would also leave the outfield open so that the cityscape would become a regular part of the stadium's sight lines. In these ways, the new ballpark promised patrons the ability to renounce the present in favor of virtual access to a richer, somehow more authentic, past.

Frankly, I was enchanted by the idea of a retro stadium. Like most fans of baseball, I have always been deeply captivated by legends, stories, photographs and statistics from the past. Baseball is, after all, a sport which absolutely requires nostalgia to validate the present. For instance, Mark McGwire's thrilling home run record chase of 1998 would have meant nothing had it not conjured up comparisons to Roger Maris's monster season of 1961. Similarly, Cal Ripken's long march toward breaking the consecutive game streak of Lou Gehrig allowed followers of the game to recall the thousands of legends whom he surpassed.[2] Likewise, the Yankees historic season of 1998 when they won a record 125 games would have been downright boring had it not been for the fact that, throughout, they were chasing history rather than just playing out the string after they all but clinched the division in July.

Clearly, from the time of their conception, retro ballparks were meant to orchestrate a related form of validation for me and all fans like me. Even before the first brick was laid, Camden Yards was promoted as an antidote to our immediate, inauthentic past, a fitting replacement for Memorial Stadium and the other parks I had grown up in. It was to accent legendary parks like Shibe Park in

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[2] Ripken broke the record in 1995.

Philadelphia and Crosley Field in Cincinnati which had come to be replaced by massive multi-purpose stadiums. Promotion of Camden Yards brought with it widespread denunciation of the multiple use venues characteristic of the previous forty years of ballpark construction. The architects of Memorial Stadium and the other debunked multi-purpose buildings were made to seem guilty of a type of inexcusable baseball hubris. By designing these leviathans, they had turned their backs on a century of unique, classic urban parks and instead drawn their ideas from the excessive rationality of post war America. Monumental, cavernous and round, these stadiums seemed inevitably to flatten out the experience for baseball fans. Each looked a bit like the other. Riverfront Stadium in Cincinnati, to the non-discerning eye, was simply a replication of Busch Stadium in St. Louis and Three Rivers Stadium in Pittsburgh; Shea Stadium seemed too much of a piece with Robert F. Kennedy Stadium in Washington and Fulton County Stadium in Atlanta; and Memorial Stadium seemed indistinguishable from Cleveland's Municipal Stadium and Milwaukee's County Stadium.

From the perspective of anyone enamored with the preciousness of both the older stadiums and the new one being built in homage to them, the multi-purpose stadiums seemed to be monuments to function over form. While they employed many of the engineering advances characteristic of an era of post-war expansion, they did so at the expense of character. For instance, their architects designed massive concourses seating tens of thousands of people while eliminating the distracting columns and other obstructions characteristic of the

first wave of American concrete and steel parks. Yet these engineering feats ultimately provided for a kind of lowest common denominator of seating options. None of the seats in the park was outrageously far from the action; yet none was very close either. Unquestionably however, the biggest slight toward the national pastime committed by these architects occurred when they designed these stadiums to host such a wide range of activities. Indifferent homes to baseball, football, tractor pulls and rock concerts alike, they failed to allow for the elevation of baseball to its erstwhile privileged status. In short, the designers of these parks committed the sin of suggesting that baseball was just like any other sport.

In my mind then, the new Orioles' park was going to address these mistakes of the immediate past and, in so doing, help revive something fundamental about the franchise's history. It was designed specifically for baseball. Foul territories would be kept to a minimum so that the stands would literally hug the contours of the playing field. Furthermore, it would serve as a metaphor for the "new urbanism" just coming into vogue. This anchor of downtown redevelopment was going to buck the forty year trends of American suburban development. In contradistinction to suburban ballparks which, like suburban shopping centers, failed to promote a sense of regional uniqueness, a specialness of place, this new stadium was to hark back to Ebbets Field or the Polo Grounds, built within existing city grids, part of the fabric of an integrated urban existence. As part of their experience, patrons to this park would be able to

combine a ballgame with shopping, dinning and, above all, a simple city promenade.

A tonic to the perceived atomization of the suburbs, this park, like the thousands of "new urbanist" developments in the works across the country would be, as Lonnie Wheeler says of Wrigley Field in Chapter Three of this project, "a real place, one that feels different from other places" (Wheeler 2). For me, anticipation of the new park was clearly related to my feelings for the Orioles as a young kid. The architects' description of it signified a certain heroic humbleness which I had always associated with the town and its ball club. Renouncing the perceived sterility of monumental and cavernous parks like Memorial Stadium and high tech ones like Sky Dome, this stadium would be able to rekindle the fundamental and magical simplicity of an earlier era. In retrospect, I can see how this renunciation seemed to promise the same kind of pleasure of identity — the class status cross-dressing — that the Orioles once enabled in me as a child watching their games on the tube and, ironically, in Memorial Stadium.

The architects' plans also spoke to my strong desire for "historicist" knowledge. Informing my excitement about the proposed park were memories, stories and footage of famous moments from the more hallowed grounds of twentieth-century baseball. Bobby Thomsen's "shot heard round the world" along with Russ Hodges' famous, raspy "The Giants win the Pennant! The Giants win the Pennant!" call have forever etched in my mind a vision of the Polo Grounds as a rarefied and special place. Similarly, the televised view of Carlton

Fisk hopping expectantly down the first base line, imploring with his waving arms the blast he just hit to stay fair and clear Fenway Park's Green Monster during the sixth game of the 1975 World Series, connects me to both a place and a time. Additionally, like many sports fans, I found, and still find, that these old parks resonate in my psyche through a familial oral tradition. My grandfather's stories of watching Joltin' Joe DiMaggio patrol the outfield in Yankee Stadium are by now a part of my DNA. In short, I wanted to *know* what it was like to live in another era, not just to hear about it.

This project then is also an examination of the meaning of contemporary replications of the old, a discussion of how my anticipation of opening day at the Orioles' new park was a form of longing for cheap grace. Even though in Memorial Stadium I had been collecting my own treasure-trove of memories — Paul Blair running down fly balls in the park's huge center field, Earl Weaver tending to his tomato plants behind the third base line, Super fan Wild Bill Hagy spelling out O-R-I-O-L-E-S with his body to the delight of the patrons in section 34 — I was anxious for an experience that would more quickly connect me to the past, a way to experience the benefits of age without aging. It seemed as if an old time ballpark could somehow function as an express train to history for me, a passenger who, like any mortal, had theretofore been forced to stop at every station. In the early 1990s, the dawn of virtual reality, when faster microprocessors were allowing for the simulation of so many kinds of previously inaccessible experiences, a simulated world of the past seemed suddenly,

imminently within reach. If the engineers at Orlando's Universal Studios could construct a virtual reality ride that literally made me feel like I was riding in a flying De Lorean in 1956, the architects of Camden Yards could surely take me back to a mythical past.[3]

Additionally, along with promising a fulfillment of my desire to time travel, the architects' plans spoke to my more decadent wishes. I felt absolutely seduced by the promise of a host of amenities attendant with the construction of a state-of-the-art sports venue. Maryland Area Rapid Transit Trains were to deliver patrons to the doorstep of the stadium from stations all around the region. A giant video scoreboard with never before seen picture clarity would instantly replay action on the field. Fancy concession stands and club restaurants would provide sumptuous Maryland crab cakes as an alternative to standard ballpark faire. An elevated bullpen would allow patrons to view relief pitchers warming up no matter where their seats were. An out of town scoreboard would keep us all abreast of happenings around the league.

My anticipation became so intense I felt like I couldn't wait. So I didn't. A few weeks before the opening game, I invented some excuse or another to visit downtown Baltimore. While there I figured I might as well stroll over to the old warehouse to check on progress. A kind security man let me in the building where I was able to take it all in. From my perch in a second floor window, I

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[3] Here I write about Universal Studio's *Back to the Future* ride. Designed after the 1985 Robert Zemeckis film, this ride was one of the first to bring the technology of advanced flight simulation to a popular audience.

caught a glimpse of the park's evolving architectural achievement. Truly a thing of grace, at once massive and intimate, the stadium was able to immediately conjure up the thrill of the urban pastoral. The new spring grass of the outfield jumped out at me in contrast to the delicate wrought iron and sturdy brick of the fences containing the concourse. It really was a *park* as opposed to a *stadium* in that its great volume of open space was juxtaposed clearly with the organized clutter of the city; downtown skyscrapers brilliantly framed the grass and climbing ivy in centerfield.

During my few moments staring out of the window, I also noticed some witty features of the new park which I had not expected. Eutaw Street, one of downtown Baltimore's most important arteries continued as a brick walking street within the gates of the park. It thus provided for a nice promenade between the warehouse and the right and center field bleachers and porch, making seamless the visual transition between city and stadium. Also, I marveled at how the elegant outfield seating section down the first base line rose abruptly then vanished gently as it approached the warehouse. The effect of this ocular magic trick was to make this huge section seem as if it tapered off into thin air. It was at once massive and delicate. Leaving my perch, catching one last glimpse of workers hurriedly applying the final touches to this section and others in the stadium, I returned home eagerly anticipating watching the opening game on television in a few short weeks.

Yet even through my excitement I felt something troubling in the air. Because I'm neither wealthy, well-connected nor fanatical enough to wait in line overnight, I was not able to procure a ticket to any of the games during the first few weeks of the inaugural season. This was already for me a sign that something significant had shifted when the "Birds" moved downtown. Almost overnight, my insider's status had vanished. Because tickets were now coveted, they fell into the hands of a more economically exclusive set. Season ticket holders, renters of corporate luxury boxes, wealthy contributors to campaigns of Maryland politicians and other important and/or affluent people were the only ones who could gain access to this *purer* form of baseball event.

Thinking about my impending exclusion gave me pause that day. But I was nevertheless able to assure myself that, over time, I might again be able to discover the hidden parking spots and cheap concessions which endowed me at the old park with the psychic capital of an insider. However, I realize now that in reality I chose to ignore the changed dynamics of the park largely because I was still so eager to experience the grand nostalgia trip for myself, still so seduced by the promises of retro authenticity.

When I did finally manage to get tickets to a game about a month or so into the season, I found the experience, well, not *bad*, but not exactly *transformative* either. The amenities were indeed pretty decent. I snacked on somewhat authentic but overpriced Maryland crabcakes. I drained a couple of pints of handcrafted ale. I walked past the smoking barbeque pit on Eutaw street

and brushed up against portly, jovial Boog Powell shaking hands with each patron who waited in line to buy one of his special recipe sandwiches. I have to admit, at the time, Boog's presence seemed to be a pretty cool touch. The ultimate symbol of the old Orioles, Boog greeted folks with a firm handshake and a bellowing, Maryland-accented "how ya doin." Yet, at the same time it seemed kind of perfunctory and staged, a photo opportunity with cachet derived from the tension between Powell's aura and his ordinariness. Boog's nightly ritual struck me somehow as largely a replication of authenticity in the age of mechanical reproduction.[4] He functioned as a flesh and bone signifier of the past; his act was a simulacrum of an impromptu street corner chat occurring during an era when professional ballplayers and other celebrities actually lived in the same neighborhoods of the fans who admired them.

But in the moment I did not get too bogged down by the contradiction between Powell's 'aw shucks' posture and the more exclusive and elitist dynamics of the event. I was still too interested in uncovering the many gems articulated throughout the stadium by its designers. I turned my attention to the energy generated by the building's novelty. The backdrop of downtown was indeed spectacular and there was truly a certain buzz about the place caused in part by the fact that most were experiencing this space for the first time. I noticed too that the sight lines were indeed quite fine, though I could also tell immediately that the upper deck had been constructed on an excessively steep angle and

[4] For a discussion of the shift in the evocative power of art after the onset of industrialization and

situated farther than normal from the field in order to accommodate the two rows of corporate luxury suits now occupying the mezzanine. The price of progress, I reasoned (still willing to be seduced by the sterling new park) was that the wealthy would achieve their luxury at the expense of some minor inconveniences for the poor.

Yet, when I got to my seat perched high in the upper concourse behind home plate, I looked around and began to wonder just who it was that the new park was catering to. The faces, the clothing and the behavior of my section mates in the "nose bleed seats" seemed distinctly different from the ones to which I had become accustomed at Memorial Stadium. The section was literally one hundred percent white and, apparently (judging by conversations I had), mostly middle class and upper middle class. Equally disturbing for me once the game began however was that, there in the "cheap seats," everyone was so eerily well-behaved.[5] There was some cheering, but only at appropriate moments — like when an Oriole reached base or made a nice play in the field. Within a couple of innings I found myself terrifically nostalgic for the excessive, the inappropriate, the picaresque — the vernacular behavior and comportment of the rowdies blissfully exiled together in the cheap seats at the old park. I longed for foul mouthed commentary about the umpire's decisions or for someone to *accidentally* spill beer on the patrons in the corporate luxury boxes just below.

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mass production, see Benjamin.

[5] In truth the ticket was not very cheap. It cost $18 to sit three rows from the top of the stadium.

So, I left my seat and began to navigate the park, hoping the section I had just vacated was an anomaly. I walked around the concourse to the bleacher section in center field, confident that there I would find a rarefied area of ballpark anarchy, a place for the delightful expressions of outsider animus. Surely, in the bleachers I'd find the some of the oppositional sentiment of my youth, a community of folks on the outside looking in. Much to my dismay, however, I was stopped at the entrance by, of all people, an usher. The bleacher seats, formerly a free space with open admission and bench seating, had now become the most exclusive area in the park. In this new old park, it has been chopped down to a mere token, a few hundred seats in the outfield for the lucky fans who could pay to revisit something like an old-time bleacher experience. This seemed blasphemous to me. The section that had for generations allowed those on the margins of stadium life the freedom to generate their own forms of pleasure and oppositional sentiment, had now been reduced to a simulacrum, a space for a select few to exercise fantasies of being a participant in outsider culture.

I was still not completely dejected though. Even though I had been forbidden from entering what had always been my favorite part of any ballpark, I headed up to the large patio on the stadium's middle concourse to take in the sights of the Baltimore's harbor and the surrounding downtown. From there, I was able to begin to admire how cleverly the stadium had been constructed and situated in order to pay homage to Baltimore's history as a turn of the century industrial city. Its massive steel beams and endless red brick forged a lovely

continuity with the surrounding industrial structures and skyscrapers. Its location, in a former rail yard, harked back to the locomotive era when Camden Yards really was ground zero for the movement of goods and raw materials making their way in and out of the city. Along with this, I remarked to myself how this spot seemed to be an important symbolic intersection of the three kinds of transportation linking the various mercantile epochs in the city's history. The harbor in the distance once brought millions of immigrants to work in the factories and populate Baltimore's lively ethnic neighborhoods. It also brought goods from Europe and the Far East and served as a port from which Baltimore's industries could send their products around the globe. The train line sent the facts of Baltimore's production into the interior of the country helping other cities expand and construct their own skylines. Meanwhile, the ribbon of highways which converge directly outside the park are the primary means of transport in the modern economy. Yet these roads also are a harbinger of the changing cultural role of the city.

The convergence of these highways reveals a crucial truth about Camden Yards, about Baltimore and about revitalizing American cities in general. Even more important than any of its specific architectural achievements, Camden Yards and the Inner Harbor redevelopment of which it is an anchor, are able to succeed because of their proximity to Interstate 95. In contradistinction to Memorial Stadium which forced visitors from outside the city to negotiate the sometimes labyrinthine neighborhoods through rush hour traffic, Camden Yards and the

Inner Harbor are located in the most tourist-accessible spot in Baltimore. They are thus much more inviting to the millions of people who live in suburban Baltimore and the more distant Washington suburbs. In fact, driving time from Washington to the stadium is now roughly equal to driving time from the city's own northern communities; and even the most conservative estimates are that a full thirty percent of Orioles' fans now drive from the suburbs surrounding D.C. Camden Yards then functions as a magnet for tourism, a way to bring outsiders to the city where they will contribute currency to the Baltimore economy. In contrast to neighborhood-based Memorial Stadium which drew the great majority of its patrons from Baltimore and its immediate suburbs, Camden Yards was designed to attract outsiders. Similarly, downtown Baltimore, once a home to neighborhoods of row houses, shops, manufacturing entities, schools and parks, has been transformed to a kind of themed environment for tourists, conventioneers, baseball fans and others interested in experiencing a taste of the urban.

In and of itself, this transformation did not strike me as entirely disturbing. After all, throughout history the idea of the city has been subject to changes based on trends in transportation, industrialization and even pure aesthetics. Yet, the themed nature of this new kind of urban space left me immediately with a sense of something missing. For one thing, the new urban landscape presented a much more homogenous culture than the one it replaced. Observing the scene outside the stadium, I noticed how the rows of local, largely

unlicensed vendors I loved to chat with outside Memorial Stadium were gone, replaced by official Oriole concessionaires and an army of ushers and police officers maintaining order and ensuring that pedestrian and vehicular traffic flowed only in the prescribed direction. Scalpers, most of whom had been African-American teenagers at the old park, were similarly shooed away by the police. Thus, part of the themed nature of this *urbanesque* space seemed to require that the grit, the loose ends, the spontaneity — in short, the facts of city life — be consciously kept out of sight or at least contained so that the downtown ball park experience could be comfortably consumed by what I recognized to be primarily a suburban audience.

It was at that point that it began to become clear to me that all the wrought iron in the world could not really take me back to where I wanted to go. Despite the stadium's promise of abundant recompense, despite its virtual presentation of the past, it was unable to satisfy my longing for temporal transportation. I felt intuitively and immediately that a large part of this particular simulacrum was a rejection of the otherness of history, a refusal and inability to replicate the discomfort and the incomprehensibility of the past. Truly going back to the city would have required a replication of the inconveniences of Memorial Stadium, the kinds of spatial juxtapositions that force folks of different races, classes and backgrounds to meet on street corners and other public spaces. In short, looking out at Camden Yards from my perch, I recognized the new space as a projection of the present into the past. The analogue clock and the wrought-iron weather

vane adorning the scoreboard, the old-style advertisements on the center field fence, and the various photographs of old ballparks hanging here and there struck me at that moment as pure camp, inauthentic accents of authenticity. Sadly, I realized at that moment the extent to which "Orioles' Magic" had become a commodity.

Yet, despite it all, I still found myself wanting to believe, anxious to be swept away by the simulacrum. Like the millions of patrons who continue to flock to Camden Yards and its spawns in cities around the country, I came back time and again during the first few years of Camden Yards hopeful that the experience would help me ease my longing for access to a more authentic past.

In many ways, this project provides me an opportunity to theorize the meaning of this longing. I'm beginning to realize now that the retro stadium movement of the 1990s is but one feature of a late-millennial culture desperately searching the past for a tonic to a sense of belatedness. Like bell-bottom jeans, or re-emergent swing dance societies, wrap around porches on suburban homes and a host of popular movies like *Back to the Future* and *Pleasantville,* retro ballparks at once commemorate, commodify and fetishize cultural forms from earlier in the final century of the millennium.[6] They activate the dynamics of a "Disney-esque" simulacrum and thus create an important intersection between the past and the future. I believe that at this intersection we can learn about the present through an examination of how the past now comes routinely packaged for consumption. In

other words, like my initial desire for Camden Yards to restore the "blue-collar" shape of my youthful identification with the Orioles, retro parks give us perspective on contemporary longings for the "reality" of the vanishing American city.

In the past few years, many people have written about the economic irregularities surrounding the construction of these and other new ballparks. Better than anyone else, Mark Rosentraub in *Major League Losers: The Real Cost of Sports and Who's Paying For It* has described the elaborate system of corporate welfare that has enabled the transfer of billions of dollars from taxpayers to billionaire sports owners and their millionaire employees.[7] He and others have demonstrated how, time and again, sports franchises hold municipalities hostage by dazzling state and local governmental officials with dubious promises of economic growth and by threatening to move their teams if the city fails to build them a state of the art facility.[8] Maryland paved the way for this culture of blackmail by being the first to provide in excess of $250 million in subsidies facilitating the construction of the downtown park (Rosentraub, *Major League Losers* 18). As part of this project, I will of course touch on these pernicious trends in corporate welfare. It would be irresponsible of me to describe the displacement of many of the urbanites of the past — like the vanquished

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[6] *Pleasantville*. Dir. Gary Ross. Perf. Tobey Maguire, Reese Witherspoon, Joan Allen, William H. Macy. Miramax, 1998.

[7] Also see Cagan and deMause and Bartimole's "Who Really Governs?" for good descriptions of corporate welfare for professional sports teams.

[8] See Bartimole and Chapter Seven of Rosentraub for descriptions of this pattern of promises and threats played out in Cleveland.

vendors and scalpers in Baltimore — without showing how the injustices of capital have required them to pay taxes and suffer a decrease in services in order to fund their own banishment. Along with this, I will also go back a bit in history in order to describe the etiology of the exodus of capital from the American city. Without understanding the reasons for the denuding of downtown, it would be impossible to understand the contemporary longing for a return to it.

Nonetheless, my focus in this project is primarily cultural. As the title indicates, I'm interested in describing how the accenting of urban ballparks with elements of a largely mythical past provides compensatory pleasure for its primarily suburban consumers. In late-millennial culture, the ballpark functions as a stage for the rehearsal of many forms of behavior and attitude perceived of as missing from contemporary American middle class life.

Clearly it is an enormously popular stage. Baltimore's *back to the city, back to the past* experiment was so immediately successful that it became a template for the other stadiums constructed, or now under construction, in the wake of Camden Yards. In the seven years since Orioles Park first opened its gates, retro stadiums, or stadiums at least accented with retro touches, in Cleveland, Arlington Texas, Atlanta and Denver have allowed those cities' franchises to become among the league's wealthiest and most successful. Additionally, a taxpayer-funded venue in Phoenix and soon-to-be-opened parks in Seattle, Milwaukee, Houston, Cincinnati, San Diego, San Francisco, Detroit,

Pittsburgh and possibly Queens and Manhattan have owners eagerly anticipating big profits (Gildea, H3).

Small market clubs, increasingly squeezed between escalating player salaries in an era of free-agency and smaller television revenue in proportion to the size of their market, have looked to the construction of these parks as the only way for them to compete with the larger market clubs. While once graft, patience and player development allowed the Orioles to thrive against the Yankees, the club's contemporary success is now much more a product of creative marketing strategies convincing taxpayers to provide them with such a desirable and profitable new venue. As such, as it did during my youth, the club has once again provided the model for successful small-market franchises.

Thus, as the original form of this kind of venue, both in terms of financing and cultural value, Camden Yards could have served me well as the focus of this study. However, I felt that my own emotional proximity to the subject might have limited my perspective. As it is, I already realize that my own subject position as a recovering suburbanite has prompted me to essentialize somewhat the experience of visiting the city. I also could have chosen to write at length about "The Ballpark at Arlington." In many ways, the most contextually-challenged of all the new parks, "The Ballpark" epitomizes the role of these venues in simulating the urban. Arlington Stadium, the original home of the Rangers which "The Ballpark" replaced, was a refurbished minor league stadium forming a part of an amusement park complex including "Six Flags Over Texas."

Located on a highway halfway in between Dallas and Fort Worth, the "town" of Arlington was originally nothing but the amusement complex on an empty plain. However, throughout the 1970s and 1980s, an edge city of strip malls and hotels emerged around the park. The decision thus to build an "urban" park in this rather non-urban location gives one pause. In order to compensate for its contextually-challenged nature, architects endowed the park with characteristics allowing it to replicate Yankee Stadium. They constructed "historicist" brick arches anathema to Southwest architecture and built an elaborate Ranger Hall of Fame which apes the famous monuments in center field of the hallowed Bronx ballpark. However, in contrast to the Yankees, the Rangers are a team without much of a history, having been moved from Washington in 1972; they are also one without a city, playing their games on a spot off a highway ramp. So clearly a large part of the park's purpose is to make Arlington seem more like a "real" place instead of just another suburban way station or edge-city.

Because of this fascinating post-modern juxtaposition of architecture and location, I gave great thought to conducting my research in Arlington. Yet I finally settled on Cleveland's Jacobs Field for a variety of equally compelling reasons. For one thing, the city seemed to me to be a potent symbol of the passing of an era. Once the center of national steel production with an awesome skyline dominated by blazing smokestacks, downtown Cleveland had become, by the late 1960s, one of the most recognizable casualties of the end of the great era of American manufacturing. Shrinking Cleveland lost one-third of its downtown

population between 1970 and 1990. It saw its polluted Cuyahoga River literally catch fire in 1966 then witnessed its urban neighborhoods ravaged as a result of a week-long race riot that same year. In the wake of this, its Center City experienced suburban flight in greater degrees than almost any other major American city. A town which at the beginning of the century was blossoming into perhaps the most prosperous location of industrial activity in America found itself at the end of the century in need of a dramatic reinvention.

The particular path that Cleveland has chose for this reinvention, after thirty years of wrangling over how to best restore the Center City, speaks volumes about the collective psychological dimension of ballpark-centered revitalization. The same city which forced out Mayor Dennis Kuchinich in 1977 because he wanted to divert public money from large-scale tourist and business development initiatives into the city's floundering schools and public infrastructure, has become the unquestionable leader in providing welfare to professional sports franchises. The city has spent more for and on professional sports teams and their playing facilities than any other community in the United States. Conservative estimates of the costs for building Jacobs Field, Gund Arena, and the surrounding garages by the Gateway Redevelopment Corporation are approximately $462 million. However, by the time such extras as overtime pay for police patrolling the area and free apartments and furniture for Indians' management are thrown in, many estimate that the city has kicked in over a billion dollars to help augment the profit of two sports clubs which, even without such perks, would still be profitable

(Bartimole, "Who Really Governs?"). Perhaps more than any other place, Cleveland's post-industrial image was in such ill-repute that it felt it needed such capacious forms of public to private largess to assure the rest of the country that it was still 'major league.'

Another reason for my choice is that, despite this huge investment in redevelopment, tremendous urban problems still remain in Cleveland. In fact, by many standards, they have gotten worse. The schools are still considered among the worst in the country and welfare "reform" of 1996 cost many city neighborhoods upwards of 17 percent of their total yearly income (Bartimole, "Who Really Governs?" Rosentraub 245-64). Nonetheless the erstwhile "Mistake by the Lake" is being universally touted as America's "Comeback City." The ballpark, basketball arena, Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Flats Restaurant area attract millions of visitors each year from neighboring suburban counties and indeed from around the world. So I came to Cleveland hoping in part to begin to understand how the city negotiates these contradictions.

When I arrived in Cleveland, I immediately discovered the widespread enthusiasm and optimism of a renewing city. The perky hotel clerk at the suburban hotel I stayed in told me right away that she volunteers daily to give tours of the ballpark because "it's just so much fun to be a part of all the exciting things happening downtown."[9] At the park, I witnessed scores of fans arriving early, congregating outside the wrought iron gate on Ontario Street to watch

batting practice and socialize. I saw thousands of others spend the time between work and the game hanging out in the dozen or so bars and restaurants that have opened near the stadium. Walking to the park from the other end of downtown, I dodged a few of the twenty thousand or so cars full of suburban fans crossing the highway spanning the Cuyahoga. Once near the stadium, they were efficiently funneled into the capacious stadium parking lots by the dozens of traffic cops and beat patrol officers working overtime to make sure things flowed smoothly in the Gateway. In dramatic contrast to the dilapidation and isolation of this erstwhile home to drug dealers, prostitutes and low end businesses, the revitalizing Gateway which surrounds the stadium now bristles with energy before games.

However, off the beaten path, I immediately also noticed many of the ironies associated with an urban area undergoing renewal. On a dark, narrow street leading directly to the stadium area, I saw so many of the tragic markers of gentrification. Low end stores specializing in hair care products for African-Americans with going out of business signs stood next to signs proclaiming the space a "future home of Chesapeake Bagels." Panhandlers, ignored by passing baseball fans, hid from the watchful eye of club-wielding police behind hastily-installed, plastic-coated imitation wrought-iron lamp posts. Condemned and boarded-up habitations were being restored by speculators eager to provide luxury housing for those who can afford to move back into the city.

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[9] Shelly Perkins who works at the Embassy Suites Hotel about ten minutes by highway from Jacobs Field.

In short, what I found in the Gateway, like what I found at Camden Yards, was simultaneously inspiring and frightening. The "Jake" is indeed an aesthetic marvel. Its architects have found a way to tuck the park and its garages comfortably between highways and skyscrapers; yet they have also found a way to make the space feel impossibly grand and open. The park treats its patrons to an urban promenade unrivaled outside Central or Hyde Parks while dazzling them with a host of witty post-modern idioms helping patrons make the psychic connection with other places, other times. For example, the open gate on Ontario Street is supposed to remind fans of the elevated platform outside Yankee Stadium where those waiting for a train can see part of the action for free. Also, the exposed steel structure of the rising concourse unveils many of the architects' structural secrets while helping patrons recollect Cleveland's industrial past; Floodlight stanchions were constructed to remind visitors of the latticed pattern on the edifice of the closed steel mill across the Cuyahoga; a large stand along bleacher section was designed to accent, among other places, the outfield section at Wrigley Field. So, while Indians' management refuses to call Jacobs Field a "retro" park largely because they want their home to be considered a unique architectural achievement, not simply a knock-off of Camden Yards, it is clear that a great deal of the park's appeal is invested in its promise of the provision of an "old time" Cleveland baseball experience.

But again, to the extent that the architecture is meant to remind patrons of the past, the economics of the stadium complex and the meanings it is intended to

generate are deeply tied up with disturbing elements of the present and future. In Chapter One of this dissertation, I will begin to situate the building's economic and cultural value within the dynamics of a changing American city. I will argue that, for close to thirty years, major structural changes in the organization of capital have brought about a subtle but steady shift in the very purpose of this country's urban areas. Retro ballparks like Jacobs Field have emerged from the rubble in order to facilitate this shift. As they become progressively more geared toward servicing the corporations and tourists who work and visit them, third millennial urban spaces like Cleveland's Gateway rely on images of retro-authenticity to reinvest them with the energy perceived to have been lost along with this corporatization. Available now in simulated form, emerging through carnival mascots and other metaphors of the eroticism of city life of the past, accents of an integrated city life provide primarily suburban consumers a safe way to enjoy this liminal space.

In Chapter Two, I will then discuss some of the historical reasons why the ballpark, as opposed to other kinds of venues, has emerged as the anchor of nostalgic downtown redevelopment. Since the origins of the game as a professional enterprise, spectators have come to ballparks looking to satisfy their thirst for carnival pleasure within a larger culture that seeks to systematically suppress it. As early as 1861, baseball team owners set up separate bettors' pens enabling middle-class men, most of whom conducted themselves according to Victorian codes of respectability outside the park, to act out against behavioral

norms. This Saturnalian function was able to persevere even as baseball learned to package itself as a wholesome enterprise, as the national pastime. The resulting tension in turn has allowed the ballpark historically to serve an important dual role for the emergent American middle class; it has allowed for the rehearsal of a variety of oppositional behaviors among the bourgeois sporting class while enabling the game's image makers to promote baseball as a symbol of American "verve and vigor"(Spalding 4). Today this duality still exists, enabling visitors to retro parks the opportunity to *think* themselves authentic, just like I did as a child attending Orioles' games. The retro park, I will argue, invites a kind of psychical class cross-dressing by connecting the experience of the visitor with those of mythologized patrons of actual old ballparks. Along with this, increased security, improved surveillance technology and economic stratification have allowed these same patrons to visit the city without actually having to come into contact with many members of the contemporary urban dispossessed.

In Chapter Three I will focus the microscope on perhaps the most popular site of this kind of false opposition in retro parks, the bleacher section. Once the primary section for immigrants, African-Americans, *bleacher bums* and others on the margins of stadium life, the brave new bleachers capitalize on illusory feelings of otherness (and hence communal solidarity) created precisely by the economic and racial stratification of which ballpark segregation has historically been part and parcel. In this chapter I will discuss the history of bleacher sections and suggest how, throughout this century, they have served as important sites of

vernacular or unauthorized pleasure for a relatively marginal urban population. I'll then describe how more recent iterations of the bleachers have attempted to commodify the experience for middle class patrons eager to purchase, among other things, community, authenticity and otherness. Part of the way that retro stadiums attempt to enact the "old" and the "urban" for its audience is by replicating sensations of exile or marginality for bleacher patrons. In this section I'll examine the manifold ironies involved when the outside becomes "in."

In Chapter Four, I'll extend this discussion of longing for outsider status to include race. Part of this examination involves describing how, over the course of the last quarter century, baseball has been becoming segregated once again. On every level, from the little leagues to the majors, African-American participation as players and spectators has been dropping ominously. However, along with this re-segregation, has come a curious reemergence of the game in the American urban landscape. Just like in the Gateway, whole sections of cities have been razed in order to build parks which cater almost exclusively to white, suburban populations eager to experience "the urban." In this chapter I'll demonstrate how images of, and sounds from, African-American culture are carefully articulated in and around these parks in order to code these new spaces as "urban." In other words I will describe how, in places such at the Gateway, "blackness" has come to replace blacks. I will also argue that, in many ways, this replacement articulates utopian longings for racial solidarity even as the renewed infrastructure of baseball, and indeed of the city, helps re-establish a color line.

Finally, in Chapter Five I'll turn my attention to what strikes me as an excellent literary representation of the limitations of the American city when it is experienced as simulacrum. Nick Shay, the main character of Don Delillo's novel *Underworld*, functions as a stand-in for the millions of pilgrims who flock to retro stadiums in search of an experience helping them close the chasm between the present and the past. Shay, who as a young man witnessed ball games at Ebbets Field, attempts throughout the novel to employ a logic of commemoration to help him regain psychic connection with the "gritty and real" streets of his youth in Brooklyn. Yet at every turn his attempt is thwarted because he becomes increasingly aware of the primacy of mediation in a world gone "hyperreal" (Baudrillard, *The Transparency of Evil* 93-4). Shay's search for a famous baseball, the authenticating object of one of his darkest moments — when the Dodger's lost the 1951 pennant on the last pitch of the last game of the year — like the quest of retro stadium patrons, remains vexed because, as Benjamin writes, "even the most perfect reproduction ... is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space"(220). Ultimately I will contextualize these quests in relationship to sensations of late-millennial belatedness, to the psychological limitations of both suburbanization and the post-industrial, post-modern city. This section will serve as kind of a conclusion, taking me full circle by helping me theorize my own sensations of something being missing when I first visited Camden Yards in 1992. To a large degree, the gap between my expectations and my experience links me to the fictional Nick Shay, who, having lived a life of

hyperreality, longingly and unsuccessfully looks to baseball and its preponderance of the commemorative for a way out.

Like many scholars within the field of cultural criticism, I draw my methodology from a variety of disciplines and styles. In part this project is a peripatetic analysis. Many of my ideas result from walking around downtown Cleveland, talking with fans, local shop owners, police officers, ball club executives, community activists and others in and around the Gateway. Sitting in the bleacher section, taking a tour of the "Jake," interviewing members of the Indians' front office staff as well as behind-the-scenes workers, I was able to get a strong sense of both the pride Clevelanders have in their new park and some of the theoretical and practical questions arising from this particular form of urban renewal.

In part, too, this project functions as an interrogation of my own subject position. As a child I needed to identify with the blue collar Orioles as a reaction to my own sense of what was lacking from my own identity. In comparison to popular cultural images of working people, African Americans and others, I felt distinctly un-cool. In relationship to true Baltimoreans who shared the homespun history of Boog Powell — people who I imagined lived in a more vibrant and "real" place — I felt cut off from connection with a community. Baltimore, its darkened streets of row houses and porches of people congregating to watch the visiting baseball fans flock toward the stadium, seemed to me — raised on the

wide streets and endless lawns and shrubs of the suburbs — more authentic, more gritty and true.

Perhaps one other important thing at stake in this project is the movement toward a definition of the "real." For me as a child, the distant city and even televisual or cinematic representations of urban culture seemed more "real" than the life I was actually living in the suburbs. Each of my chapters thus works toward a greater understanding of the "real" as it is expressed and packaged in the new old urban baseball stadium. Like my title suggests, reified versions of the "real" in these venues are presented via replications of carnival, through the clever and contained reenactment of liminal celebrations of disorder and disrespect. What follows then is a discussion of carnival pleasure at retro baseball stadiums.

## *Chapter* 1
## Understanding the Big Picture

You gotta understand the "big picture."
Bob Dibiasio, Cleveland Indians Vice President for Public Relations.

Long before 1969 when a bizarre fire blazed on the Cuyahoga River near Cleveland Stadium, the old drafty arena had come to be recognized as a calamitous mistake. A massive, dank structure first used for baseball in 1932 during an era of large concrete and steel ballpark construction, the stadium had for years been home to baseball's most notorious losers.[1] At the moment the polluted river burned, the Indians were in the midst of a record-breaking 40-year period without a pennant and were routinely playing in front of minuscule crowds of only the most die-hard fans, virtually lost in the chilly, cavernous building. Yet, after the Cuyahoga caught fire that day, downtown Cleveland itself, its behemoth stadium, its closed steel mills and boarded-up buildings already serving as dramatic symbols of rust belt depression, began to share with the stadium a rather infamous nickname: "The Mistake by the Lake."

Thirty years later, however, Cleveland is being touted as America's "Renaissance City." Downtown, home by the late sixties and early seventies largely to low-scale enterprises, housing projects, boarded up businesses, closed

[1] See White, particularly Chapter One, for a good discussion of the cultural significance of urban stadium construction in the first part of the century. Also Gershman, pages 142-3, for a description of how public financing for Cleveland Stadium amounted to the original "sweetheart" deal.

steel mills and open air drug and prostitution markets, now shimmers with modern glass and steel skyscrapers. In the shadows of these buildings, on the site of the now-demolished stadium, the city is building a brand new football-only arena complete with hundreds of revenue generating luxury sky boxes and all the other amenities of the modern sports venue. This glitzy new sports facility will join the Indians' new park, Jacobs Field, and the Gund Arena basketball complex as the revived downtown's marquee attractions. Just like in the days when the woebegone ballpark symbolized the town's blighted status and decaying infrastructure, Cleveland's three new state of the art facilities represent the city's rebirth.

In this regard, Jacobs Field is perhaps the most impressive of the three. The Indians' new home is not only replete with all the amenities demanded by a modern, upscale sports audience, but its favorable lease has allowed the historically pitiable Indians franchise to become among the league's most successful. Night in and night out, in contrast to the depressing scene at the old park, Jacobs Field packs in patrons. Upscale visitors dine on steak and lobster while watching the game through the glass of the stadium club; corporate executives and sales representatives entertain clients in the luxury boxes ringing the mezzanine; waiters bring assortments of fancy hors d'oeuvres to fans sitting in dugout boxes on field level behind home plate, and families frolic in the open air bleacher section underneath the Jumbotron in left field. They all join together to watch their revitalized Indians not only compete in, but dominate, the American

League Central Division. By 1998 the team had won four consecutive division titles and two out of the previous four American League Pennants.

Accented with aspects of "old time parks" built in the first few decades of the 20th century and constructed as the crowning jewel of the Gateway project, a reinvention of Cleveland's former immigrant market section which had become extremely run down in the wake of the 60s race riots, Jacobs Field stands as perhaps the most dramatic symbol of Cleveland's renaissance. The themed "old fashioned" park replacing the decaying structures of the area's most depressed era emphatically advertises to the nation watching ball games on television and coming to downtown Cleveland as a tourist destination that the city is no longer the "Mistake by the Lake."[2]

The success of the new park and the attendant pride and tourist dollars it brings to Cleveland are thus a large part of what Indians' Vice President Dibiasio refers to as "the big picture." A native of Cleveland and an Indians' employee for close to thirty years, Dibiasio has seen the city's and the team's fortunes come full circle. As a child in the early 1950s, he used to accompany his mother to the Italian section of the markets where the ball park now stands; he still remembers gazing in awe at the massive steel mills ablaze along the banks of the Cuyahoga and cheering wildly as the Indians won what would be their final division title for a staggering 40 years. As an adult, conversely, he has watched in disbelief as, one

[2] The "Rock-and-Roll Hall of Fame and the "Flats" restaurant and club district are symbols of the new "theming" of downtown Cleveland for the enjoyment of tourists. *Inside the Mouse*, a compilation of essays on Disney World in Orlando, edited by Susan Willis, astutely analyzes the economic and cultural logic of theme parks.

by one, the mills — the heart and soul of industrial Cleveland — shut down operations. For most of his adult life then he has been forced to wonder about job security as the perennially second division Indians struggled to remain financially viable in Cleveland. During that time he witnessed far more games seen by a scattered few thousand freezing fans at Cleveland Stadium than he has events at sold-out, sterling Jacobs Field. Thus his sense of the "big picture" is informed by kind of guarded optimism of the renewing rust belt. As a young man, the idea that the great steel mills along the banks of the Cuyahoga might someday stop producing would have seemed absurd. Now, as an executive for a large and successful corporation in post-industrial Cleveland, he wants desperately to not repeat the mistakes of the past. Experience has taught him that success can be fleeting; thus the "big picture" describes his charge of keeping the business healthy so that, even better than the manufacturers of Cleveland's past, it can do its part to maintain a strong regional economy. Within his conception of corporate noblesse oblige, the team's value in the community hinges on its long-term ability to create jobs, increase consumption, invoke civic pride and provide a recreational space suitable for the newly affluent.

But the "big picture" is even more complex, I think, than Dibiasio knows. Unpacking the term will provide valuable insight into the convergence of culture and capital in the post-industrial American city. In this chapter, I will first discuss the reorganization of the Cleveland financial world in the wake of the economic crisis of the late 1960s and early 1970s. The oil crisis and subsequent

depression of 1973-75 brought about a remarkable break in the structures of American capitalism. Signaling an end to the post-war boom, this crisis sparked a prolonged era of restructuring necessitated by low growth rates, high unemployment and inflation. Profits suffered, requiring American corporations to become much more flexible at the point of production. The era of "Fordism," or an economy based on American mass production, stable technologies and immobile capital abruptly came to an end.[3] In its wake, America moved away from large-scale mass production in favor of "flexible specialization." Thus, service industries, financial organizations, media-based technologies, and now ballparks have begun to claim the American downtown. In many ways, the "Cleveland Renaissance," its transformation from the "Mistake by the Lake" to the "Comeback City" serves as a perfect case study of the transformation to a "post-Fordist" city.[4]

In the second part of the chapter, after describing the historical and economic conditions responsible for the transformation of downtown Cleveland, I will turn my attention to the cultural role of the ballpark in this shift. Jacobs Field, as the crowning jewel of the transformed downtown, both mirrors the

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[3] The term "Fordist" refers of course to the structures and strategies of American mass production popularized by automobile innovator Henry Ford.

[4] "post-Fordist" means "Post-Industrial" or the disorganized or diffused structures of capital since Ford's model of mass production no longer dominates. Although I am not certain of the exact origin of the terms "Comeback City" and "Renaissance City," they are both used frequently in tourist brochures and by newspaper reporters and politicians to describe the revitalized Center City. Most probably the terms arose during former Mayor George Voinovich's tenure in the eighties, when huge tax abatements and gifts of welfare to corporations cleared the way for a string of high-profile downtown projects geared toward attracting tourists. For more on corporate welfare in Cleveland, see Bartimole, "Who Really Governs?" and Rosentraub, *Major League Losers* 245-60.

economic and racial dynamics of the glass and steel corporate skyscrapers standing next to it and promises abundant recompense of a variety of cultural forms elided by the very corporatization of the urban landscape. Yet, it provides this kind of recompense primarily on the level of simulacrum. Ultimately, in the third part of the chapter, I will discuss the complexity of this simulation, accenting certain ironies associated with a "big picture" privileging representation over reality, the televisual over some previous order. Emergent in this new simulated space is a negotiation of the tension between the old and the new through a fascinating re-creation of, and response to, traditional forms of urban carnival. In short, I will discuss how Dibiasio's "big picture," within the context of a post-industrial, hyperreal downtown, functions as a "big top," a thoroughly modern, carefully articulated, "liminal" space which reveals important traits characteristic of contemporary American middle-class longing for the "urban."[5]

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The seeds of Cleveland's urban renewal were sown well in advance of the actual depression of the early 70s. A city that was born great, where "iron ore met coal to become steel and rode off by railroad to build America's skyscrapers,

[5] The term "hyperreal" is Jean Baudrillard's. In many of his works, including *The Transparency of Evil, America* and *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place*, he describes subjectivity in a post-modern, consumerist world as so mediated by information technology, advertising and propaganda, that it is more than "real," it is "hyperreal." Many of Baudrillard's ideas about the power of the media build on those by Paul Virilio. See *Pure War*. In Chapter Five of my project,

railroads and bridges," Cleveland, through the first half of the 20th century, was home to one of the country's strongest economies as well as some of the richest and most charitable families.[6] The Rockefellers, Mathers and Boltons became fabulously wealthy and, in turn, created a system of foundations and corporate charities that enabled Cleveland to enjoy a strong social welfare system. As long as the mills remained profitable, Cleveland remained graced with high levels of steady employment, stable communities and noblesse oblige — the antecedent of Dibiasio's "big picture." Yet, after WWII, when the steel industry began to fade, increases in poverty, middle-class flight to suburbia and the erosion of the privately financed safety net brought about the erosion of the downtown infrastructure. In the wake of this, Cleveland's wealthy and close-knit business community began to look almost uniformly toward large-scale packages of urban renewal to save the city.

However, the vision of this wealthy circle of businessmen signaled a threat to the notion of downtown Cleveland as a livable space. Faced with widespread racial and economic problems, urban developers and other Cleveland business interests worked closely with the government in the 1960s and early 1970s to plan

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Baudrillard's and Virilio's dystopic descriptions of American media culture take center stage as I discuss Don Delillo's epic novel about life in the age of hyperreality, *Underworld*.

[6] Again, for a description of the relationship between the tradition of individual noblesse oblige and corporate welfare in Cleveland, see "Who Really Governs?" Bartimole, a former reporter for the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, has crusaded for years to limit the scope of giveaways to corporations and to make companies that receive public funds more accountable to taxpayers. Of a particularly pernicious quality to Bartimole is the type of sweetheart deal that allows an already profitable organization like the Indians to rake in more money even as skyrocketing ticket prices exclude the base of poor citizens who contribute disproportionately to the so-called "sin tax" on cigarettes and alcohol used to fund Jacobs Field. Also see Cagan and deMause for a description of how

a city that was to be rebuilt through projects geared toward tourism and corporate service. Gradually, hotels and skyscraping office towers began to loom over, if not replace, a fabric of close-in communities and manufacturing entities. Because the majority of these corporate towers were propped up by huge tax abatements and because the middle-class had long since fled for the suburbs, the tax base which should have paid for needed schools and social services for the remaining — by then predominantly African-American — residents of the city was severly eroded. This of course contributed to a descending spiral of poverty and misery in the downtown Cleveland hidden in the shadows of urban renewal.

In the wake of the oil crisis in the early 1970s which brought about a further erosion of the town's manufacturing base, Clevelanders attempted to reverse the trend toward this explosion of subsidized, corporate development by electing populist mayor Dennis Kucinich in 1977. Kucinich took on the increasingly strong banking interests by refusing time and again to sign legislation approving new downtown projects. But his crusade was short-lived and, frankly, doomed from the start. He was humiliated by a united front of business leaders and bankers determined to force him out of office. His administration had inherited a $14.5 million bank loan, which, in the past, had simply been allowed to roll over. Now, spurred on by business interests frustrated by Kucinich's efforts to halt the free for all on downtown development, Cleveland Trust, now Ameritrust, chose to demand payment. This aggressive action on the part of a

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downtown redevelopment in Cleveland is a tale of two cities, one very rich and prosperous, one as

corporation destined in a new world order to become a "subject of history," literally sent the city belly up.[7] If the fire on the Cuyahoga had not already signaled rock bottom for Cleveland, the fact that the city went into default in December 1978 as a result of Cleveland Trust's calculated actions most certainly did.[8]

Determined to have one of their own in the mayor's office, Cleveland corporate and business interests then both drafted George Voinovich to run and funded his election bid. In turn, after winning the race, Voinovich worked in conjunction rather than against corporate interests to push forward an ambitious program of rapid downtown development. For his efforts, the mayor was seen as a savior; and, in fact, from many perspectives, downtown Cleveland, during his term, did indeed enjoy a remarkable recovery. The new Cleveland skyline, shimmering glass and steel reaching up toward the heavens, became a symbol of

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poor as anywhere in America.

[7] In "Perioditizing the 60s," Frederick Jameson describes ITT's intervention on behalf of Augusto Pinochet's right-wing coup in 1973 as a significant moment in the formation of so-called "multinational corporations." As a result of America's failure in Vietnam and genuine reluctance to intervene directly around the globe, corporations like ITT discovered their power as de facto governments, learning to become "visible actor(s) on the world stage" (205). Cleveland Trust's aggressive action in the domestic sphere most certainly can be seen in the same light.

[8] For a description of the game of political hard ball played by the banks against the Kucinich administration, see Bartimole's "Who Really Governs?" and Rosentraub's *Major League Losers,* particularly Chapter Seven, "Sports and Downtown Development II: Cleveland, the Mistake by the Lake, and the Burning of the Cuyahoga." Also see Naymik for an examination of the chain of events occurring after the city went belly up on so-called "Black Friday." He concludes that high profile projects have not begun to solve Cleveland's core problems. "Cleveland, while ranking number one in amenities (sports, arts, recreation), ranked second to last on economic vitality and community prosperity based on medium household income, employment growth, and the income gap between city residents and suburbanites. Only Detroit ranked worse" (11). Also see Cagan and deMause for a description of the atrocious record of funding for Cleveland schools during this period of perceived prosperity.

the town's resiliency. This transformation allowed Cleveland to be touted nationally as a model for revitalizing the rust belt.

But, of course, all that glitters is not gold. Brilliant downtown Cleveland is really a tale of two cities. In the shadow of the skyscrapers, hotels and new stadiums stand rows of vacant stores and decimated African-American communities. Cleveland schools, despite the so-called "economic miracle," are among the worst in the nation, even in the wake of a stream of false promises that taxes generated by new development would go directly toward them. City neighborhoods have continued to decline. Crime is still on the increase and hopelessness remains the dominant mode on many streets, especially in the aftermath of "welfare reform" which alone deprived certain communities in Cleveland of up to 17 percent of their total income.[9]

However, the two-tiered nature of downtown is not simply endemic to Cleveland, but rather pandemic in "post-Fordist" America. In the aftermath of the early 70s economic crisis and in the wake of the long decay of the American manufacturing base, the urban economy has clearly split into two distinct, yet symbiotic, growth sectors. On one hand, the high paying corporate service sector comprising bankers, speculators, lawyers and managers has boomed in order to facilitate the increasing mobility of capital. On the other, the poorly-paying sectors of lower level services — janitors, secretaries, couriers, etc. — has needed to grow in order to service these high end workers. In other words, each corporate

skyscraper is, itself, a microcosm of the new class structure of urban America. Flexible and often temporary labor cleans wastebaskets and answers the phones for an increasingly-wealthy corporate elite. In this way, Voinovich's economic miracle has indeed produced plenty of new work. But it has done so in large measure by creating a "hamburger economy" of low-wage, expendable, low-ceilinged jobs.

Clearly then, a bedrock resonance of the term "big picture" has to do with pure political economy. It denotes the ideology behind the conviction on the part of a town's corporate community and government that the key to economic recovery is large-scale projects of urban renewal geared to the recreation, working patterns and consuming desires of the upper middle classes. It also describes the systematic corporate welfare extended to realize these projects. The new Cleveland downtown and, especially The Gateway, are products of thirty years of sweetheart deals given by the government to corporations benefiting from the mobility of capital in a "post-Fordist" economy. Franchise relocation in baseball, or at least threats to relocate, is now a routine bargaining chip on the part of shrewd owners. Just like other corporations which, for thirty years, have been playing one municipality against another in order to earn tax abatements and better labor contracts, baseball clubs (themselves increasingly owned by corporations instead of individuals) steadily demand that cities pick up more of the tab for the construction of their facilities and for operating expenses as well.

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[9] See Bartimole's *Point of View*, Vol. 29, no. 12 for more facts concerning the continued

The history of Cleveland's stadium deal is indicative of the kind of dubious "trickle down" economic arguments used to market stadium projects to taxpayers.[10] Voinovich's successor Michael White, elected in 1989 by promising racial peace and improved neighborhoods and by guaranteeing not to raise taxes in his first term, quickly led a campaign to pass a $275 million sin tax on liquor, beer, wine and cigarettes to finance the new arena and stadium. The tax referendum easily passed in the affluent suburbs but was clearly rejected by those who live within the city limits. Campaigning on behalf of the tax, White promised creation of 16,000 permanent jobs to the most needy city neighborhoods and said that he would allow no tax abatement to the stadium, which, he reasoned would provide for $15.6 million to be funneled into Cleveland schools. Just one year later however, he ended up lobbying the State Legislature to grant a tax abatement in perpetuity to the stadium and the arena.

When the cost of this tax abatement is added on to the amount of money spent on the stadium in the first place, it becomes clear that the city has contributed at least one billion in real dollars. Yet, even this figure does not tell the whole story. The "big picture" includes a city-financed security team in the form of an army of police officers working overtime directing traffic and shooing panhandlers off the streets surrounding the stadium during the 110 or so events a year. It also includes a loss of city revenue for such items as parking spaces given

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impoverishment of downtown Cleveland neighborhoods.

[10] Before becoming a convert, George Bush in his campaign against Ronald Reagan for the 1979 Republican nomination for President called such "supply-side" belief akin to "Voodoo

free to members of Indians and (the basketball) Cavalier management in civic-owned garages, and tax and rent free apartments, suites and corporate offices built in the complex for the teams' owners and personnel. Additionally, the city has thrown in a host of lavish extras such as $1.5 million to furnish these offices. Astonishingly however, during the Indians' second year at their park, a year in which they sold out the stadium each and every night and made millions from television revenues alone, they wrote a rent check to the city for a mere $461,415 or less than the club pays its most inexpensive ballplayer (Bartimole, "Doing Gateway Up Right" 1).

Working in concert with the city, the Indians almost overnight became one of baseball's most profitable franchises. In turn, they were able to become among the game's biggest spenders, signing a string of high profile, high salaried free agents.[11] This spending spree has allowed the Indians, for forty years a symbol of baseball futility, to emerge as one of the most dominant teams of this decade. In this sense, the "big picture" signifies the string of sweetheart deals helping the club achieve profitability and success on the field, which in turn provides pleasure and a sense of civic pride to all Clevelanders who support the baseball team.

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Economics." One of Reagan's legacies to the American people was a national budget deficit unprecedented in the history of the world.

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But the "big picture" also has to do with the systematic way the ball park and its surrounding area are being refashioned in order to cater more specifically to the desires of the modern middle-class American consumer. "Gone are the days when you could give a guy a dog, a beer and a ballgame and think this was enough," says Dibiasio, acknowledging the changing expectations of a more upscale baseball audience.[12] Within the renewing "post-Fordist" American urban space, patterns of consumption have undergone tremendous shifts. While the previous epoch promoted a certain democracy of consumption, the new one privileges customized purchasing alternatives. Whereas in the past, working classes joined the middle classes as buyers of standardized mass products, now,

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[11] Not coincidently, free-agency in baseball emerged at the beginning of the "post-Fordist" era. Like their corporate counterparts, baseball players have become flexible and mobile labor, moving from city to city, leveraging one club's contract offer against another.

[12] It is important to put a bit of pressure on Dibiasio's use of the term "guy." Clearly, the "guy" to whom he refers is simply an "average Joe," a throwback consumer who is happy with whatever beer, hot dog, or ballgame you put in front of him. While this "guy" is, of course, disappearing from the "big picture," the sentiment and authenticity he represents is not. Having been relegated by the changed economic dynamics of baseball to a seat on his couch where he watches the game on television and to Madison Avenue representations of a vanishing form of "real" masculinity in Chevy commercials and Marlboro advertisements, he still manages to occupy the ballpark in spectral form. He is the oppositional longing deep inside consumers who come to the park to shop, dine, and play video games, but who yearn for the "reality" of an authentic place. Of course, part of what made old parks seem authentic in the first place was their lack of amenities, their inability to nourish the privilege of a flexible consumer. Inhabiting a "public space" different from and also similar to shopping malls, contemporary baseball patrons thus try to have it both ways. One of their purchases, indeed the most important of all their purchases, is imagined access to a pre-consumerist world of the average guy. See Chapter Three for a description of how bleachers in parks like Jacobs Field attempt to satisfy longings on the part of middle-class customers for a time when they too, were just "regular guys."

having more exotic choices signifies freedom.[13] For example, consumers nationwide now demand a hundred different types of micro brews and foreign labels whereas, prior to the disorganization of American capital, mass-market American beer would be the only thing on the shelves. Schlitz and Pabst Blue Ribbon, icons of standardized mass-consumption goods which used to suit most beer drinkers, now are largely favored only by the American poor. Conversely, the increasingly distanced upper middle classes demand that their needs be catered to by an increasingly flexible system of product development, marketing and shipping.

In relationship to the changing face of the city, what results from this demand for accumulative flexibility is not so much pluralism as hegemony. Cities are reconstructed according to the tastes and desires of upper middle class consumers — a notion made clear when we examine certain details of Cleveland's faux historical "Gateway." A casualty of the city's so-called "economic miracle," the area now comprising the "Gateway," formerly the site of the city's many immigrant markets, had, during the past several decades, fallen into considerable disrepute. Therefor, few people with any power lamented the revitalization of this erstwhile home to only the most marginal enterprises largely catering to African-

[13] Several years ago, the 7-11 convenience store chain hit on a catch phrase that seems to sum up contemporary notions of the psychic power of commercialism. "You're going to like the freedom of 7-11" advertising a store where everything from Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream to cigarettes and car supplies can be purchased twenty-four hours a day, brilliantly suggests how, more and more, American "freedom" has become synonymous with the sum total of new purchasing alternatives and convenient delivery. Today, of course, innovations in home shopping via the Internet have begun to obliterate older notions of access of consumer choices, making even 7-11's notion of "freedom" seem quaint.

Americans. Literally in the shadow of Cleveland's sterling new downtown, the Gateway had come to embody the darkest side of urban renewal — an area so forgotten and neglected that even the urban working poor fled from it to more distant neighborhoods. As such, it was universally believed to be in need of desperate attention.

Yet, the type of economic development stimulated in the Gateway by the construction of the two stadiums suggests the future of downtown Cleveland as a kind of business and theme park. It is becoming an interesting place to recreate, work, shop and dine, but not (for all but a select few) an affordable place to live; thus it provides us with a valuable cross section enabling a study of gentrification culture. On a side street connecting the famous "Arcade" (the country's first indoor shopping mall) with "the Gateway," all the racial and class markers of this transition are in place. Across from a store, now going out of business, which has for years specialized in low cost hair care products for African-Americans stands a sign announcing the arrival of Chesapeake Bagels, a national sandwich franchise. Bagels, once unknown to middle America, have emerged as a potent symbol of the transformation of the new downtown economy. This erstwhile ethnic food is now demanded by consumers nationwide. So, to meet this demand, Chesapeake Bagels reconstructs the same store interior at thousands of locations across the country, allowing the American middle class 'masses' to consume an ersatz version of the Lower East-Side Delicatessen experience. Similarly, between a soon-to-be-closed Korean-owned general merchandise store selling

Afro-centric clothing and a boarded-up check-cashing shop is the "Historic Buckeye," an apartment building being restored to attract upscale tenants. The emergence of the "Buckeye" augers a shift away from the older era of urban planning supporting the structure of a more inclusive middle class life. It is the centerpiece of a street that provides upscale goods such as bagels, coffee, baseball and parking instead of the whole infrastructure of support — eating, sleeping, shopping, working, public transportation and public space — characteristic of an inclusive urbanism of the past.[14] On this particular street, impoverished African-Americans, previously relegated to the level of consumption, buying essential products from recent Korean immigrants, are now being squeezed further out of the mainstream. No longer even really valued as customers, Cleveland's downtown blacks are simply vanishing as a result of gentrification.

Moreover, the hastiness with which this street is being "restored" is generating the kind of ephemeral gentrification aesthetic so often a product of these large scale downtown projects. On the newly bricked sidewalks stand quickly-installed lampposts covered with plastic "wrought-iron" sheathing. The lamps were put in by the city to make the area safer at night for the visiting suburbanites and to give the place a more upscale, "historic" feel. It is the stuff

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[14] Of course, gentrification is but a latter-day movement in the life of a city which threatens its inclusiveness. Institutional segregation based on race and ethnicity has, since the beginning of this country, divided city space into factions. Also, movements toward suburban development and infrastructural changes paving the way for increased automobile traffic have wreaked havoc on urban neighborhoods throughout this century. For example, for close to a half-century, Robert Moses, New York City's transit czar saw to the construction of highways through Bronx neighborhoods which literally decimated thriving multi-ethnic urban communities in order to give

of 90's urban kitsch — a bit of red brick and faux wrought iron — which signifies "historic," even if those materials are anathema to the area's actual history. Naming the area "the Gateway" and then giving it this kind of face-lift, enhances its aura, suggesting to passersby that it was perhaps once a significant port of entry for old Cleveland. In reality, it never really had a name or served this kind of purpose; it first housed the town's immigrant markets and then became a rundown site of various illegitimate activities and marginal and patently illegal enterprises. Nonetheless, in lending the site an apocryphal historicity, these finishing touches code the area and the retro ballpark at its center as "restorations" rather than "simulations." In corporatized Downtown America, this desire for a stylized aesthetic of the "old" virtually subsumes the restorative. This is of course part and parcel of a culture which, despite many instances to the contrary, tends to value the new over the renewed, a culture which has in the past twenty years seen the virtual disappearance of such standard urban icons of repair as cobblers and "fix it" shops.

These aesthetic choices also suggest how easily history itself can become yet another consumer choice. The symbiotic impulses of commemoration and commodification, so central to the logic of gentrification, extend on this street from the materials used to redo it to the many pictorial displays of the past set up inside the windows of buildings being renovated. In one abandoned store front for example, the new owners have put together an impressive photographic

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suburbanites quick and easy access to the city and wealthier urbanites an easier way to drive to

exhibit detailing the exploits of the various Negro League teams that played in parks in that area of the city long before Larry Doby and Satchel Paige broke the Indians' color line in the late forties. At least five Negro League teams competed in Cleveland between 1922-48, with one team, the Buckeyes, winning the Negro World Series at League Park II in 1945. While the integration of the Major Leagues eventually spelled the end of Negro League baseball in the early 60s, this tribute makes clear that the legacy of a segregated Gateway lives on in commemorative form. The placement of this display is filled with a central irony of gentrification. Next to a textual and pictorial commemoration of the Buckeye's championship season, stands the "Historic Buckeye" apartment building attempting to lure wealthy tenants back into the city. This tableau enacts a semiotics of replacement — cultures and people of the past subsumed by names and images for consumption. The appropriation of the name "Buckeye," like the aisles of Negro league gear — "X" hats and Jackie Robinson jerseys — filling the official Indians' gift shop on the concourse of the stadium, both pays homage to a disappearing past and recycles some of the "left-over" energy of the original. It invests the new space with some of the "swagger" of the old city even as (or perhaps precisely because) it gentrifies.[15]

The "big picture" transcends simple political economy in this sense by describing the countless post-modern cultural forms that must emerge when downtown goes corporate. These forms, many of which are writ large on the

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Long Island.

stadium scene, promise psychical connection with the past through a series of replacements for many of the desired elements of urban life missing from the "post-Fordist" city. As I will now show, the ballpark, the crowning jewel of the Gateway project, is a veritable petri dish for the generation of symbols and images of the past, a postmodern cultural response in part to perceptions of belatedness in post-industrial Urban America.

First, I should note that the construction of arenas that attempt to replicate the past is entirely congruent with the nature of 20th century baseball cultural production. In many ways, baseball has long tied the excitement of the present to feats of the past. For example, in the past few years, the exploits of Cal Ripken Jr. and Mark McGwire, chasing and shattering decades-old records, have almost completely monopolized the interest of baseball fans. Five years from now, few people will be able to recall that the Florida Marlins won the 1997 World Series, but they will always remember McGwire's smash to left field which broke Roger Maris's 40-year-old single season home run record or Cal Ripken's victory lap around Camden Yards after he broke the record thought untouchable — Lou Gehrig's consecutive game streak. Throughout this century, baseball has continually made a full course meal out of historical morsels, elevating the exploits of past ballplayers to heroic dimensions, immortalizing players in its pantheon, the Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York, and, when expedient, fabricating its own history in order to more thoroughly validate the present. For

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[15] For more on the use of inflections of race in gentrifying culture, see Chapter Four.

example, the very foundational myth of baseball — that Civil War hero Abner Doubleday invented baseball behind a barber shop in Cooperstown — is itself entirely apocryphal. This myth was generated and supported by a bogus commission enlisted by Commissioner A.G. Spalding during a time when the sport's executives were trying to market the sport as a symbol of uniquely American "vim" and "vigor."[16]

So, just like Spalding and his cohorts, contemporary baseball management is now looking to the past as a way out of a crisis caused by a string of player strikes and a decade and a half of lagging popular interest in the "national pastime." The retro stadium movement is most directly a reaction to the massive, multi-purpose stadiums in vogue during the 50s, 60s and 70s. Popular contemporary aesthetic belief holds that symmetrical playing dimensions, astro-turf, and clunky cement concourses in places like Three Rivers Stadium in Pittsburgh, Busch Stadium in St. Louis, or Riverfront Stadium in Cincinnati have been depriving the game of its intimacy and warmth, thus contributing to the game's problems. Relics of a waning era of American mass production, these

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[16] These words come from the famous first few pages of Spalding's 1911 propagandistic book entitled *America's National Game: Historic Facts Concerning the Beginning, Evolution, Development and Popularity of Base Ball, with personal reminiscences of its vicissitudes, its victories and its votaries.* Because it encapsulates Spalding's expansive sense of the meaning of baseball for the country, the whole passage is worth reproducing here: "I claim that Base Ball owes its prestige as our National Game to the fact that as no other form of sport it is the exponent of American Courage, Confidence, Combativeness; American Dash, Discipline, Determination; American Energy, Eagerness, Enthusiasm; American Pluck, Persistency, Performance; American Spirit, Sagacity, Success; American Vim, Vigor, Virility" (4). In Chapter Two, I deal with this quote in more detail when describing the relationship between Spalding's propaganda campaign and the ascension of the American middle class. I also unpack the origin of the Doubleday myth, showing how it is emblematic of other important constructions of the meaning of baseball in the American middle class psyche.

stadiums are seen as cold and alienating, a departure from the urban pastoral in earlier, more intimate parks. Powerful, sturdy, yet absolutely unoriginal, these stadiums, like the American suburbs emerging at the same time, tend to dislocate themselves geographically. That is to say, like mass consumer brands — Wonderbread, Budweiser, and Frigidaire — they make the experience of watching baseball the same no matter where you are.[17] By contrast, retro stadiums try to invoke or at least create a sense of regional variation. Architects "locate" the park by opening up center-field to a view of a city's skyline, by articulating "quirkiness" in the form of jutting-out bleacher sections or asymmetrical outfield walls, and by including witty symbolic accents of the historical architecture of a particular city. As such they seek to elide baseball's and a town's more immediate past in favor of a more "authentic" time in the life of American cities, a time before mass construction and consumption flattened out the landscape.

Smaller in scale, located once again downtown, these stadiums gesture toward the first generation of concrete and steel ballparks constructed in the early part of the century.[18] Now demolished Ebbets Field in Brooklyn and threatened older parks like Fenway Park in Boston and Tiger Stadium in Detroit provide the models for "retro" stadiums. Each of these older parks, in contrast to the multi-

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[17] Yet, also like these mass consumer brands, they flattened out the range of choices allowing for a kind of widespread consumer democracy. So large that they rarely sold out, they ensured that cheap tickets were available for most games. Circular and symmetrical, they erased the great distinctions between the best and the worst seats in the house. In Chapter Two I detail many of the more egalitarian traits of the multi-purpose stadium while comparing them to their replacements, the new retro parks.

purpose stadiums of post war America, contribute to a municipality's sense of geographic specificity by providing constant visual reminders of their location. City skyscrapers and other urban architecture form the backdrop to the game.

The older stadiums were also able to "locate" themselves through architectural inventiveness necessitated by the fact that they were all built into a pre-existing city grid. Both Ebbets and Fenway are remarkable for large outfield walls enclosing an extremely short field on one side of the park. In Boston, the existence of a road forced architects to devise the "Green Monster." In Brooklyn, Charles Ebbets, after several years of surreptitious land acquisition, was unable to obtain a final parcel of land which would have allowed for more outfield symmetry. Thus, he too was forced to construct a tall wall in right field in order to keep ordinary fly balls in play. In turn, these walls — the strange, game-turning caroms and massive blasts which cleared them — became the centerpieces of legends.[19]

Architects in Cleveland and in Baltimore have paid homage to this kind of resourcefulness by situating their parks in such a way to account for a partially faux, or at least a refashioned, urban grid. In Baltimore, architects left standing

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[18] White, once again, is particularly good on stadium construction between 1908 and 1923. Also, Gershman's *Diamonds* and Phillip J. Lowry's *Green Cathedrals* give excellent historical information on each ballpark.

[19] For example, most baseball fans who have followed the game during the past quarter century can describe the two most memorable home runs hit over the left field fence in Fenway Park. Red Sox faithful will always fondly remember Carlton Fisk hopping down the first base line, dancing and imploring the blast he hit to remain fair and help the Sox beat the Reds in the sixth game of the 1976 World Series. These same Sox fans might try, but will never be able, to forget weak hitting Yankee shortshop Bucky Dent lining a rope that cleared the Green monster by only a couple of feet, helping the hated Bronx Bombers beat the Sox in a one game playoff at the end of the 1978 season. For a description of Fisk as white cultural icon, see Chapter Four.

the old C&O train warehouse and Eutaw street in front of it as a backdrop to right-center field. To compensate for the short porch, they then built a tall right field wall in front of it. Similarly, in Cleveland, stadium designers incorporated adjacent Ontario Street prominently into the plan for the park. Both Ontario and Eutaw Streets are central components of the "themed" urbanism so much a part of the attraction. In Baltimore, Eutaw Street is actually confined within the gates of the park. A walking street for paying customers, it provides a food court, rest rooms, and Boog Powell's famous barbecue stand just beyond the outfield bleachers. In Cleveland, the large gate on Ontario Street serves as the stadium's main entrance. Gesturing back to Coogan's bluff outside the Polo Grounds in New York, to the old elevated platform outside Yankee Stadium in the Bronx and to the apartment roofs outside Chicago's Wrigley Field — sites of urban democracy, where even the poorest fan could see a game — this iron gate affords passersby a free glimpse of the action. Yet, this gesture is somewhat disingenuous. In reality, the road is so far dislocated from natural downtown pedestrian traffic that it serves primarily as a pathway for ticket holders to use after they park in the lots.[20]

Also, instead of redesigning the park to account for an existing grid, architects actually chose to *create* spatial conflict. This difference is crucial. The resulting tension gestures back to a time when cities were necessities, not

[20] During a recent four game series I only saw two non-ticket holders happen upon the gate. These two roller bladers seemed to have arrived on the scene rather by accident. I did ascertain from Indians' management, however, that during marquee events such as the playoffs or the All-Star game, a few people actually do choose to watch the game from this vantage point.

commodities, an era prior to both suburbanization and the industrialization of recreation, when baseball architecture somehow had to integrate itself into the vibrant city. In the "post-Fordist" city, by contrast, the structure of downtown is adjusted to accommodate the ballpark, even as it creates the illusion that the city's shape came first. This distinction must serve as a metaphor for the place of the ballpark in the city. These venues for upper middle class recreation are perceived to be so important to the vibrancy of the new downtown space that the city literally bends in order to accommodate them. Along with this, a large part of the mission of their architects is to situate ball parks in such a way that this dynamic is not just elided but inverted. It is a kind of large-scale "aw shucks" gesture, hinting at the constructed historic appeal of baseball as a game of selflessness and teamwork, a part of the very fabric of American culture.[21] In short, the intended message of stadium designers seems to be that retro merely fit into a city's "big picture" instead of dominating it.[22]

Cities that chose to construct one of these parks usually do so in large part because they see this sense of uniqueness of place as a crucial component in the development of their region's economy. One of the more powerful forces in an

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[21] For a description of how, during the late 19th century, baseball became "something more than a simple diversion from daily routines," see Rader 122. Rader's discussion of the relationship between baseball's production and its reception informs many of my ideas in Chapter Two where I describe the effort on the part of a group of owners to construct baseball as transcendent of mere sport.

[22] This is in direct contradistinction to football stadiums which tend to dominate the skyline. The new Ravens Stadium next to Oriole Park in Baltimore, for example, appears way out of scale in its Camden Yards setting. Whereas, the baseball stadium is virtually unseen from the highway, just another building on the edge of downtown, Ravens stadium, twice as tall as the ball park and not situated within any kind of grid, stands as an behemoth completely undermining the architectural feat of the earlier park.

"post-Fordist" economy is competition among municipalities. Because capital no longer locks itself into one location as it did during the age of manufacturing, the governments of states, cities and counties are now largely occupied with marketing themselves to both corporations and to professional individuals. One of the most important strategies in this process involves the packaging of a particular place as sui generis. The "big picture" of baseball parks is, in this sense, a type of intentional representation, like the picture on a postcard or tourist brochure. Ballplayers, fans and ushers alike gather to form a visual image of the new downtown. This image often then becomes the centerpiece of a large-scale marketing package beamed on national and international Television and used in state-sponsored videos intended to lure new corporate and tourist dollars to town. It is intended as a transcendent image changing people's knee-jerk responses to a place. "Cleveland, a city on the move" replaces "Cleveland, the mistake by the lake." Jacobs Field replaces Cleveland Stadium. Glass and steel replace concrete. Young, white and upper middle class replaces multi-ethnic and working class.[23]

To reinforce the uniqueness of the venue, to, in a sense, prescript its "character," the Jacobs Fields public relations arm conducts free tours of the stadium, continually making reference to the features of the park that set it apart from all others. Tourguides begin the session by calling visitors' attention to the

[23]These stadiums have also begun to play a central role in luring ballplayers to a team. In an era of largely unrestricted free agency, when most of baseball's elite franchises are able to offer up similar amounts of contractual dollars and signing bonuses, the teams with the best stadiums are winning many of the most important free agent battles. Like high-tech firms which build elaborate gyms and offer large benefit packages to an increasingly mobile work force, baseball corporations find themselves having to provide these kinds of amenities.

stand-alone bleacher section in left field. As I will discuss further in Chapter Three, the section is a very prominent and witty duplication of "originality." Clearly gesturing back to the bleachers in such places as Wrigley Park in Chicago, this section was designed to be the most "authentic" in the park, a place where patrons would be more free to generate certain oppositional cultural forms of the past — spontaneous cheering and jeering, the behavior of exiles — intended to identify Clevelanders as creative and down to earth, "true" baseball fans. To underline the signifying capital of the bleachers in a former industrial town like Cleveland, I only need to point out a particular feature of the new football stadium being erected where the old one used to stand. Architects are actually creating a replica of the "Dog Pound," the end zone bleacher section where, during Browns games in the 1980s, a rowdy group of passionate fans painted themselves up like dogs, chewed on bones and, most importantly, barked insults at opponents. The "Dog Pound," during a time when Cleveland's downtown was busy reconstituting itself as a site of white collar service and trade, provided weekly nationally-televised images of the "true" Cleveland — blue collar, passionate and "real." Even though ticket prices will exclude most members of the city's working classes, the new "Dog Pound" will be re-articulated in order to provide Clevelanders with visual assurance that they still have a unique identity, that they are somehow different from citizens of Jacksonville or Charlotte — nouveau riche sunbelt towns which also were recently awarded N.F.L. franchises.[24]

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[24] I should note here that Indians' management argues again and again that Jacobs Field is not a

Recognizing the crucial symbolic content of these new stadiums, we can begin to understand why cities invest so much money in facilities for athletic spectacle. As the population and, indeed, the essence of a place become increasingly mobile, gestures of "rooting" become progressively more important for the post-modern subject. In a predominantly manufacturing economy, it was not uncommon for several generations of men and women in the same family to live in the same neighborhood and to work in the same place.[25] Conversely, in a "post-Fordist" economy, the status of being middle class is clearly inflected with the simultaneous privilege and mandate of geographic and occupational mobility. These kinds of mobility — having the flexibility to change jobs or cities — often determines the degree of success a person realizes in the modern corporate world. Thus connection to a sports franchise can quickly earn the modern subject a degree of psychic rootedness even as his or her professional life continues to demand mobility. Different from opera houses, parks and other traditional public works designed for the gathering of large audiences, stadiums create an atmosphere of approximated tribalism. Fans, who more and more lack a common history, join together for a common purpose — rooting for the home team.

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"retro" park. Ignoring the obvious signs of "retro-authenticity" — the exposed steel beams, the Victorian numbers and letters on signs, the omni-present photographs of classic American ballparks, the asymmetrical playing dimensions, etc. — Dibiasio and others seem rather invested in claiming absolute uniqueness. They hold onto this notion largely from a desire to not be seen as having merely replicated Camden Yards. Of course, they make this claim because the logic of late capitalism requires that each new product be interpreted as "new and improved." See Vattimo for a good discussion of the necessity of late capitalist enterprises to continually trump the past.

[25] For an excellent description and argument against "post-Fordist' geographical mobility, see Sanders.

Similarly, the world they inhabit — the post-modern physical world — is itself defined by flux and flexibility. Architecture needs to be more ephemeral, more able to shape-shift in order to meet a more rapidly changing consumer aesthetic. For this reason, malls (the primary form of suburban public space) now get "face-lifts" every decade or so to account for increasingly dynamic popular tastes. Perhaps largely as a response to these general trends toward a new dynamism, retro stadiums are constructed to signify something more enduring. A stadium with its very roots in antiquity, naturally offers up an image of continuity. It is, by its very nature, massive and open. Thus, exposed steel trusses, like the imposing brick arches of the Roman Coliseum, advertise to passersby the awesome staying power of the present regime. Strip malls and jobs may come and go, but this central symbol of civic cohesion will endure. In this way we can see how the "retro-authenticity" of the contemporary stadium movement adds cultural value to new projects. Inflections of the past allow stadiums to prefabricate their own history, to be dressed up to look old and consequentially more established and enduring.[26]

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[26] The Ballpark in Arlington Texas, in many ways, epitomizes the role of a ballpark in "creating" location. Arlington Stadium, the original home of the Rangers which the Ballpark replaced, was a refurbished minor league stadium forming a part of an amusement park complex including "Six Flags Over Texas." Located on a highway halfway in between Dallas and Fort Worth, Arlington was originally nothing but the amusement complex on an empty plain. However, throughout the 70s and 80s, an edge city of strip malls and hotels emerged around the park. Thus the decision to build an "urban" park in this rather non-urban location has to give one pause. In order to compensate for its "contextually-challenged" nature, architects endowed the park with characteristics allowing it to replicate Yankee Stadium. Perhaps most striking in this regard is its elaborate Ranger Hall of Fame which apes the famous one in the Bronx ballpark. In contrast to the Yankees, the Rangers are, after all, a team without much of a history, having been moved from Washington in 1972, and one without a city, playing their games on a spot off a highway ramp.

Additionally, as part of their efforts to "locate" or "root" these new old buildings, architects often employ witty postmodern idioms, accentuating structural or ornamental details that help relate retro stadiums specifically to elements of the city's past. For example, in Cleveland, architects designed floodlight poles intended to remind visitors of the massive steel mills, now closed, just across the Cuyahoga River from the stadium. Relics of Cleveland's great industrial age, these white steel structures advertise the significant changes occurring in the post-industrial city. The same steel that once supported the massive tresses covering the great furnaces where thousands labored daily now holds up lights illuminating the central recreational pursuit of the new downtown. Once, downtown Cleveland was the site of large-scale feats of production. Now, it caters to the masses largely as the site of recreational consumption: a contrast which punctuates the kind of fantasy investing retro stadiums with much of their appeal. Downtown is no longer a place where the average person breaks his or her back, day after day feeding the infernal furnaces of the steel mills. Instead, it is a place where the erstwhile oppressive raw materials are now used to provide *pleasure*. As the status of Cleveland has changed, from one based on production to one based on recreational consumption, the venue housing its most popular recreational pursuit needs to commemorate or fetishize this important symbol of the past. In mini-vans assembled in Mexico out of steel products fired in Germany, Jacobs patrons cross the Cuyahoga from the distant suburbs, looking

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So clearly a large part of the park's 'significance' is that it helps make Arlington seem like a 'real'

for an experience at least accented with the authenticity of the epoch of production.

This crucial tension between consuming and producing informs a great many of the detailing choices in the new old stadiums. Cleveland's ballpark is virtually packed to the rafters underneath the light poles with manifold relics of the past accentuating the "authenticity" of a passing age of production. The post-modern package includes expressed steel beams, analogue clocks, and copious displays of black and white photographs — objects with obsolete exchange value and/or forms of the "anti-technological." These symbols promote a fetishization of the past at the expense of the present and as such allow patrons to be "tourists" to their past lives, or at least to the lives of their parents. The operating logic of such tourism is metonymy, or the replacement of experience with commemorative items. Like corsages kept pressed in photo albums, the various relics of an earlier era serve as souvenirs of the original experience. Thus, like so many postmodern mementos, they are invested with the promise of narrowing the gap between the status of contemporary consumers pitched into hyper-speed reality and an imagined pre-commodified self. For example, the momentary struggle involved in reading an analogue clock provides nanoseconds of relief and reassurance. A small act of renunciation, it enables sensations of a self which existed prior to the technological present. It also allows for a small-scale psychic subversion of the middle class' increasingly techno-consumerist ethos and the attendant promise of

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place instead of just another suburban weigh-station or edge-city.

greater and greater ease. This kind of subversion is made necessary by the changing nature of middle-class work in downtown America. White collar work, while saving the body from abuse, deprives the modern subject of many acts of creation associated with manual labor. Therefore, items such as analogue clocks and "hand-held" scoreboards, reminiscent of an age when men and women toiled, are seen as an essential features of these new parks.[27]

Understanding the compensatory nature of an item like the manually-operated scoreboard is crucial in thinking about the role of the ballpark in a rapidly changing city. Retro ballparks facilitate the shift from the "Fordist" city to the "post-Fordist" city by providing a host of 'urbanesque' cultural forms. From the creation of a sense of regional variation, to architectural gestures highlighting the uniqueness of a particular location, to simulated urban promenades and the injection of thousands of relics or souvenirs of a previous order, these stadiums offer a link to an increasingly elided past which is nonetheless perceived to be more stable and authentic than the present. In the next section, I will continue to examine this link by discussing the "big picture" stadium event as modern bourgeois carnival. By doing so, I will extend my argument about authenticity from the material to the behavioral.

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[27] A "hand-held" scoreboard is a manually-operated scoreboard usually situated on an outfield wall. A live human being sits in a well behind the scoreboard, manually changing runs, hits, and errors. Perhaps the most famous of these scoreboards still in operation is found in the "Green Monster" of Fenway Park.

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Clearly, a key element in the experience of attending a game in these simulated old fashioned environments is the ability to rehearse or release oppositional sentiment to many of the more problematic elements of the "post-Fordist" downtown. For example, many patrons choose to sit in the bleachers, a section self consciously coded with the outsider erotic of carnival as I'll discuss in more detail in Chapter Three. For now however it is enough to recognize that most sit in this section because, distant and segregated from the rest of the park, they earn access to less-regulated forms of release. In the bleachers, fans feel more free to shout down opponents' outfielders, deride figures of authority in the form of umpires, managers and team owners, and belittle the representations of the aristocratic order sitting comfortably behind the glassed in partitions of the stadium restaurant and the corporate luxury boxes. Yet, an equal and opposite attraction of new ballparks is the creation (or at least the illusion) of absolute safety and order without which a critical mass of suburban patrons could not be convinced to come downtown. "The big picture" thus requires abundant forms of simultaneous tolerance and control — large scale and well coordinated — in order to enable patrons to enact something akin to carnival and simultaneously contain it as a harmless tourist attraction.[28]

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[28] The ideas of Peter Stalleybrass and Allon White, two pioneers in contemporary thinking about carnival, are central here. In their 1983 article "Bourgeois Hysteria and the Carnivalesque," they discuss the late 19th century transformation of the Nice Carnival. After it was taken over by a 'comité des Fetes,' it was contained and marketed as a tourist attraction for the increasing numbers

But before I begin to examine the details of the experience which endow the ballpark with the potential for inversion of certain social norms, I need to describe how the "in process" status of the Gateway area enables carnival in the first place. To begin this description, I should first point out just how the vocational structure of the surrounding corporate office buildings is mirrored in the stadium. By day during the season, hundreds of Cleveland's low wage laborers work behind the scenes, cutting the grass, cooking the meals and polishing the seats. Like the janitorial night shift in office buildings, this crew of mostly African-American employees remains largely invisible — cleaning ghosts and goblins who, as if by miracle, enable the place to maintain its sterling appearance. Meanwhile, at night when the place comes alive, a virtual army of mostly white part-time employees smiles at fans as they arrive at their seats, sells hot dogs, dances on the dugout with the Indians' mascot, and waits on the patrons of the corporate boxes. This striking contrast between the visible and the invisible world provides fertile ground for carnival. The nighttime whiteness of the stadium scene, in an area which for thirty years was the darkest of places in the imagination of suburban Clevelanders, creates the liminal. Thus, we can see how the Gateway, for a whole generation a symbol of urban decay and danger, first the site of race riots, then home to open air drug markets, boarded up buildings, and a

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who spent time on the Riviera and who were finding neighboring San Remo's new casino a bigger draw. Like most contemporary critics since Bahktin, Stalleybrass and White no longer see modern life as replete of carnival. Rather than interpreting attacks on carnival (first repression, then middle class co-optation) as pure victories over it, they "discover the forms, symbols, rituals and structures of carnival to be among the fundamental elements of the aesthetics of modernism."

smattering of low-scale legal businesses, bridges the dual worlds of the legitimate and illegitimate, the alive and the dead, the decaying and the gentrifying, the black and the white. As such, it simultaneously keeps alive the energy of the vanquished and works to replace it.

In fact the Gateway gets much of its cultural cachet from the fact that the past remains always partially visible. On game nights, rows of Cleveland's police can be seen pushing panhandlers and others left behind by gentrification barely out of view. It is a scene reminiscent of the many used for comical effect in the 1997 film *Men in Black* when the Will Smith character, suddenly able to see the dangerous world as it is, now and again turns his laser gun in the direction of an alien being who had theretofore gone unnoticed. That is to say, patrons who arrive on the Gateway scene for the first time witness time and again background visions of policemen just barely beating back threats of the urban that they have become accustomed to fantasizing about via news reports and movies depicting dangerous city streets. Now however, because the Gateway is in the process of gentrification, these patrons can have it both ways: they can enjoy contact with the danger of the city while maintaining a safe distance from it. Suburban fantasies of the city are reinforced as visitors watch cops sweep remnants of the old Gateway into dark alleys next to old check-cashing shops whose signs have been painted over by newly-arrived corporate chains. However, in many cases a fresh coat of paint only partially covers up the old lettering. This partial visibility

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This is Stalleybrass' and White's main contribution to my project, registering some of the

of the "darkness" of the past invests the space with an aura of black magic. This aura in turn codes the location as "urban." Without this "edge" provided by the location's liminality, the Gateway would feel just like "another cookie-cutter shopping mall."[29]

So, rather than simply making the more threatening elements of the past disappear, the Indians organization shrewdly finds ways to manage the crucial tension. To describe how it does this, I first need to detail its hiring practices. Carefully choosing front-line employees who project management's notion of a positive image is the first step in providing balance to the excitement and the attendant terror of the urban. "We really look for those applicants who have good communication skills and appearance (because) you'll go back to where you feel comfortable," says Dibiasio commenting on the process by which the organization whittles down the original pool of 10 thousand applicants for 2,500 game night jobs. His words clearly point out how a careful orchestration of the class and racial makeup of the staff is part of the "big picture." "We look for just the right college kid" who passes a background check and gives off a "courteous, clean-cut appearance." The Indians fill the majority of their visible positions with part-time, largely summer-only workers; they then not only encourage, but demand, these workers to comport themselves at all times in a "cheery and helpful"

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"displacements" of the carnivalesque into bourgeois discourse like art and psychoanalysis.

[29] This term comes from Lonnie Wheeler's, *Bleachers: A Summer In Wrigley Field.* In Chapter Three, I describe Wheeler's efforts to escape the monotony of suburban life via a prolonged trip to the Cubs' hallowed grounds.

manner.[30] It is crucial to note that in contradistinction to the ushers and vendors at the old Cleveland Stadium — a notoriously surly lot comprising primarily moonlighting men and career service workers — the staff at Jacobs Field takes these jobs as a form of luxury. They work because their small salaries provide most of them with a bit more disposable income to spend at college. But, even more important, they work because their job gives them status and access, a chance to be part of the Indians team, a chance for a role in the "big picture."[31]

Yet a cheery, elective and white work force is only part of the package the organization puts together to insulate customers from remnants of the dark city. Crowd control was one of the major "priorities of the 'big picture' from the very beginning," says Dibiasio, proudly describing an impressive plan for maintaining order not just inside the stadium, but in the surrounding Gateway as well. He tells how surveillance begins the moment one enters the stadium area. As part of the ballclub's agreement with the city, 50 extra police officers patrol the Gateway beginning an hour and ½ or so before the gates open. That number of officers in a roughly 30 acre area means that, at virtually no time can one be outside the sight of at least one patroller. Thus, stadium activities traditionally carried out by a more marginal population — scalping tickets and panhandling — are eliminated or at least contained.

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[30] These words are Dibiasio's.

[31] Shelly Perkins, the hotel clerk quoted in my introduction, reinforced this notion when asked about her motivation for moonlighting at Jacobs Field: "I don't need the money," she said. "It's fun. It's just so much fun to be a part of everything."

Significant in this regard is the fact that in Cleveland, as in most cities with new downtown stadiums, team management has joined with local law enforcement agencies to create a "scalp-free zone." In this cordoned off area, patrons can resell their extra tickets at face value under the watchful eye of a few plainclothed and uniformed police officers. This virtually eliminates scalping, or the resale of a ticket for profit, as police have been granted probable cause justification for arresting anyone selling outside the marked area. The effects or this are several. First, it protects the corporation's investment, guaranteeing to the club the ability to regulate prices of tickets bought both legally and illegally. Second, it eliminates a source of revenue for a segment of the urban dispossessed. Typically, as a symbolic gesture to the community, and in an effort to regain the African-American market (a group of potential consumers whose interest in baseball has virtually dried up during the course of the past half century as I discuss in Chapter Four), ball clubs will set aside about a thousand free tickets per game for inner city youth. A common sight in the past decade or so has thus been groups of African-American teenagers and young adults selling complimentary tickets at ballparks constructed in what had been their neighborhoods. By replacing these renegade entrepreneurs, the ball club, in effect, attempts to co-opt an important form of urban carnival.

Creating "scalp free zones," contemporary baseball management replaces ad-hoc open air markets with a 'public' space subject to the control and discipline of the state apparatus. While the basic activities remain the same, peddling and

negotiating, the element of transgression has been severely short-circuited. Like the myriad fairs and markets brought under bureaucratic bourgeois control in Western public culture during the past couple hundred years, the underworld economy of the scalping market around the stadium is contained and repackaged as a tourist attraction.[32] No longer a renegade activity performed by marginal members of the urban economy, "scalping" now simply serves as an auxiliary form of ticket distribution for the organization. Yet these zones still maintain residual liminality, gesturing back to the thrilling *sport* of ticket acquisition prior to their invention. In its heyday, scalping produced an inverted economic order, where the poor and racially marginalized held all the cards, where the value of a dollar was a product of a person's skills and savvy, a matter of barter rather than state and market-managed fiat. Ballpark scalping reenacted a more fluid, bartering economy, when goods were sold under the table so that the state could not impose taxes. Thus, the creation of residual forms of these markets *by* the organization displays how, in a modern bourgeois state the impulse for and the motive forces of carnival remain intact, yet its realization can be appropriated by witty agents of the more legitimatized segment of the capitalist world.

Scalp free zones have become so popular in fact that they are now a precondition for some ball clubs agreeing to move to downtown arenas. In arguing for the creation of a such an area near the new MCI Center in downtown

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[32] Again, Stalleybrass and White's description of the transformation of the Nice Carnival seems an appropriate analogue. In their essay, however, they also describe similar attempts to contain underworld and carnival economies at Bartholemew Fair and Donneybrooke.

Washington, for example, *Washington Post* family values columnist Bob Levey lamented that he had received dozens of letters from fathers of families who had been "harassed by aggressive scalpers as they walked to the entrances" of other area stadiums (par. 9). He urged the management of the Washington Capitals and Wizards to "designate an area, hang a sign and watch smiles form — lots of smiles" (par. 14). Levey's concerns are quite representative of the buzz generated in anticipation of the opening of the sports facility. Like Jacobs Field, the arena is the centerpiece of redevelopment catering to a primarily affluent and white recreational crowd in an area which had been almost exclusively poor and black. Thus it should come as no surprise that much of the pre-opening night discourse in Washington focused on questions about the safety of the urban location for suburban visitors. Intense surveillance outside the stadium, Levey implies, is the only way to negotiate the tension caused by a neighborhood in transition. He insists that police officers "lurk nearby to be sure no one 'accidentally' forgets the face-value-only rule or fails to mind his manners" (par. 10).

Absent from Levey's analysis however is any kind of recognition of the social value of carnival for the elite themselves. The underworld economy of scalping is, to a large degree, the one way that much of the local population would have been allowed to benefit from the construction of this large, crowded arena in their neighborhood. History has shown that tolerance of a degree of underworld activity indeed helps to manage resentment and anger of those on the economic margins of society — a lesson especially important in the area near the arena

which still has not recovered from the race riots of the late 1960s. Nonetheless, Levey's fear of the city is extremely representative of the demand on the part of consumers for reassurance that they are being looked after when they enter the liminal world of urban reconstruction: his vision of surveillance and appropriated carnival quite possibly a metaphor for the American downtown in the new millenium.

In Cleveland, this new urban standard of surveillance as paternal reassurance takes on an added, impressive technological dimension. Instead of tearing tickets, each gate usher passes the entering patron's ticket in front of a scanner that collects data for the corporation. This system, which Dibiasio believes is the first of its kind, allows the Indians' marketing team to track zip codes for future sales use since most tickets are bought with credit cards. It also allows them to keep track of use patterns of its individual patrons and it virtually eliminates counterfeiting. The symbolic content, however, is just as important. The technology one encounters when entering the ballpark advertises pretty plainly that the Indian's security detail has its act together, both protecting patrons from the unsavory elements lurking in the surrounding dangerous landscape and further discouraging their own transgressive behavior. The "electronic eye" helps patrons negotiate their ambivalence about being downtown; yet, it also makes them acutely conscious that the state is watching *them*. Like Foucault's panopticon, the stadium's system of surveillance regulates its subjects

efficiently by prompting an internalized belief in the ubiquity of the state apparatus. [33]

This panoptic mode of crowd control continues on after patrons pass the infrared turnstiles. Inside the stadium, the Indians' security force amounts to a well-coordinated and formidable army. The stadium's management arm, the "Baseball Management Company," employs more than 2,000 part-time workers per game. Three ushers occupy each entrance to the seating sections and several corporate managers with clipboards and two-way radios shuttle from section to section for quality control. Additionally, 34 ushers, a host of security guards and four Cleveland police officers perform a well-choreographed bunker maneuver at every stoppage of play. Between every half inning, whenever there is a pitching change, or if a manager calls time-out to talk with his pitcher, the security force moves with the precision of a team of infielders attempting to cover a double steal attempt. One of the three ushers from the entrance level sprints down to the first row where he or she assumes a position with his or her back to the field. There, joined by a security guard in every couple of sections, he or she pans the stands

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[33] In addition to panoptic methods of *crowd* control, Indians management employs technologies aimed at helping its *workers* internalize surveillance. Once an employee has been hired, his or her performance is closely monitored and recorded via a comprehensive computer program. Each employee enters in a key card when arriving at work allowing management to carefully monitor attendance and arrival habits. Someone who shows up habitually late will find his or her hours cut short, or dropped all together. Yet, this discipline is meted out anonymously. The managers don't directly tell people their schedules. Instead, employees call a voice-mail system to find out when they are to report to work. Impersonal discipline in an atmosphere of implied surveillance keeps employees walking the straight and narrow and leaves them isolated from fellow workers and without human contact to express grievances. The message is of course that, if they find their hours cut short, they have no one to blame but themselves because the computer program acts only objectively. See Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* for a description of how the modern

looking to head off trouble. On the field, the bullpen gates and the camera well gates swing open and four police and security guards emerge to survey the stands from field level. This level of ocular vigilance, originally employed only at championship events at the end of games to discourage fans from rushing the field to celebrate with players, has now become so systematic that its presence is internalized by the average patron. The modern stadium fan is simply being watched full time.

Nonetheless, as is the case with any large gathering, occasional transgressive behavior does in fact emerge. On such occasions however, discipline to the perpetrator is meted out swiftly and efficiently. When there is a disturbance, an usher and a police officer quickly round up the participants and bring them to the concourse or to a holding pen in the bowels of the stadium.[34] One of the guiding principles among members of the security force at Jacobs Field is that, if possible, they are not to deal with disturbances in the public eye. "We remove the problem from the general populace," says Dibiasio, and therefore work toward the creation of an illusion of absolute safety. This illusion is a crucial one within the 'big picture." It is necessary that security never be perceived as a problem given that the club wants to create a safe or suburbanized experience in a

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bourgeoisie has internalized methods of control and surveillance enacted by the panopticon in prisons.

[34] Each modern stadium now comes equipped with either a holding pen or even a police substation. In this age of increasingly efficient discipline, a person can now go straight from a box seat to custody without every leaving the stadium. This efficiency and concealment allows for no "perp" walks which would paint a dangerous picture of the stadium scene for television viewers. In general, the emergence of police stations within stadiums seems to point to the increasing symbiosis of private capital and public law enforcement in the late millennium.

dangerous or urban setting. In order to attract the same people who fled the city for the suburbs based on racial panic and fear about the gremlins of urban life, the same folks who patronize enclosed, air-conditioned malls instead of browsing urban storefronts, the club must carefully preserve the illusion.[35]

Indeed, according to Dibiasio, choreographing what the patron *sees* from the moment he or she enters the Gateway area was among the first priorities for management when they moved to the new park. "We incorporated the city. We needed the mayor and police chief. Visually, we got bright lights and wider streets." These "bright lights and wider streets" as well as the massive police presence and the cadre of ushers, security guards and friendly vendors are all intended as important visual reminders that, despite lingering danger, the Indians' corporation has everything under control. The liminal nature of the Gateway, its 'in-process' status of a place being transformed from darkness to light, dangerous alleys to well illuminated thoroughfares, scalping to "scalp-free," prosititution to baseball, requires a coordinated management of conceptions about safety. Through the provision of symbolic images of state power and "off-screen" oriented crowd control, Indians management seeks desperately to reassure patrons that they are safe.[36]

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[35] Susan Willis, *Inside the Mouse*, particularly in her chapter entitled "The Family Vacation," describes the intense ocular vigilance at Disney. Ironically, Disney's hidden cameras don't stop crimes and violence from occurring but do allow corporate security teams to rush in and remove the victim quickly from sight therefore preserving the crucial illusion of absolute safety in the Mouse's utopia.

[36] Dibiasio's use of the term "incorporated" is extremely provocative. Increasingly in the "post-Fordist" city, local governments have become service providers for corporations. In the older regulation model, local governments worked as checks on corporate power and abuse. Now city

But of course, regulation is only half the story. Management is shrewd enough to understand that patrons who are increasingly regulated by informational and surveying technology at work come to the park for release. Thus, a large part of the "big picture" consists of the creation of a fair or "big top" space highlighting the benevolent and recreational virtues of the very technology that in other contexts, inside the park and outside, oppresses them. In the outfield promenade for example, a fan can pitch a virtual reality batting practice session or take swings at a computer-generated Roger Clemons fast ball. For twenty dollars, the same fan can sit in an authentic broadcast booth and do play by play for a half inning of an actual ball game. So, along with the employment of oppressive forms of technological surveillance, the modern stadium enables fans to see technology as leisure rather than work. As such, it enacts carnival by producing an environment in which patrons can mock the world of productivity by turning cutting-edge technology into a game. These games themselves turn topsy-turvy the binaries of spectator/participant, player/fan, broadcaster/viewer.[37]

Jacobs Field also enacts the dynamics of carnival by cultivating a tension between control and release. The park (just like most sports stadiums) convenes large gatherings of people then asks them to behave both passionately, when rooting, and calmly, when paying attention to rules of crowd control. Just like on

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politicians largely focus on working *for* private investment by expanding the urban infrastructure and coordinating urban renewal, as well as by granting tax breaks and other direct financial incentives for investment. For more on this shift, see Mayer.

[37] In *Amusing the Million*, John Kasson makes a similar argument about roller coasters and the appeal of Coney Island at end of the 19th century. For workers who increasingly toiled at large

the field, where players in every sport are asked to perform a dance of control and aggression, fundamental play and pure physicality, fans are implored both to act respectfully toward others and to lose control, to "MAKE SOME NOISE!" in support of their team.[38] The stadium event gives the audience a chance to loudly express pleasure and displeasure, to yell for mythical heroes and to shout down authorities. The many walls and screens separating the playing field from the stands serve as dynamic thresholds marking the distinction between synchronized team play and the unruliness of a mob; at other times, however, the dynamics are reversed. These walls also are able to help separate the brutishness of professional athletes who periodically engage in brawls, cussing matches or forms of rude gesticulation from the fan who has the power to condemn this behavior.[39]

In fact there are few other public spaces that consistently offer such meaty juxtapositions of discipline and excess, the precision of a well-executed double play and the sloppiness and unpredictability of a crowd or a brawl. When for example, "Morganna the Kissing Bandit," her enormous breasts barely concealed underneath a skin tight, low-cut wet t-shirt, hopped on the field a few years ago to plant a lipstick-smudged kiss on the cheek of Cal Ripken, Jr., the symbolism was unmistakable. Ironman Ripken, the ultimate symbol of regularity, fundamentals

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machines, the thrill of using a big machine for frivolous enjoyment would have been tremendous. See page 8.

[38] This phrase comes from the video scoreboards located around Jacobs Field. It flashes during crucial moments of games when Indians' management wants the fans to cheer in unison.

[39] In Chapter Four I discuss the implications of white condemnation of black "showboating."

and steadfastness was confronted by the barely submerged eroticism of sport.[40] Morganna and the dozens of streakers who periodically interrupt games should be commended for bringing onto the level of discourse the obvious, yet under-discussed, latent sexuality of the game. Morganna's abnormally large breasts are simply a female version of the grotesquely large male genitalia signified by jockey cups bulging out of players' uniforms. The performance of naked men dashing across the field, fleeing police officers and players alike, strangely parallels all the touching, butt-slapping and tackling among men so much a part of sports' homo-erotic appeal.[41]

Yet, even Morganna, a frequent visitor to baseball stadiums over the past two decades whose periodic violations of the sanctity of the proscenium arch have traditionally been met with a response ranging from the bemused chuckles of the ushers and police who haul her off to the wild laughter of fans, would not be able to make her way past the elaborate security detail at Jacob's Field. Because the crowd control apparatus needs to be strong enough at "The Jake" to provide reassurance about fan safety and because the shift upward in audience socio-economic demographics has eliminated a large percentage of the unruly fan base, the atmosphere at the park is always at issue. Without Morganna, or at least

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[40] Cal Ripken Jr. in 1995 broke Lou Gehrig's record for consecutive games played. By the time he voluntarily ended the streak during the final week of the 1998 season, Ripken had not missed a game in an amazing seventeen years. In Chapter Four, I treat the cultural meaning of Ripken, relative to race, in more detail.

[41] The heyday of streaking seems to have occurred in the mid 1970s. Today, for a variety of reasons, some of which include television stations' refusal to show these acts of transgression and a more general trend away from the public, "free love" ethos of the era, streaking at professional baseball games seems to occur less frequently.

without the forms of spontaneous carnival she represents, the new park is constantly in danger of being deprived of the energy and edge historically associated with sporting arenas.[42]

Thus, Indians management has learned to script carnival. Ultimately, a huge component of the "big picture" is the packaging of a steady stream of replacement forms of excessive release. Indians management has created and continues to create a variety of cultural forms intended to reintroduce the energy of the urban, and indeed of sport itself, which its elaborate system of surveillance and discipline has, perhaps at times, too successfully eviscerated. Henceforth, a primary focus of this dissertation will be a description and reading of these supplementary cultural forms.

In Chapter Three for example, I will describe the role of the faux 'working-class' bleacher section in creating Dibiasio's "big picture." I will detail how the clever ocular arrangement of the park allows bleacher patrons to psychically pit themselves against the members of the ballpark 'elite' perched in luxury sky boxes and the fancy club restaurant. This arrangement allows bleacher patrons the chance to experience an aspect of carnival — the thrill of being on the outside looking in — typically unavailable to the members of the American middle class. The pleasure of sitting in the bleachers is not unlike that of watching a particular video scene played several times per game on the Jumbotron

[42] Dibiasio does readily acknowledge that a frequent criticism of the park is that it is too yuppie and staid, that it lacks a real baseball "atmosphere." He believes though that the various attractions at Jacobs Field more than compensate.

showing upper deck, cheap seat patrons of other ballparks pouring beer on the head of wealthier fans in the lower boxes. This behavior of course would not be tolerated at Jacobs Field but, in televisual form, the image pays homage to the release of class-based hostilities so much a part of stadium culture in general and bleacher culture in particular. Similarly, in Chapter Four, I'll examine in detail the racial implications of commodified carnival. I'll provide a reading of Slider, the ball club's enormous purple mascot who patrols the park performing sexualized set pieces. Slider mock fondles ushers and dances the "Freak" seventies-style to the music of K.C. and the Sunshine band pressing pelvises with a scantily-clad teenage girl during the seventh-inning stretch. Slider's presence partially gives shape to forms of eroticism repressed by both the dominance of the nuclear family and an increasingly litigious society. His provocative dance with the teenager allows for the articulation of one of American culture's greatest — and hence most pornographized — taboos: the sexualized, under-age female. His costume and act also link him inexorably to popular conceptions of the African-American male teenager. His tilted sideways baseball cap, untied basketball shoes and large gold chains, along with his various dance routines to hip-hop music blasted over the stadium's loudspeakers, helps him embody white projections of the black male sexuality and violence.[43]

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[43] Interestingly enough, Slider was conceived of as a politically-correct gesture toward Native American groups. Slider as Indians mascot replaced the ubiquitous face of "Chief Wahoo," the diabolical trickster Indian figure featured on the club's caps. Nonetheless, the continued presence of the Chief's devilish grin and impossibly red face, on caps and other Indians' gear and posters, simultaneously encapsulates and contains fear about the other. This particular fear was of course first embodied on the continent by Native Americans, but now is taking the form of the countless

Slider thus helps invests the new "urban" space with the hip qualities and coolness of "blackness." In an area of the city which is being bleached white, this cultural form has obvious cachet as a replacement for vanishing urban subculture. In short, as a central feature of a culture that has attempted to systematically suppress or at least appropriate carnival, in a setting that is clearly "in-process" from decay to gentrification, the liminal or subcultural reemerges nightly as a central element of the "big picture."

So it should be clear that one of the primary reasons fans flock to the new ballpark is that the Gateway helps them negotiate the tension caused by an 'in-process' downtown. The Gateway was black, but is now becoming white; it was working class, or more recently, poverty-stricken, but is now becoming upscale; it was gritty and real, but is now hyperreal. As I continue to move through this project, I will explore further the use of subcultural images in easing the transition to a gentrified downtown. In other words, I will show how the "big picture" which transforms the stadium experience for baseball fans is representative of a kind of "theming" involved in the creation of the entire downtown experience for visitors. The Gateway, intended as a faux historical reference to a non-existent port or subsection of national or international commerce, indeed signifies

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other races which have immigrated to America this century. Like Charlie Chan or "Pedro" the lazy, genial, yet sly mascot of the "South of the Border" theme park in South Carolina, Chief Wahoo both articulates white fear about dark skin and helps to contain it through the power of comic representation.

'threshold.' However, it is not a threshold of goods and services, but rather one which links the past and future, emergent to dominant culture.[44]

Meanwhile, in my next chapter, I will begin to discuss Jacobs Field as a historical inevitability. For over a century, since the very inception of "urban planning" as a discursive subject, urban reformers have debated the role of baseball facilities in managing a similar set of tensions to those being worked out in the Gateway. From the time of the first enclosed ballpark in mid 19th century Brooklyn through the present era of the retro stadium, engineers, architects, and management have been deriving strategies to simultaneously provide social insulation for wealthier fans and encourage and contain oppositional or transgressive forms of behavior among the less well-to-do.

[44] For definitions of emergent and dominant cultures, see Williams, *Culture and Society*.

## *Chapter* 2
## The "*Beneficient*" Revolution

In a 1995 article describing the design of Jacobs Field, architecture critic Heidi Landecker joins a chorus of voices praising the park (64). She comments how, replacing cavernous and drafty multi-purpose Cleveland Stadium, the sterling new downtown ballpark has brought baseball back to an intimate setting. Seating about 45,000 fans instead of 85,000, putting patrons closer to the action, the new venue, she writes, is warm and friendly whereas the old one was cold and alienating. She applauds the park's designer, HOK Sport's Joseph Spear, for including a host of witty accents of Cleveland's past — expressed steel beams echoing the many steel bridges still visible from the ballpark; the ochre color of its bricks reminiscent of the 1912 West Side Market across the Cuyahoga River; a tall, vertical concourse recalling the Arcade, the nation's first shopping mall still standing a few blocks away. Though in theory she supports Spear's argument that Jacobs Field is not a retro park, not simply a "knock off" of the same architect's Camden Yards built a few years earlier in Baltimore, Landecker organizes all of her praise around descriptions of the many features of the park recalling old Cleveland.

Yet despite the fact that it endows the new location with "authenticity," the "old" seems to carry some classist baggage for Landecker, ultimately bringing her to qualify her praise. In the final paragraph of her piece she mentions what she and other critics view as the park's one major flaw: "the definitive segregation of the Indians' wealthy fans and those in the stands."

> A restaurant for club members might have been discretely tucked out of sight; instead, its glassy, terraced volume hangs ostentatiously over left field. Perhaps such class stratification is also true of Cleveland, long a society of extremely wealthy patrons and blue-collar factory workers. Baseball, after all, is for everyone, and today everyone can enjoy it in the style that he or she can afford.

Landecker's comments seem oddly bifurcated here. On one hand, she laments the symbolism of the overhanging restaurant; the Cleveland wealthy ostentatiously advertise their privilege when they sit in the gaudy glass club looming over the grandstands. On the other hand, she casually dismisses this inequity by suggesting a certain kind of natural justice in the Cleveland caste system. The biggest problem, she asserts, is not the gap between rich and poor, but that, in the stadium, the injustice of capital isn't "discreetly tucked out of sight." In other words, the club restaurant ruins the illusion — or at least the utopian fantasy —

articulated in the passage's final sentence, that contemporary baseball is somehow fulfilling its destiny as the "great American democratic game."[1]

The abrupt truncation of her critique is in many ways a product of middle-class American longing for democratic public space combined with the historical power of baseball to generate narratives describing urban ballparks as precisely these kinds of sites. Landecker's quick shift makes it clear that certain obvious truths about baseball's reality in relation to its mythology are simply too threatening to integrate. The fact is, baseball is *not* for everyone. On the field during the past twenty years, the percentage of African-Americans playing the game has dropped precipitously; and although Major League teams have progressively added more Latino (and now Japanese) players to their rosters, baseball's audience is, more than any time in its history, overwhelmingly white.[2] Furthermore, as Landecker must realize, skyrocketing ticket prices at new ballparks like Jacobs Field have contributed to the virtual exclusion of most members of the American working classes.[3] The particular "style" of baseball

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[1] Throughout the chapter, I will refer this particular description of baseball. It comes originally from A.G. Spalding, who in 1911, as President of the major leagues, included it prominently in his bombastic and largely apocryphal, *America's National Game*. On several occasions in the book, Spalding refers to baseball using this particular inflated locution. For a discussion of the propaganda campaign led by the former player, owner and president, also see Levine.

[2] For a discussion of these trends, see Starr 56-7.

[3] Cleveland is the only ballpark in the majors which sells out every game as soon as tickets go on sale in the off-season. Although individuals do manage to get tickets here and there, for the most part, one has to buy a season-ticket plan or a partial plan of twenty games or so in order to get to see a game. Bleacher tickets, as of 1998, cost $12. Multiply that by two (because most people buy tickets in pairs) then again by twenty, or the minimum number of games in a package, you get $480. Add in $10 to park per game, and say $18 per game for a couple of hot dogs ($4 each), sodas ($4 each), and a program ($2), and the total comes to over $1,000. Of course, bleacher seats and standing room only tickets sell out within hours after going on sale. The next tier of tickets is almost double that price.

that "everyone" can afford has thus become the style of the television consumer. Those with incomes big enough to allow them to buy season tickets enjoy the comfort and grace of the new park. Everyone else watches the games on the tube. In short, the movement of "retro-authenticity" which has, in the 1990s, produced the series of "warm" parks that Landecker praises, has also reconfigured the ballpark experience in order to shift the stadium economic demographic upward thereby setting up the kinds of troubling juxtaposition she criticizes.[4] Meanwhile, however, the mythology of baseball as the "national pastime," a mythology that informs her optimistic and abrupt tonal shift, perseveres.

In this chapter, I will examine in detail this disconnect. I will argue that Landecker's mixed message is emblematic of over a century of baseball rhetoric attempting to synthesize its own ambitions of being the great democratic game with truths about classist and racist elements of both its own structure and the structure of the larger culture in which it participates. In deconstructing her claim that "baseball is for everyone," I will attempt to explain the psychic necessity of retro stadiums during what I will identify as a time of millennial crisis. Retro stadiums have emerged as central components of the renewing American city in

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[4] I should note that in this piece Landecker joins the chorus of Cleveland city and Indians officials in stating that that Jacobs is not a retro park. She says that "what HOK Sport gave Cleveland is not a knockoff but a whole new ballgame," referring to the many characteristics of the stadium that sets it apart from Camden Yards in Baltimore. Nonetheless, she praises the park specifically for its witty accenting of elements of Cleveland's architectural past. So, perhaps the park is not "retro" in exactly the same way that Camden Yards is; perhaps its designers did not want to create a replica of a 1920s ballpark. However, by inflecting it with so many elements of the past, they clearly capitalized on the cultural value of retro authenticity. Like contemporary fashion designers who create clothes with bell bottoms and wide lapels *accenting* 70s culture but perhaps not entirely *replicating* the older styles, Jacobs Field architects articulate cultural value reliant on

the wake of at least two decades of unprecedented widening of the chasm between rich and poor, when a shift in emphasis from manufacturing to service has left the American middle class subject anxious about his or her contribution to the surrounding physical world. New stadiums in part relieve these anxieties by serving as physical manifestations of anti-modern thought holding 'authentic' experiences to be a source of salvation.[5] They thus both ease patrons' adjustments to a culture defined increasingly by consumption and allow these patrons psychic connection with members of economic classes excluded by the new world order. The most important contemporary symbol of baseball's resiliency and creativity, new urban parks serve as dramatic texts articulating middle class American utopian longings historically invested in the "national pastime."

To underline how the bifurcation of Landecker's response is typical of baseball rhetoric, I will first historicize her comments by examining the nexus of culture and baseball's cultural production. I will look back to the origin of organized baseball in the late 19th century to show how it established a dual pattern of physical exclusion and discursive inclusion. Since that time, when middle class business interests began defining the parameters of the sport, baseball has been able to continually generate and propagate a rhetoric of

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the troping of older forms. Clearly, to patently deny the retro influence of Jacobs Field as she does is disingenuous.

[5] Much of my discussion about middle-class formation in this chapter is informed by T.J. Jackson Lears' *No Place of Grace*. Lears is extremely thorough in describing the anxieties of the emerging American bourgeoisie during the late 19th century when commerce rather than farming or other forms of hands-on production became the biggest part of their daily routine. Throughout this chapter, I will attempt to show how many of these same anxieties are currently being

*inclusiveness* at every moment that it has taken steps to become more exclusive. Thus, we can say that baseball has been remarkably successful through the years at *thinking* itself inclusive, whereby *thinking* has a doubled resonance of *believing* and *making it true through this belief.* In other words, as Landecker's quick tonal shift indicates, the rhetoric of baseball as the "great democratic sport" has made this very axiom come "true," whereby "truth" refers to constructions of reality so ingrained in the American fan's psyche that they overlay and often subvert expressions of dissonance.

Next, after contextualizing her remarks historically, I will turn my attention to the contrast between retro stadiums and the ones they are replacing. Massive multi-purpose venues like Cleveland Stadium, assumed by Landecker and other critics to be black marks on the history of stadium architecture, in fact serve as exceptionally good chronicles of consumption patterns in an era of relative economic parity and stability. By allowing for the inclusion of more fans and by flattening out the range of consumer choices available, older venues like the now demolished one in Cleveland did in fact accommodate a greater degree of ballpark democracy than anything before them. New parks constructed as part of baseball's retro movement, on the other hand, renounce the immediate past in favor of stadium architecture which emerged in an era prior to this one of unprecedented democracy of consumption. They hark back to a time of smaller, more intimate venues built in the first few decades of the twentieth century when

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reenacted in response to the late 20th century transformation of the American economy from one

higher ticket prices relative to average salaries, daytime only games, and in some cases, statutory segregation made them accessible primarily to those in the middle classes and above.[6] They thus shift the center of ballpark appeal from fetishized notions of "equality" to "authenticity." Whereas the multi-purpose stadiums constructed in the middle portion of this century were large enough to accommodate huge crowds, but in a somewhat bland setting, the new parks promise the "warm" architecture of the distant past to a more exclusive audience.[7] Yet, again, as the bifurcation of Landecker's remarks suggests, this shift troubles the contemporary fan on an instinctual level. After all, modern notions of "authenticity" are themselves inflected absolutely with utopian desire for equality. Born as an experiment in democracy, America and its institutions have always produced a rhetoric of equality over privilege even if they have never quite achieved these lofty ambitions. Landecker's dissatisfaction with the iconic segregation of Jacobs Field demonstrates how baseball stadiums have become over-determined signifiers of American democratic potential, at least for the bourgeoisie.

Since their very origins, ballparks have in fact been subtle bourgeois fantasy lands allowing for the rehearsal of oppositional sentiment enabling customers to imagine themselves outside the normative social order. As part of

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based in production to one based on service.

[6] For a description of the construction of the first wave of concrete and steel ballparks in the first three decades of the century, see White, particularly Chapter One, "The Ballparks." See also Gershman's *Diamonds* and Lowry's *Green Cathedrals* for facts related to the construction and use of the parks that retro stadiums are now emulating.

this chapter, I will try to establish how this sense has historically been a constitutive element of class formation in American culture. I will join social historians like T.J. Jackson Lears and Michael Denning in arguing that accompanying industrialization in the late 19th century was a thread of anti-modern, anti-positivist sentiment pervading the American middle and upper classes.[8] Metaphoric quests for baseball titles, physically challenging pursuits like playing the sport, and the widespread promotion of recreational activity as valuable preparation for artificial war in board rooms and markets were secularized forms of ennobling pursuits harking back to what was considered a time of pre-modern "authenticity." Like Lears, I believe that such quests and pursuits, far from constituting a simple reaction against the emergent consumerist ethos of late capitalism, helped pave the way for a "streamlined culture of consumption" which in turn gave shape and purpose to an American middle class (Lears xiv). However, unlike Lears, who feels that "anti-modernists were not primarily powerful businessmen," I believe that a cabal of increasingly powerful baseball owners, beginning in the 1870s, played a key role in propagating anti-modernist thought (xiv). Baseball rhetoric surrounding the consolidation of a loose affiliation of professional clubs into what would eventually become the major leagues contributed substantially to the sports-mediated identity formation of the American middle classes. In this chapter, I will emphasize how baseball's

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[7] "Warm" is a term universally used by Landecker and by Indians' management, architects and fans to describe the feeling of Jacobs Field versus that of "cold" Cleveland Stadium.

[8] See Denning's *Mechanic Accents* and, of course, Lears' *No Place of Grace* for book-length accounts of middle-class identity formation and its relationship to the anti-modern.

presentation of itself during the formative decades of the late 19th century as "artificial adventure, artificial war" helped bring about widespread perceptions of a "revolution" of the individual spirit. In witty ways, baseball parks fostered this perception on the part of middle class fans that they, themselves, were somehow "revolutionary" because of their participation in the sport; these sports thus eased the transition to a more consumer-based and hegemonic existence.[9]

Additionally, ballparks have historically enabled sensations of solidarity among middle class fans otherwise separated by ethnic, geographical and political differences. In places like Spalding's immigrant-heavy Chicago, where neighborhoods were relatively homogenous and self-contained, the ballpark became a site of limited social mixing. Joining together to cheer (or jeer) the hometown White Stockings, fans could temporarily elide or ignore difference. By accommodating a wider range of rough behaviors among middle class men than most public venues, baseball parks allowed both for the venting of repressed passions increasingly stored up as the middle class moved toward respectability and a rehearsal of primitive and oppositional sentiment. This ability to rehearse the primitive psychically compensated for the denuding effects of late capitalism and linked the middle-class spectator to the ethos of the rebel, a constitutive element of American masculinity since colonial times and the Revolutionary War. Ultimately, I will suggest that this desire to think oneself outside the consumerist

[9] All of this language comes from Spalding in *America's National Game*. This book, crucial in the formation of widespread beliefs about the exalted place of baseball in American culture was the culmination of a forty year propaganda campaign which I will describe later in the chapter.

norm remains alive in modern baseball stadiums and is largely responsible for the hint of discontent and opposition in Landecker's commentary, as well as for a inevitable tension emergent in retro parks as they replicate "authenticity" for a progressively more elite audience.

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Before I begin to show how baseball, as it became professionalized in the 1870s, helped shaped middle class perceptions of a burgeoning revolution of the individual spirit, I should first briefly discuss the dynamics of the sport as it began to explode in popularity in the 1850s and 1860s. Once a game played primarily by elite school boys, baseball after 1850 or so began to be enjoyed by working class and middle class men as well. Both the Union and Confederate soldiers adopted it as their game of choice during the war investing it with an edge lacking when it was played only by the nation's elite. After the war, widespread reports of violence and betting associated with the sport gave pause to many genteel reformers as they considered whether or not this emergent national pastime was truly a salubrious pursuit for workers who, more than any time in the nation's history, had some leisure time to fill up. On the professional level, the sport gradually became dominated by a type of ruffian culture, the best players and the best teams known as much for their tactics of intimidation and rough play

as for their skill "at the bat."[10] The parks they played in accommodated cordoned off areas — bettor's pens — where middle-class men were free to shed the decorum of their daily lives and instead engage in a host of illicit activities like betting, smoking, cursing and drinking. On the amateur level, workers and immigrants ran roughshod over the intentions of the genteel designers of urban parks. In Central Park for example, dozens of "vernacular" recreation areas emerged. In these spots, groups of men trampled down their own diamonds and other types of ball fields in order to quench their thirst for "manly" amusements.

Understanding the debates over proper usage of Central Park is key to understanding the promise as well as the threat of baseball in its early years. In the decade prior to the construction of the park's original form, groups such as the New York Knickerbockers, the largest baseball club in the city at the time, petitioned the Central Park Board to provide space to accommodate ball grounds. Those in favor of using the park for such forms of "manly, vigorous" outdoor exercise were quite confident that their request were to be met. After all, early brochures promoting the proposed park featured drawings of cricket games on their covers and the winning design entry marked out three separate playgrounds.[11] Furthermore, various parcels of land appropriated by the city for the park were themselves already vernacular recreation areas, for years having

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[10] In the 19th century and, in some cases beyond, a hitter was described this way. As in "Casey At the Bat."

[11] Here I refer to the Greensward Plan. For more on this particular plan, see Rosenzweig and Blackmar 248.

been used for baseball and other "manly" amusements by local residents (Rosenzweig and Blackmar 246-50).

Yet the changing demographics of baseball in the 1850s and 1860s convinced the Central Park Board to proceed more cautiously, to redesign the park in order to keep the passionate fans of the game at bay. Advocates of a "quiet, orderly, and decorous park—a park that resisted rather than embraced the variety and spontaneity of the city — generally held the line against such challenges throughout the first decade" (Rosenzweig and Blackmar 247). Then, when the pressure to build public diamonds grew too strong to resist in the early 1870s, the park board continued to hold the line, refusing calls to allow working class men and youths to play; it gave only well-behaved schoolboys and girls access to the public diamonds.[12]

It would not be possible to completely unpack the tension between reformers and advocates of baseball from 1850 to 1870. However, what is indisputable about the discourse of reform emerging at this time is that the game seemed such a threat to genteel reformers like Frederick Law Olmstead who designed Central Park and the aristocratic park board that controlled it that they took dramatic steps to limit the playing of the game in this unique "public" space. Whether it was the drinking, the gambling, the cursing, the class make up or the pure physicality of the game which threatened the individual members of the

[12] By the 1870's, the Park Board responded to pressure for more space for active sports by opening part of the North Meadow between 97th and 102nd streets to baseball. However, adult baseball games were banned in the park until the 1920s. For more on this see Rosenzweig and Blackmar 312.

board, one thing is certain; there really was an air of revolution — a revolution in acceptable forms of public behavior — associated with baseball.

In the 1860s and 1870s, another important social force was added to the mix. Baseball as a professional, for-profit enterprise got its start in these decades as a slew of entertainment entrepreneurs emerged in order to capitalize on the revolutionary potential of the game. The most important of these men in the early years was Brooklyn politician and businessman William H. Cassmeyer, who in 1861, created almost by accident the first enclosed baseball park, Union Grounds. Three years after the opening of Olmstead's Central park, just across the river yet miles away, Cammeyer originally set up his venue as a large ice pond for recreational skating. Then, attempting to augment his profits in the off-season, he tried to get the community to use it for summertime boating and horseback riding. Ultimately however, lack of revenue forced him to convert the space to a ballpark.

This transformation is quite important. The kinds of activities that Olmstead had sanctioned in Central Park certainly appealed to Cassmeyer the politician. Ice skating and horseback riding tended to attract a rather decorous crowd. These activities encouraged the participation of women who in turn were thought to bring out the best behavior in the men who accompanied them.[13] Additionally, they discouraged the participation of the urban working poor who,

[13] For more on the roles of women in early professional baseball, see Berlage. In her first chapter she discusses the importance of the presence of Victorian ladies at games in relationship to the rise of baseball as the national sport.

for the most part, had neither the means nor the inclination to participate in skating and riding. Yet, to Cassmeyer the businessman, this attempt to earn money off the provision of only salutary and gentle recreation proved disastrous. Within a year, severe losses convinced him to have his laborers drain the pond, level the field, and plant sod so that he could provide a recreational space more attuned to the desires the Brooklyn population looking for a more intense experience.

The new baseball park he created out of the quagmire was, from the very beginning, a huge attraction. Local newspapers estimated that eight to ten thousand people attended the park's inaugural game. In turn, this immediate success convinced Cassmeyer to begin charging admission to games. This was one of the first times in American history that one would have to pay to watch a game and it serves as a watershed moment in the transformation of baseball from an almost exclusively recreational activity to one which is also a spectator sport.[14] The overflow crowd on the first day proved that there was tremendous popular interest in this form of public diversion and, of course, that there was a great deal of money to be made.

Yet Cassmeyer's dual status as a politician and a businessman complicated matters. On one hand, as a respected member of New York's

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[14] Pierre Bordieu in "How Can One Be a Sports Fan?" discusses this change. He argues that most sports like baseball originate among the people, then return to them in the form of spectacle. In essence, they become consumers and not producers. In truth, the shift of which he writes is the second major one. During the early parts of the century, baseball thrived primarily in boys schools — an elite practice reserved for amateurs. Baseball as the 'people's game' exploded in the 1850s. For a good discussion of the early years of baseball, see Rader.

emergent mercantile class and as an intimate of mayor "Boss" Tweed, he must have shared a sense of trepidation with Olmstead and other genteel reformers about the dangerous potential of this particular form of public gathering. On the other hand, as heir to a successful leather business and as part of a new breed of aggressive middle-class entrepreneurs, he saw almost limitless potential in the ability to make the ballpark experience appeal to the segment of the population willing to spend money to attend a game. The results of this tension seems to be a compromise between the beliefs about salubrious public amusement voiced by Olmstead and a sense of the need to cater to the passion of a large segment of the population increasingly passionate about baseball.

The scene inside Union Grounds was simultaneously controlled and anarchic — a tableau allowing the expression of both Victorian respectability and its corresponding underworld. In order to attract ladies to the events and therefore endow the games with respectability, Cammeyer created two segregated areas. The first was a long wooden shed "capable of accommodating several hundred persons, and benches provided for the fair sex" (*The Brooklyn Eagle,* May 16, 1862 qtd. in Gershman 12). The other was a "bettor's ring" which confined gamblers and kept them away from the more proper element. This demarcation suggests the particular tension shaping baseball in its early years and continuing to inform the make up of stadiums today. Professional baseball club owners, from the beginning, wanted to distance their product from other forms of

popular amusement, but they also needed to make the game to a relatively wider swath of the American urban scene. So, they simply segregated their patrons.

In writing about the inauguration of the Union Grounds, the *Brooklyn Eagle* went out of its way to praise this "thoughtful" segregation of "ladies" and "bettors."

> The chief object of the Association is to provide a suitable place for ball playing, where ladies can witness the game without being annoyed by the indecorous behavior of the rowdies who attend some of the first-class matches.... Wherever [the ladies'] presence enlivens the scene, there gentlemanly conduct will follow. Indecorous proceedings will cause the offenders to be instantly expelled from the grounds. (qtd. in Gershman 12)

The reporter's words are, of course, a bit naïve. The "chief object" of Cammeyer's Association was, indeed, to make money. Of only ancillary benefit was the provision of a "suitable" ball field amidst a general, city-wide shortage. Nonetheless, what the *Eagle* really seems to be endorsing is a kind of compromise which was untenable to the more old world members of the Central Park board across the East River.

Of course, also absent from a discussion of this "thoughtful" internal segregation was any acknowledgment of the external segregation resulting from the enclosure of the park. Tall fences, admission charges and inconvenient daytime hours excluded the majority of Brooklyn residents right off the bat. Those really on the margins of society — the working poor, new immigrants, the

unemployed, and, of course, African-Americans — were locked out completely. The "rowdies" *inside* the park to which the Brooklyn newspaper refers simply could not have been primarily members of Brooklyn's working classes. For one thing, even a ten cent admission fee would have eaten up too much of a laborer's salary.[15] For another, games were usually held on weekday afternoons. Only white-collar workers with flexible schedules and leisured men and women could take time off to attend games. Thus, because this privately-owned "public" space was enclosed and regulated, its great experiment in social mixing had to have taken place among a relatively homogenous population.

Nonetheless, this arrangement, though at least as exclusionary as it was revolutionary, did provide a venue for a certain "outing" of an aspect of Victorian middle-class life which had theretofore been hidden in the dark back-rooms of male-only saloons and clubs. Men, who most probably lived a "respectable" public life outside the ballpark, stood in an area apart, conducting themselves much more freely than they could in almost any other "public" space. Smoking, drinking, betting and cursing openly, they, in effect, took the behaviors of male-only saloon life into the open air. Baseball parks not only allowed but invited rough public behavior and large-scale male bonding unavailable elsewhere even as they excluded the folks labeled "dangerous" for their propensity to enjoy these very behaviors.

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[15] For a description of the kind of cheaper amusements engaged in by immigrants, see Peiss. Also, see Nasaw for a discussion of saloon culture.

Nonetheless, the internal segregation of baseball stadiums failed to ease the apprehension of genteel reformers. The pressure to reform the professional version of the game, to eradicate drinking, gambling and cursing from the ballpark intensified in the late 1860s and early 1870s.[16] Moralists decried the nexus of sport and business which placed the financial standing and attendant pressure to win at all costs above concerns for the moral well-being of baseball participants. By the early 1870s, the National Association of Baseball Players, which had been formed in 1858 to organize the many teams playing the game and to try to keep baseball a recreational amusement for urban, upper class gentlemen, had clearly become anachronistic.[17] For one thing, the status that a winning ball club afforded a town had long compelled many of the original teams to relax membership standards based on social standing. Teams routinely violated rules about amateurism and began, like Cassmeyer, to charge admission to games to pay for the best players. For another thing, the profit motive became just too irresistible. By the late 1860s, it became quite apparent that a well-organized club could help an owner make a fortune.

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[16] In order to generate my history of the early years of the National League, I draw my information from a variety of sources. Invaluable to me foremost is Spalding's self-promoting *America's National Game*. Levine's *A.G. Spalding and the Rise of Baseball* serves as a good adjustment to Spalding's history. Also, Benjamin Rader's *American Sports* is an excellent source of historical information as is David Q. Voigt's, *America Through Baseball*. See Spalding's description of the kinds of pressures for reform faced by professional baseball club owners at this time. On pages 159-172 he describes the actions to rid the sport of drinking and gambling on the part of a the owners of National League clubs as nothing short of heroic. See Levine, particularly pages 6-10 for a more balanced account of this period. Also, see Voight, pages 132-4, for a description of how owners and reformers charged players with the "sins of maldiscipline."

[17] Again, for the most comprehensive account of these years, see Levine 6-10.

So, what emerges in the early 1870s from this dual set of pressures — to reform the game and profit from it — is an aggressive program of consolidation, regularization and propagandistic promotion of baseball on the part of a small affiliation of owners. Lead by Chicago coal merchant William Hulbert, this group drafted a constitution and gathered support for a new league, the National League of Professional Baseball Clubs to replace what had evolved into the National Association of *Professional* Base Ball Players (emphasis mine).[18] The subtle difference in name actually describes a tremendously important distinction between the new league and the one it displaced. The old league had functioned as a kind of loose partnership between management and players; the new league, on the other hand, evolved in part out of a sense by the new breed of owners interested primarily in making a profit that players should not meddle in financial and administrative decisions. In other words, this shift denotes the change from professional baseball as a pursuit which is first and foremost *a sport* to one which is *a business* with a distinct separation of labor and management.

Predictably, this movement angered more than a few people. Genteel moralists cried foul, denouncing the collusion of profit and sport. Owners of teams that were shut out of the new league also complained, arguing that this association was promoting an unfair monopoly of the game. Finally, many players, who previously shared profits as well as the power to make decisions,

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[18] For details on the genesis of Spalding and Hulbert's partnership, see Levine 22.

decried the new owners for being greedy and selfish robber barons.[19] To a large degree, the owners' response to widespread and diverse expressions of discontent was a package of rhetoric which rationalized the endeavor. To deflect criticism of locked-out owners and angry players, the owners began to promote themselves as symbols of uniquely American ingenuity and prosperity, as heroic generals leading the culture through an *industrial* revolution. To allay the fears of genteel moralists frightened by the dangerous behavior at baseball parks, they began to construct a mythology of baseball, holding it to be more than just a game. In this sense, baseball became a cure for the physically and spiritually draining experience of living and working in the industrialized city, a way for urban dwellers to connect with the country's rural past, a way to shape and refine the character of the American individual.

This particular rhetoric helped create a more profound acceptance of sports among the middle classes as well. After all, middle class prosperity toward the end of the century had prompted a number of observers to speak out against a kind of "overcivilization" of the American city. More and more people began to notice a widespread nervous tension and anxiety among the very people who had come to benefit most from progress. Given a name, "neurasthenia," this condition soon came to be though of as a type of "national disease" among the middle

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[19] I should note here that many people were also strongly in favor of the new affiliation. Many players who did make the jump to, or remain with their teams in, the new league, profited handsomely. The well-capitalized owners ignored previous agreements among NAPBBP teams and paid large sums to attract the game's biggest stars to their fledgling league. Many fans liked the new league as well because it consolidated talent and hence produced a good brand of baseball.

classes. Neurasthenia was said to stifle the individual spirit, creating a "paralysis of the will." A large part of the owners' strategy during this time was thus to sell baseball as a unique tonic for this national disease, a sport which naturally recharged one's moral fiber and strengthened his will.[20]

Finally, even more cynically, this rhetoric provided justification for controlling and managing the subversive conduct of workers and immigrants and for disciplining labor. It served as the basis of theoretical arguments used by owners in their successful attempts to crush the handful of collectivist-capitalist baseball enterprises which sprung up to rival the collusive National League during the 1880s and 1890s. I'll now describe the basic shape of the rhetoric that emerged as these owners tried to both sell the public on baseball as something transcendent of sport and on the notion that they, themselves, were somehow uniquely gifted to carry the sport forward.

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To achieve success in the early years, it is clear that the owners needed to first convince the public that their reason for forming the new league was primarily to affect a cleansing of the sport and only secondarily to make a profit. They immediately waged a high-profile campaign against gambling and drinking,

[20] For more on "neurasthenia" and baseball, see Levine 98-100. In this section he references a few primary sources which dealt with the national disease such as *Wear and Tear: or Hints for the Over Worked* by S. Weir Mitchell published in 1887 and *American Nervousness. Its Causes and*

claiming that the newly professionalized league would be able to eliminate the sins of the past. This campaign, which they spoke about as dovetailing with the league's stated objective of making "Base Ball playing respectable and honorable," made it illegal to both sell alcohol on club ground and to bet or to sell slots in pools (Levine 24). Although it is clear that in reality much of this behavior was tacitly accepted, these high profile attempts to repackage the game did earn the new league some good favor among local politicians and reformers.[21]

The league's second order of business was to go about "reducing the game to a business system such as had never heretofore obtained" (Spalding, qtd. in Levine 24). The National League raised the annual franchise fee from $10 to $100 in 1875, pricing out collective enterprises and other teams that were not financed by already-wealthy individuals. What had theretofore been a loose affiliation of hundreds of professional teams in the NAPBBP all of the sudden became the National League with but eight teams representing only cities with a population of at least 75,000. Of course, even after the formation of the National League, many other leagues continued to exist. Associations like the International League, for example, had teams with players comparable in talent to National League teams. Also, because of the existence of various, as yet unwritten, agreements making it difficult for African Americans to join many established

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*Consequences* written by George Miller Beard in 1881. Also, see Lears "A Psychic Crisis: Neurasthenia and the Emergence of a Therapeutic World View," in *No Place of Grace* 47-58.

[21] See Richard Henry Edwards' 1915 moralizing tract, *Popular Amusements*, for an example of the willingness of otherwise skeptical reformers' acceptance of baseball. Later in the chapter, I treat in detail Edward's somewhat ambivalent embrace of the game as America's "National Pastime." See footnote 45.

leagues, Negro circuits began to form. Nonetheless, the action of consolidation by Hulbert and Spalding et al. was the first step in the eventual merger of the two dominant professional leagues. It paved the way for the "New National Agreement" of 1903, after which the baseball public came to consider the American and the National Leagues simply the "Major Leagues."

Symbolically, the shift from a wide range of ownership types to a singular one, from the collective and sometimes off-the-wall ownership of the old affiliation to the earnest and disciplinarian middle class creed of the new National League, is crucial as well.[22] Emerging out of a perceived crisis period in baseball's history, when rowdy public behavior and the actions of "hot-headed anarchists," or players who tried to form their own leagues, suggested that the sport truly had far-reaching revolutionary potential, this group of owners immediately set about to promote themselves as just the ticket to restore order.[23] In other words, in less than a fifteen year period, the primary agents of exclusion from the game went from being the elite members of the NABBP, aristocratic and leisured men who wanted to ward off the threat of rowdyism and, perhaps worse, professionalism, to being middle class entrepreneurs who saw *professionalism* itself as the way to preserve the sanctity of the game.

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[22] Chris Von der Ahe, owner of the St. Louis Brown Stockings is, in many ways, the antithesis to the National League owners. Later in the chapter I will detail his exploits as well as the efforts on the part of Spalding and the others to crush him. For more on Von der Ahe, see Lieb, *The St. Louis Cardinals: The Story of a Great Baseball Club* and Burke *Never Just a Game: Players, Owners, and American Baseball to 1920*. Lieb's history tends to be a bit rosy, praising outlandish German immigrant Von der Ahe for being an owner for the people. Burke counters by describing many of Von der Ahe's own despotic and otherwise problematic actions.

I will of course discuss the meaning of this shift in detail in due time. First, however, it is important to show who suffered most as a result of this bourgeois attempt at "reducing" the game. Coinciding with the perception on the part of this new affiliation of baseball owners of the need to legitimize and regularize their enterprise was the onset of statutory racial segregation. Prior to this period, despite widespread racist sentiment and occasional boycotts by ballplayers and clubs scheduled to play against teams with one or more African-Americans, many blacks were able to play the game at the highest level. Players such as Bud Fowler, Fleet Walker, George Stovey and Frank Grant participated for a variety of teams in the professional leagues prior to consolidation. Although there had been a couple of attempts to establish a statutory color line in baseball — most notably by the aristocratic National Association of Base Ball Players which, in 1867, did in fact bar blacks from participation — most Jim Crow battles were fought individually, team by team, event by event. These battles generally took the form of isolated fire-fights when a particular team refused to suit up or at least threatened to. Nonetheless, since the end of the war most baseball leagues had almost always chosen to de-politicize themselves, to simply ignore the most combustible political topic of the day.

In the 1870s and 1880s, however, the climate began to heat up. In 1883, Spalding's manager Cap Anson, perhaps the greatest player to have played the

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[23] For a description of how Spalding used such language to influence public opinion against fledgling player run leagues that began in response to the National League consolidation, see Rader 118.

game to that point and a venomous racist, drew attention to the Negro question by threatening a boycott of the White Stockings' scheduled exhibition with Toledo if Fleet Walker was allowed to play. Though Walker did play, Anson's actions and words brought to the fore rampant anti-black sentiment among a large segment of professional players and owners. As the leagues sought acknowledgment of their reputability during this decade, they began to rely on race in the most pernicious ways in the wake of Anson's actions. The emergent professionalized ethos of the sport held that the gradual purging of blacks from the highest levels would signal a transformation of the game away from its recent rougher and more anarchic form to one more in line with new American middle class values of vigor and discipline.

Finally, in 1887, one of the top eleven leagues, the International League, made it official: no new contracts would be tendered to any player of color from then on. By that time, as many as twenty five African Americans were participating in the league. After that fateful moment however, the color line in the other professional leagues became sharply delineated. It was not until sixty years later, in April 1947, when Jackie Robinson first suited up for the Brooklyn Dodgers, that the line was officially crossed again.[24]

Above and beyond the obvious social injustice that this sixty year exclusion engendered are questions about how segregation helped construct many

[24] A few blacks did manage to participate during this sixty year lockout. For an account of the handful of African-Americans or natives of Caribbean islands who were able to pass as native American or Hispanic, see Peterson 53-73.

of the more odious notions of black athletes still in circulation today. During this crucial era of reorganization and consolidation, the idea of "fundamentals" began to emerge. Previously, when the professional version of the game was being played by thousands of teams nationwide, rules and strategies were as numerous as the number of games being played. After consolidation, however, the leagues were able to agree on rules and were able to begin to address questions pertaining to the best ways to play the game. Along with this, countless publications such as *Reach's Official Baseball Guide* were founded to both inform a national audience about players and scores from around the various professional circuit and to serve as manuals instructing players on fundamentals.

Additionally, proponents of the "organized-play movement" promoted Public School Athletic Leagues (PSALs) as training grounds not just for professional baseball but also for the essential business of the American middle class.[25] PSALs, whose motto was "Duty, Thoroughness, Patriotism, Honor, and Obedience," were established to teach discipline, fundamentals and, most important, the necessity of "harnessed aggression" to white children. In general, the fundamental belief behind PSALs was that sport would allow for the release of potentially dangerous energy while simultaneously developing the rigor necessary to compete in the business world. This belief is central to the place of sports within the developing white middle-class consciousness. It suggests a simultaneous pride in and fear of the energy of middle-class youth. Anxious

middle class adults felt the need to counter the allure of the modern American city filled with immigrants and other agents of corruption and social unrest by providing simulated access to the more rugged pre-industrial world and by constructing commercial pursuits as themselves vigorous and "manly" (Lears 108-117). The PSAL curriculum stressed the correlation between success in the world and the mastery of fundamentals. In this way, the youth leagues were a large part of the process by which the white version of the game became increasingly subject to bourgeois discipline and regularization.

Conversely, after 1887, when exclusion of blacks from organized leagues became statutory, African-Americans were forced to diversify their act in order to draw an audience and earn a living. Bud Fowler, the first black professional baseball player who, unlike the sport, really was born in Cooperstown, had made a living playing ball with white teams for fifteen years prior to segregation.[26] In

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[25] For a description of PSALs and how they fit into the more widespread "organized play movement," of which Theodore Roosevelt was the greatest proponent, see Levine 109-112.

[26] Cooperstown has become known as the birthplace of baseball largely because of an infamous propaganda campaign initiated by Spalding. In need of a suitable myth of genesis, Spalding, as National League President in 1905, went to work rewriting history. As a young man, he had always bought into his *Sporting Guide's* editor Henry Chadwick's widely accepted theory that American baseball originated from the English game of "Rounders." Yet, by 1905, he not only offered a different opinion — that baseball had evolved from a colonial American game called "One Old Cat" and had matured toward its present form thanks to the ingenuity and creativity of young Americans — but appointed a bogus historical commission to "investigate" and drawn a definitive solution. This commission — the National Board of Baseball Commissioners — comprising among others, Al Reach, Spalding's business partner, and three former presidents of the National League, relied primarily on evidence suggested by Spalding himself to settle the issue. In 1907, Spalding pointed the commission toward a letter from a man in Denver who said he had seen former Federal Army hero Abner Doubleday, as a young man, interrupting a marbles match behind a tailor's shop in Cooperstown, New York in order to draw up a diamond and explain this new game. Though this seems to be the only thing gesturing toward Cooperstown and Doubleday as site and creator of baseball, Spalding reminded the commission that "it certainly appeals to an American's pride to have had the great national game of Baseball created and named by a Major-General in the United States Army." The commission quickly issued a report

fact, he is said to be one of the best second basemen to play the game in that era. However, after political winds shifted and Jim Crow agreements quickly phased out access to organized baseball, he was reduced to barnstorming. He traveled from town to town exciting curious white audiences with exhibitions of his remarkable physical prowess. Instead of playing ball, he now traveled mostly in the Northwest, giving walking exhibitions against skaters and running the mile in under five minutes (Peterson 19-21). Then, just as he paved the way for the black players who followed him prior to 1887, in the decades after the beginning of statutory Jim Crow, his traveling curiosity show functioned as a model for Negro professional baseball players who wanted to play for pay as well. Although Negro teams began playing in the early 1880s, an organized Negro League did not emerge until the 1920s. In the interim, all-black teams traveled the country, often playing three games in three towns in a single day in a perpetual search for competition and a reasonable gate. But, along with simply playing a baseball game, like Fowler they were expected to provide alternate forms of entertainment as well. Often, white entrepreneurs would organize a black troupe which would be expected to provide a minstrel show, music, and other carnival attractions to go along with their baseball exhibitions. So, notions of African American showboating, assailed by today's still mostly white press as a primary cause and

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concluding that, in fact, baseball had been first devised by Doubleday when he was a young man in Cooperstown. History was rewritten; eureka, baseball *was* after all an American game. Even though the commission's report was widely accepted when published in 1908, Chadwick held fast calling the decision a "masterly piece of special pleading" by his boss. Nonetheless, thirty one years later, baseball celebrated its mythological centennial by opening the, by now hallowed,

indicator of the ruination of the game, are at least in part a product of sixty years of exclusion forcing blacks to "jump Jim Crow," to earn a living simultaneously as ballplayers and pickaninnies, while their white counterparts played a game that was increasingly defined by its regularization and fundamentalization.[27]

But blacks were not the only Americans excluded from many forms of participation in the "national pastime." Spalding fought vigorously to enforce a 50 cent admission policy at National League parks. Constituting roughly a third of the average worker's weekly salary, this price was part of the owners' attempt to clean up the game by excluding the more "dangerous" classes. This policy also served the dual purpose of helping owners make enough money so that they could resist the impulse to open their parks to Sunday baseball. Organizing his arguments around a falsely pious commitment to honor the Sabbath, Spalding in reality wished to avoid Sunday baseball because it would have been the one day of the week that workers actually had time to see a game.[28]

Not surprisingly, however, at this very moment — when blacks became statutorily forbidden from playing and members of the working classes were

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Baseball Hall of fFme in Cooperstown. A.G. Spalding was one of its charter members (Levine 112-15).

[27] In this context, it is important to note that the third thing Spalding and the other owners did to regularize the game (after cracking down on gambling and drinking and raising the franchise fee) was to eliminate the so-called "lively ball." This measure cut down the length of the game, allowing them to appeal more to businessmen who had daily appointments to keep; it also privileged more conservative, defensive play. Also, for more on the relationship between *showboating* and this period of segregation, see Chapter Four.

[28] During the week, because most games started at around 3:30, laborers could not have attended even if they had had the money. Instead, crowds at National League games comprised primarily clerks and professional men with flexible hours as well as the Victorian sporting community — show people, gamblers and other members of the middle classes who ignored more rigid social standards (Nasaw; Peiss).

being even further priced out — owners began to discover the cultural value in promoting the game as inclusive and democratic. At the end of a chapter XVII in *America's National Game,* a section in which Spalding gleefully describes the exclusionary policies of the National League, one in which he argues that, by raising ticket prices, the "patriotic" owners were able to turn away the "the class that is always 'against the government'" and squeeze out countless teams and cities, he praises A.G. Mills, a lawyer and league president who had negotiated the first National Agreement (Spalding 240).[29] Somehow, despite his expressed belief that the success of the league was predicated foremost upon widespread exclusion, Spalding concludes the chapter by quoting from Mills' confident manifesto asserting that baseball's primary appeal is as an inclusive game "for the people."

> When we behold what a revolution Base Ball has wrought in the habits and tastes of the American people we may well denominate its advancement a 'good work.' But a generation ago that large body of our people whose lives were not spent in the forest or on the farm was marked as a sedentary race, with healthful recreation denied to all but a favored few. Now, not the least of our claims to distinction among the peoples of the world is our general love of and devotion to healthful outdoor sports and recreations. The deterioration of the race has ended, and the rising

[29] I am not sure why Spalding chose to put the words "against the government" in quotation marks. Perhaps he uses this denotation to create emphasis, perhaps he was simply quoting an unnamed source, or perhaps the phrase was so popular among the elite and capitalists at the time

> generation is better equipped for the duties, the conflicts and the pleasures of life than were their fathers and mothers.[30]

Mills' propensity for essentializing is important to note here. Ignoring the obvious distinctions among classes, he conflates the "habits and tastes," not to mention the insecurities regarding neurasthenia, of the American middle class with those of the "American people." He implies that concerns about being sedentary apply to the urban population in general when, in reality, most coal miners and steelworkers were not very worried that their bodies were going soft. His use of the word "race" is of course also extremely problematic. Ignoring the obvious — that his league had just excluded an entire race of four million new American citizens and that it was finding ways to make itself less and less accessible to the millions of immigrants populating urban areas — he nonetheless chooses to speak about a mythical, homogenized American baseball public.[31] More than anything else, Mills' language underlines the psychological need for the American middle-class man to think himself a regular, hard-working guy.[32]

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that the quotation marks serve as kind of a wink and a nod, a gesture to others who reflexively understand what the phrase signifies.

[30] Spalding does not give the exact reference for the Mills excerpt. Instead, on page 248 he signals the quote as follows: "Ex-President A.G. Mills, of the Washington Olympics, in an article on the subject of the national game, said:"

[31] Of course, this rhetorical idiom is not radically different from the contemporary one which inspires Bill Clinton or his political rivals to justify or defend their ideas or actions by claiming that "the American people" feel this way or that.

[32] Though writing about class in Victorian England, Dickens in *Hard Times* captures this same sentiment quite well in his portrayal of the odious Bounderby, whose constant refrain that he "wasn't raised on turtle soup and venison" echoes the pretensions of Spalding and Mills et alia who see in themselves the energy and vigor distinguishing the American middle class from the other "peoples of the world."

Clearly Spalding's history, and more specifically Mills' written beliefs, are but doctrinal manifestations of the kind of middle class anxiety which fascinated Melville and his contemporaries.[33] The evangelical belief in the mission of the emergent middle class entrepreneur must be at least part of the motive force behind the owners' conviction that they were truly effecting a widespread "revolution." Mills continues his confident state of the game address in words that would make Dickens' famously expansive Bounderby quite proud.

> And can it be doubted what has been the most potent factor in achieving this *beneficient* (emphasis mine) revolution? We have seen Base Ball steadily growing from its notable beginning before the war, accompanying our soldiers in the field, spreading like wildfire throughout the West, until now it is known and loved and practiced in every city and town within the borders of the United States. Base Ball is essentially the people's game, in that it is equally accessible to the sons of the rich and poor, and in point of exhilarating exercise to the player and healthy enjoyment to the spectator — whether played on the modern village common or the splendidly appointed grounds of the modern professional club — it satisfies and typifies the American idea of a manly, honest, entertaining recreation. (qtd. in Spalding, 248)

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[33] Writing his novella *Bartleby* in 1853, Melville created a narrator haunted by this kind of anxiety. The proprietor of a small scriveners firm, he comes face to face with the folly of middle class ideology through his absolute inability to, in turn, indoctrinate Bartleby into the ways of bourgeois productivity, connect with his struggling worker, and finally to do anything at all for him

The word "essentially" is crucial here. Not quite the "people's game" but rather essentially so, baseball, with it roots in the martial rigor of the Civil War, has spread equally to the rich and the poor according to Mills' formulation. Yet, as Spalding's narrative of the 1870s indicates, the owners' primary charge during this time was to manage the brush fire. They merely wished to produce a controlled burn which would enable this *beneficient* revolution while short-circuiting the more radical forms of uprising occurring across the continent of Europe and being discussed domestically by an increasingly organized workforce during this century of revolution. During this time, baseball did seem to be inherently invested with the potential to lead the way toward somewhat radical social changes. While it most certainly enabled a relaxation of some standards of public behavior in the stadium, and it did help elevate the status of many men with working-class roots to that of baseball heroes, and it did allow for a certain amount of class and racial mixing in the stands and on the field when, for example, white teams played exhibitions against barnstorming black teams, it came close, but ultimately failed, to produce a kind of bottom up workers' revolution.

The National League's wresting of control from the NAPBBP in the early 1870s prefigured even more egregious practices of the new owners to systematically destroy players' attempts over the next two decades to change the economic structure of the game. In 1890, for example, Spalding appointed himself head of the National League "War Committee" to crush an attempt by

players to form their own league. Frustrated by the collusive efforts of owners to fix wages, 80 percent of the league's players joined together to create the "Players League." Favored by the majority of fans, this league nonetheless lasted only a year, ultimately falling victim to Spalding's "war effort." Importantly, Spalding first attempted to maintain his fan base by pulling out the most virulently anti-collectivist rhetoric heating up at that point in American cities as a response to revolutionary rumblings in Europe, threats of labor unrest and fear of immigrant activity at home. He called the players "hot-headed anarchists" bent on a "terrorism" characteristic of "revolutionary movements" (qtd. in Rader, 118).

Along with these denunciations of collective enterprise, he spoke frequently in public about the paternal "vision and daring" of venture capitalists. He argued that only those people who are sufficiently capitalized and who had a proclivity for big business could see the big picture, providing for the long term security of players and franchises and ensuring that the game not become "cheapened" by desperate measures such as Sunday baseball or low admission charges. When the Players League folded the next year, Spalding presented this failure as evidence of his point. He reasoned that only the middle class, in particular the magnates behind the past decades' economic expansion, should be entrusted with the large-scale organization of capital.[34]

However, it is clear that the failure of the fledgling league had less to do with the inability of the players to organize than it had to do with aggressive,

monopolistic actions on the part of the National League owners. By all indications, the players' game was better played and better attended than the National League games. Yet the older league survived because the owners had amassed a substantial "war chest" allowing them to ride out the storm.[35] Because they could fall back on this "war chest," the owners of National League teams scheduled their games in the same cities at precisely the same times as the Players League. This insured a split in the fan base, guaranteeing that both leagues would lose money. A model for today's revenue sharing plans among professional sports franchises, the "war chest" allowed each and every club to remain solvent. Meanwhile, the majority of renegade players were absorbed back into the league in 1891, but at a fraction of their original salaries.

Of course, this narrative of revolt and discipline is not unique to baseball. In a century which saw an unprecedented reorganization and expansion of capital, the hiring of scabs and collusive attempts to fix wages negatively affected most attempts on the part of labor to earn a larger share of the revenue. Yet, the particular language Spalding and the others used to justify their enterprises cannot

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[34] These quotes as well as much of the information about the "Brotherhood War" come from Levine 58-65.

[35] The dynamics of this labor dispute mirror those of the 1998-99 NBA lockout. In order to force the players' association to renegotiate a more favorable contract, NBA owners locked out players and forced cancellation of about half the season. By all indications, the owners were prepared for (and even in some cases virulently favored) cancellation of the entire season. Propped up by a long term television contract which paid them even as games were canceled, the league could afford to wait while the players, even though most made over a million a year, would have had a hard time recovering lost income. Clearly, Spalding who chaired the three-member "War Committee" and collected the substantial "War Chest" was inspired by his own inflated sense of himself as a "general," and by the other forms of labor discipline characterizing the conflicts of capital and labor in late-nineteenth-century America. Clearly, also, his actions set the standards

be discounted. In this century of violent European revolution, the American bourgeoisie discovered how to have it both ways. Mills' description of baseball as part of a *benificient* revolution underlines how the American middle-class learned to both manage and contain conflict while appropriating the language of revolt. Spalding and Mills saw their way as a "third way," maintaining the order of the ancien regime, while profiting from the dynamism of the industrial revolution.[36]

Reconciling the distinction between the *beneficient* revolution which Spalding praised and the revolution imagined by "hot-headed anarchists," which he condemned, will go a long way toward helping us understand how the emergent rhetoric of baseball aided the formation of American middle class ideology and identity. Throughout the crucial last three decades of the 19th century, National League owners sold the game as an endeavor which simultaneously brought about a revolution in the individual spirit and helped to defeat efforts at a more radical revision of the structures of capitalism.[37] They

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of disciplinary positions on labor subscribed to by contemporary owners of sports franchises in the various American professional leagues.

[36] In contemporary terms, "Third Way" refers to the ideological package of the Democratic (as opposed to democratic) revolution of the 1990s. Bill Clinton and Al Gore preach a "Third Way" partnership between business and the government. In other words, this "revolution" relies on Republican-style corporate welfare combined with pleas for corporate noblesse oblige. See Gore.

[37] Lears, in discussing a greater variety of cultural pursuits than just baseball, comes to a similar conclusion regarding the false promises of what he calls a "revolution in manners and morals." He writes that "the twentieth century's 'revolution in manners and morals' was scarcely a revolution at all. It was not an overnight result of post-World War I disillusionment but the outcome of gradual, almost imperceptible fits and starts of cultural change stretching back into the late 19th century. It was not a plan deliberately carried out by defiant bohemians and "flaming youth," but a culmination of half-conscious wishes and aspirations among the respectable bourgeoisie. And most important, it posed few challenges for the dominant patter of social relations. Justifying the quest for intense experience as a therapeutic release, this "revolution" eased adjustment to the emerging system of consumer capitalism and bureaucratic "rationality."

promoted the game of baseball as "artificial adventure" which would train a whole generation of children to succeed in the great battles now being fought in the board rooms instead of on the battlefields.[38] At the same time, they suggested that the emergent business structure of ball clubs was an indicator of American organizational and entrepreneurial savvy.

Writing about this crucial period of image transformation in 1911, Spalding confidently describes baseball's place as not only a shaper of a renewed individual spirit, but also a signal of American election. He writes that baseball...

> ...owes its prestige as our National Game to the fact that as no other form of sport is the exponent of American Courage, Confidence, Combativeness; American Dash, Discipline, Determination; American Energy, Eagerness, Enthusiasm; American Pluck, Persistency, Performance; American Spirit, Sagacity, Success; American Vim, Vigor, Virility" (4).

This impressive list of what baseball contributes to the nation is part of larger bourgeois discourse about how to effect widespread American moral regeneration.

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Through the prism of antimodern vitalism we can see the hidden affinities between two apparently contradictory strands in recent American cultural history — between the liberationist ideology of avant-guarde bohemians and the acquiescent leisure ethic of the mass society they deplored. Both sanctioned a new nonmorality of self-gratification" (160).

[38] Perhaps Spalding's most successful propaganda campaign was organized around an international tour of American Baseball players in 1889. This tour was intended not only to create new markets for his sporting goods business, but also to generate a kind of missionary fervor among American baseball fans. Even though he barely broke even on the tour, he and his ballplayers were feted as royalty when they arrived back in New York. Teddy Roosevelt and Mark Twain both enthusiastically spoke on their behalf at their reception dinner. The President claimed that sports "readied a man to do work that counts when the time arises" (Levine, 97-98). See Chapter Four for a description of the treatment of Clarence Duvall, a black "mascot" who

It is also a product of private concerns among members of the emerging bourgeoisie, part of an internal rebellion against an ethos of comfort. As the frontier closed, and memories of the civil war faded, the cult of the warrior became more interiorized toward the end of the century. Individuals readied themselves for commercial and sporting rather than militaristic battles (Lears 108-9). Sport, but baseball in particular, became the "exponent" of all the characteristics Spalding mentions. His word choice is crucial here. Baseball does not just *prepare* the American male for metaphoric battle, it *reveals* him as the exemplar of natural fitness. Spalding's language accents a residual Calvinist discourse of election and a Darwinian discourse of survival, two belief systems emphasizing a natural order of things which were readily adopted by the rhetoric of bourgeois liberalism. In other words, perhaps less important than any kind of truth about what the game provides for the individual is the fact that it inspires a kind of hubris among the consumers and participants in baseball.

Writing retrospectively at the end of the first decade of the 20th century, Spalding was able to confidently repeat rapidly developing truisms about the value of sport. Baseball, according to his formulation, was able to help the American (in reality, the middle class American male) subject restore his pre-industrial status as vigorous, adventuresome and physical. All along, this newly elevated form of "work" justified industrial progress. The origin of twentieth century cliché about the unique ability of sport to train men for the business

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Spalding claims to have "captured" in Kansas City and brought with the group as a good luck

world, this rhetoric melds a critique of modernity with the elevation of bourgeois discipline and enterprise. Fueled by the omnipresent American language of election and by an emergent Darwinian discourse of fitness and survival, this kind of rhetoric solidified the purpose and place of the rising middle class.

In his book, Spalding makes it pretty clear that promoting this rhetoric was key to the financial well-being of the league. He describes the owners' efforts at eradicating the "prevailing evils — gambling and pool selling... from the grounds and the game" in terms best used to describe the heroism of Union soldiers. "With these and other problems confronting them, the League managers entered upon the discharge of their onerous duties earnestly and vigorously."[39] The expansive quality of this line is highly representative of the rest of his "history" in that it makes clear his purpose of elevating baseball from the status of a game to an important national institution. His choice of metaphors is important. The owners became generals "earnestly and vigorously" leading others in symbolic, rather than real, battles.

Ballplayers, especially middle-class youth who were trained in the PSALs, were taught that playing the game involved stakes greater than merely enjoying a satisfying communal activity, or blowing off steam. Instead, participation in baseball instructed children how to be disciplined and patriotic while strengthening their bodies and minds for individual pursuits. The vigorous

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charm.

[39] This language comes from Chapter XIV, descriptively titled, "Statement of Causes That Lead To the Formation of the National League — Inability of Former Associations to Correct Demoralizing Abuses, 1875-80.

challenges of the game all took place within the context of a sport that was increasingly disciplined and regulated by the same forces of bourgeois liberalism responsible for structuring the world of industrialized work. The structure of baseball, beginning in the 1870s, became more and more controlled by business interests which maintained social hierarchies, enforced racial segregation and made owners wealthy at the expense of labor. All along however, the sport's popularity was augmented by a growing belief in the game's "revolutionary" qualities.

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The suppression of the spirit for communal or political revolution in favor of the belief in the transformative power of individual revolutions in spirit is one of the prime contributions that sports in general, and baseball in particular, has made in easing the acceptance on the part of an increasingly dominant American bourgeoisie of "consumer capitalism and bureaucratic 'rationality'" (Lears 160). Can there be much doubt that passions for sports teams siphon off at least some potential energy for political struggle? Probably not. There probably also can be little doubt that contemporary sports discourse relies on tropes arising from late 19th century baseball promotion; football players are "weekend warriors" and the National Basketball Association's "Dream Team" of Jordan, Barkley and Bird, etc. served as "exponents" of late-millennial American "verve and vigor," not to

mention multi-culturalism.[40] Throughout the twentieth century, two apparently contradictory impulses — the opposition, individualism and, at times bohemianism of the American rebel and the acquiescence of the unselfconscious participant in hegemonic culture against which he or she reacts — have been negotiated through the elevation of sport to its higher symbolic level.

Landecker's bifurcated claim, her reflexive belief in the power of baseball stadiums to promote democracy, deconstructs the ideology of baseball descending through the century. What she bemoans at Jacobs Field is, to a large degree, the legacy of middle class control of the structure of professional sporting events. Yet, just as important, what she *senses* is a product of the internalized belief system compelling her to suggest that, despite astonishing evidence to the contrary, in the contemporary stadium "baseball is for everyone." Clearly, she has internalized middle-class notions holding that baseball has brought about a "revolution" in consciousness for Americans. Her abrupt shift thus seems perfectly fitting.

Yet, the source of her ambivalence about Jacobs Field is even more complex than a rift between baseball and its rhetoric. It also derives from a very real sense that, to varying degrees depending the on both the arrangement of the particular venue and on patrons' abilities to create their own use value for these spaces, baseball parks have in fact come through on their promise of providing

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[40] The "Dream Team" was the nickname given to the USA Olympic Basketball team that romped through the field and earned a gold medal in Seoul Korea in 1992, the first year that professionals were allowed to play. The rhetoric surrounding the "Dream Team's" success was similar to the

sites for the exercise of some proto-democratic potential. Even Spalding contributed significantly in this regard, albeit in clever ways designed to simultaneously promote and contain more open forms of public interaction. His two versions of Lake Front Park, built first in 1878 then dramatically refurbished in 1883, featured two enormous stand alone boxes in the outfield, the largest bleacher sections in baseball at the time. These bleachers, in reality, served as extremely creative forms of repressive tolerance. They provided a way to incorporate and even profit from a potentially dangerous section of the population recently given to congregating just outside the walls of enclosed parks.

Lithographs and eyewitness accounts depicting the scene at urban ballparks arising just prior to the construction of Lake Front Park suggests the continual presence of a kind of ruffian culture just beyond the outfield. For example, a drawing published in *Harper's Weekly* depicting an 1865 game between the Brooklyn-based Atlantics and the Philadelphia Athletics at Athletics Park at Jefferson Street in Philadelphia shows how much of the event's action took place behind the roped-off line of spectators forming the boundary of centerfield. As top-hatted men (with a few women here and there) watch the game, a dozen or so others exchange blows, play leap frog or make wagers in the grassy area behind.[41]

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rhetoric of 100 years before when Spalding took a team of American ballplayers on an international tour. See footnote 37.

[41] In early incarnations of baseball parks, the outfield was either merely roped in or not separated at all from fans who congregated out there. However, as the game became increasingly professionalized, club owners worked toward a clearer demarcation between the inside and the outside the park. In fact, barbed wire was popularized through its use on fences surrounding

However, prior to Spalding's decision to accommodate some of this behavior in his bleachers, the owners of the Athletics moved quickly with strict measures to keep the *barbarians* at the gate. Another drawing, by J.L. Magee, depicting a game between the same teams at the same park just a year later, shows a significantly changed atmosphere inside the park. By this time, the outfield has been enclosed by a wall limiting by several thousand the number of spectators; additionally, as we know from monographs about the event, Athletics management had raised ticket prices to an almost unthinkable $1. What gets portrayed in Magee's drawing is thus simply the controlled anarchy characteristic of enclosed ballparks at the time. The scene in his drawing is similar to that in Cassmeyer's Union Grounds. We see a small grandstand on the third base side where the ladies sit fronted and flanked by what appears to be well-behaving men enjoying an afternoon of fresh air and salubrious leisure. These men stand, sit in chairs, or even recline in their carriages parked inside the grounds in foul territory down the third base line. On the first base side, however, men from the Victorian middle class sporting community jostle, toss objects toward the field and appear to make bets. In the foreground of this particular lithograph, one group of men — faces beaming in amusement — watch an angry patron grab another by the throat.

On the surface, nothing seems new here. The violent behavior of this particular sector of middle class Philadelphia society was not only tolerated but

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baseball parks, a low-cost way to insure that only those who paid could spectate. For a

sanctioned through the creation of a separate space to accommodate it. Kept at bay from the ladies and their more respectably-acting suitors, these men were free to blow off a bit of steam. In contrast to the scene depicted in the drawing of the previous year, the more dangerous classes who inhabited the outfield area seem to be completely excluded.

However, according to newspaper accounts of the scene, Magee's drawing fails to tell the whole story. Absent from the lithograph is the apparent mob scene which formed that day around the newly-enclosed ballpark. One writer estimates that, during the game, "there were over 20,000 people in the area in trees, on roof tops, on trucks, and in second floor windows" (Gershman 15). A more rigidly enacted exclusion seems to have produced an effect diametrically opposed to the intentions of the ball park owners. It created a violent outsiders' culture in numbers even greater than in previous years.

Thus we can see how, in Spalding's two parks, this location of subversion and carnival was brought, literally and figuratively, within the confines of the park. His bleachers which, in the second version of the park, accommodated 6,000 spectators, allowed for an unprecedented number of people to see a game, all the while sheltering the more elite Chicago fans. Accommodating thousands of members of Chicago's increasingly large immigrant population instead of leaving them to congregate outside the park, Spalding was able to make enough money to provide for a comfortable segregation. In this regard, when he

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description of early parks, see Gershman.

renovated the park in 1883, he created the template for the modern baseball arena which Landecker finds so problematic. A precursor to Jacobs Field, the second version of Lake Front Park was the first park to incorporate luxury sky boxes. Spalding provided eighteen plush saloons above the third base grandstands where wealthier patrons sat in comfortable armchairs and were waited on by White Stocking's staff members. To ensure the safety of these wealthier patrons, the owner then hired an enormous security team to keep watch over the bleachers and standing room only sections" (Gershman 30-32). To keep a grip over this site of *benificient* revolution, Spalding put an unprecedented forty-one security guards on the payroll. Rather than simply repress or categorically exclude the more dangerous component of Chicago's baseball faithful, Spalding chose gentler forms of mob maintenance.

The structure of his ballpark, remarkably similarly in form to Jacobs Field, serves as the physical manifestation of what Spalding perceived to be his central mission — a negotiation of the disparate pressures faced by middle class baseball owners: as a businessman, he looked to cash in on the widespread popularity of the sport; as a social climber, he had to manage the stadium environment in such a way to avoid the displeasure of genteel reformers; and as a member of an anxious and enervated middle class, he had to allow for enough raw energy within the stadium to satisfy the longings for primitive experience among his peers. Clearly however, when rival owners or leagues went too far, when they took measures to accommodate too many working class fans or when they allowed for

too much expression of sentiment undermining bourgeois values of order and discipline, he and his fellow owners took strong measures to destroy them.

In this sense, Spalding and the other owners found Chris Von der Ahe, owner of the American League St. Louis Brown Stockings, to be their antithesis. Whereas the new breed of owners attempted to carry themselves as professionals, Von der Ahe was self-consciously outlandish. Whereas the National League was founded partially as a way to extirpate excessive drinking from baseball stadiums, Von der Ahe created a beer garden in the outfield, then refused to cover it with a roof because, in the sun, his patrons would drink more. Von der Ahe's Sportsmen's Park, which he outfitted with roller coasters and Wild West Shows before dubbing it the "Coney Island of the West," remained a dramatic symbol of the kind of venue in need of reform.

Interestingly, even though it is clear that Von der Ahe's behavior occupied a great deal of Spalding's thoughts during the last few decades of the century, his criticism of the St. Louis owner is rather muted in his book. He writes that "Mr. Von der Ahe was proprietor of a pleasure resort in the suburbs of his city, and he came to be interested in Base Ball from the fact that games constituted one among other attractions to his place" (240). At precisely the moment that Spalding was successfully experimenting with crowd control, bleacher segregation and attractions for Chicago's wealthier baseball fans, Von der Ahe was catering to a more diffuse set of desires. While Spalding imagined the 'public' space of a baseball stadium as one which reinforced social order while allowing for a

modicum of release and primitivism among, primarily, members of the middle classes, Von der Ahe looked simply to make a buck off the provision of a place that allowed for a wider range of pleasures available to as wide a fan base as possible.

Spalding's words, though sparse, carry the kind of moralizing judgment reminiscent of condemnations of the era's most popular "pleasure resort in the suburbs," the original Coney Island in Brooklyn. John Kasson, in *Amusing the Million*, argues that Coney Island's success constitutes at least in part a reaction to more genteel forms of public space designed for the masses. Places like Olmstead's Central Park were originally designed to be "rural retreat(s) in the midst of the city... easily accessible refuge(s) from urban pressures and conditions" (Williams, *The Country and the City* 12). A huge part of the discourse surrounding the growing American city centered on the provision of suitable public space to remedy the effect of city life on the individual and consequently how to control threats to public order from the "dangerous classes," who now more than any other time in the nation's history, had a bit of leisure time to fill up. Genteel moralists praised Central Park for its ability to produce a calming effect on visitors who entered weary and wound up from the relentless commercial environment of the city. They praised it for its ability to disperse the masses and to cleanse them of the resins they carried as a result of their daily toil. Both the people and the signs of their labor, "the facts of production," were to move toward their vanishing point in the lush park (Williams 12). Meanwhile,

these moralists found themselves extremely troubled by commercial forms of leisure like Coney and, to a lesser extent, like baseball parks.

Coney Island provided an alternative to the public space of reformers who were attempting to inspire respect for and responsibility toward the maintenance of existing cultural standards. During this era of popular amusement, when the shortened work week and a transition from an agricultural to a manufacturing based economy began to forge a clear distinction between work and leisure time, amusement entrepreneurs such as Frederick Thompson, the manager of Coney's "Luna Park," looked to provide an experience more suited to the tastes and desires of the "million." Thompson and others like him attempted to provide a recreational space free from the discipline of everyday life and normative demands. They created an atmosphere which mocked the world of productivity insofar as it was deliberately unproductive or a-functional. Their roller-coasters and shoot-the-chutes turned the relationship of worker to technology on its head. Slaves to the machine by day, workers spent evenings and Sundays riding big contraptions that didn't produce anything tangible or consumable and that existed solely for their frivolous enjoyment.

Whereas Spalding attempted to negotiate the competing impulses behind Coney Island and Central Park at Lake Front Park, Von der Ahe was clearly more enamored with the former. In the 1890s, he installed rides, built a race track and constructed a honky-tonk in the lot adjacent to the baseball field. He hired a

"glamour girl" coronet band and arranged for prize fights (Gershman 22-23; Lieb 18-19).

Yet, the actual construction of an amusement park on the grounds of his baseball stadium was only the culminating achievement in Von der Ahe's almost two decade-long attempt to make spectatorship at a baseball game more closely akin to carnival than to a "rural retreat in the midst of a city." From the beginning, he had been developing the idea of the ballpark as outrageous entertainment. In the earliest incarnation of his Sportsmen's Park originally constructed in 1881, the beer garden in right field was in play.[42] Outfielders would chase fair balls into an area where men and women sat at picnic tables eating and drinking. The refusal to enforce a firm separation between player and spectator which was becoming more and more rigid in the age of professionalization, was a central part of the carnival experience at Von der Ahe's park. In the beginning of the age of mechanical reproduction, when fewer and fewer people consumed what they produced, this refusal by Von der Ahe to rigidly separate consumer and producer — spectator and ballplayer — must have provided at least a degree of psychic compensation.

Von der Ahe's entire marketing strategy, it seemed, was to embellish the stadium experience — indeed the experience of rooting for the Brown Stockings — with carnival. "Where other teams went to the ball park in prison van-like

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[42] For details, drawings and photos of every park ever used for a professional baseball game see Lowry. For information on and images of the various incarnations of Sportsmen's Park, see 226-31.

buses, Chris made a parade of his team's trip from hotel to the ball grounds" (Lieb 7). He paraded his players in front of the fans in open barouches adorned with St. Louis Browns blankets. He hired as his player-manager, the legendary Charles Comiskey, who, in turn, recruited the wildest bunch of characters in baseball. Comiskey's Browns were notorious in their time for their tactics of intimidation on the field and for their hell-raising behavior off it. Visiting teams were forced to suffer torrents of abuse from both the aggressive home team and from the passionate, crass, and drunken fans. In so many ways, the baseball season in St. Louis gave a large segment of the population a chance to turn the social order on its head. It allowed for the elevation of formerly blue-collar and marginal baseball players to the status of heroes; it accommodated and sanctioned public displays of hostility and resentment toward authority figures in the form of umpires and opponents' managers; and it helped blur the distinction between producing and consuming, perhaps the most important new line being drawn by emergent industrial capitalism.

Finally, in the lampoonable figure of Von der Ahe himself, St. Louis fans were given a king to simultaneously revere and mock in a country allegedly without kings. "Der Poss President," as he was known because of his thick German accent and over-the-top sense of his own grandiosity, adorned himself just like a carnival king. He wore a stove pipe hat, gaudy waistcoats and a slew of diamonds. At once an embodiment of the town's wealth and a symbol of the decadence caused by this wealth, he was given to storied largess as well as

excessive frugality. More often drunk than not, he threw lavish public parties one day, while selling off his most expensive ballplayers the next. He was both 'of the people,' an inspiration to the largely immigrant and poor St. Louis populace, and a grotesque stand-in for the royalty they left behind when they emigrated from Europe. He even carried physically the grotesquery of carnival. His large nose and thick accent made him the frequent subject of cartoon characature in local newspapers. In fact, the most famous illustration of Von der Ahe depicts him in a drunken stupor in his coach, a woman on each knee waiting for him to wake up" (Lieb 6).

This decadent image, which seemed to intensify as he grew more drunk with his own power, became more and more insufferable to Spalding as the National League intensified its program of image reconstruction. Despite the scanty mention of "Der Poss President" in his history, it is clear that Von der Ahe had routinely challenged everything Spalding had been trying to accomplish. Before Von der Ahe's Browns were reluctantly allowed into the league as part of a 1891 merger between the American Association and the N.L., the St. Louis owner had long been amusing himself by making public sport out of Spalding and his professional image.

At no time was this role as Spalding's bête noir more clear than in the aftermath of the controversial 1885 World Series. In what should have been the deciding game of that series, he allowed his manager Comiskey to protest an umpire's decision by having his team walk off the field leaving the competition

deadlocked. Spalding, who initially pledged to have nothing more to do with Von der Ahe and his team from the American Association, finally agreed to have his club play the Browns the next year provided the St. Louis team agree to a provision stipulating that the winner would take all the gate. Von der Ahe not only accepted, but bet an extra $10,000 of his own money. Then, when the Browns pulled the upset, Von der Ahe flaunted his success by not only buying champagne for his team, but by giving money to a few Chicago players who had lost their shirts betting on themselves. This gesture of largess helped solidify his image as a populist owner who seemed genuinely interested in the players and fans; it also threatened to make a mockery of the National League propaganda campaign which claimed that gambling had been eliminated from the sport.

So, after the merger, it was clearly only a matter of time before this symbol of old world decadence, this frequent thorn in Spalding's side, had to be forced out. As the propagandistic and consolidating strategies of the National League owners began to affect the general climate around baseball, something like an "establishment," comprising legitimate owners, stable conservative baseball publications and politicians and public figures like Teddy Roosevelt and Mark Twain who praised the sport's symbolic content, began to emerge (Levine 97-98). Von der Ahe's adversarial relationship with this establishment — on top of some of his imprudent business decisions — ultimately sealed his fate. Alfred Spink, Von der Ahe's close friend who had originally convinced the saloon owner to invest in a ball club and park, famously turned against him after the creation of

the "Coney Island of the West." As the editor of *The Sporting News*, widely accepted as the top sports journal of its day, Spink ordered an article entitled "The Prostitution of a Ballpark." In this and other columns, Spink's newspaper relentlessly went after Von der Ahe, claiming that he turned his park into the "resort of disreputable men and women" and suggesting the establishment conduct a "warfare on him" with "but one result:" a hostile takeover of the franchise.[43]

This clarion call from the increasingly important opinion maker proved to be quite powerful. In 1898, when a fire broke out in Sportsman's Park with close to 4,000 spectators in the stands, Von der Ahe's kingdom literally crumbled. Many people were trampled and burned as they rushed to exit the park and Von der Ahe's saloon and ticket office were completely destroyed. In the fire's aftermath, "Der Poss President" was faced with a stream of lawsuits and a barrage of creditors looking to recoup money they had invested in the park. By this time, the owner was also buried in a financial crisis involving his depression-ravaged real estate investments and embroiled in personal scandals related to adultery and divorce proceedings.[44] Yet, without a push from the baseball establishment, it seems entirely possible that he could have weathered the storm. Trying to court investors for the club, he was outraged when it instead passed into court-ordered

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[43] This attack on Von der Ahe was published on Feb. 29, 1896, shortly after some of the most elaborate rides and attractions had been installed. For more on Von der Ahe's relationship with Spink, see Lieb 3-26 and Burke 69.

[44] See Burke 137. Interestingly, Burke's narration and Lieb's differ significantly. Whereas Lieb, who writes from the perspective of a fan, fantasizes about Von der Ahe as a lovable maverick, a

receivership. He claimed conspiracy. The deal, he maintained, was brokered by the National League which was trying to force him out. The other owners were envious of his success, he reasoned, and would stop at nothing to force him out.

His claims, of course, have plenty of merit. Just as Spink had suggested it do, the league arranged a transaction involving a third party and traction magnate, Frank Robison, the owner of the Cleveland Spiders. The arrangement allowed Robison to take control of both franchises. Seeing the potential of the passionate fan base in St. Louis which Von der Ahe had cultivated, Robison then raided the Cleveland franchise, sending the best players south and filling up the Spiders primarily with the has-beens that Von der Ahe had accumulated during his last couple of years. Yet, Von der Ahe did not give up easily. He brought an unsuccessful suit against Robison and tried to collect $25,000 from every visiting team that played the Browns that year. Ultimately, however, he ended up check-mated by the league. On paper, the National League expelled the old Browns franchise and replaced it with an expansion one awarded to Robison (Burke 137-38).

Owners of ball clubs with the help of opinion-makers like Spink had been attempting to create a unique niche in the entertainment market; they wanted the parks to be a place which could accommodate the unruly behavior of an all-male club, but which was not a brothel or a saloon. Along with this, they needed their venues to pass as respectable establishments, without unregulated access to the

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father figure who presided over the glory years of the St. Louis franchise, Burke sees him as a

"million," and without the most prominent marker of the Victorian underworld, prostitution. Clearly, as Spink's famous column opined, Von der Ahe had violated the delicate balance initiated by people such as Brooklyn's Cassmeyer. The Sportsman's Park of the 1890's had become too hospitable to "disreputable men and women," too much like Coney Island and not enough like Central Park.

To reinforce the important symbolic content of this hostile takeover, I need only point out the first act carried out by Robison's administration at Sportsman's Park. It issued a proclamation that "No beer waiters, peanut vendors or score card boys will annoy patrons during games" (Lieb 24) Von der Ahe's public spectacle of excess simply had to be contained in order to change the popular image of baseball.

The orchestrated transfer of the St. Louis franchise is highly representative of the dynamics of Mills' and Spaldings' *beneficient* revolution. Like radical change in the structure of life during industrialization, the catalyzing forces fueling this revolution were organization and discourse rather than force or revolt. The emergence of baseball stadiums as important components of the urban landscape in the second half of the century did indeed *revolutionize* strategies for organizing public space. Like at the theater, classes were insulated by prices of seats in different sections. Yet the nature of the event, metaphorical war or a primitive release, in contradistinction to theater, privileged the corporeal or the "authentic." Coinciding with the emergence of baseball as the "national pastime"

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demagogic opportunist, more a symbol of greedy ownership than true populism.

was the formation in consciousness of an American middle class, a class heavily invested in becoming arbiters of this "authenticity."

The emergent middle class culture of the 1890s seen through baseball seems to be one which, above all, worked to negotiate a central contradiction in bourgeois status. Praise of baseball as "artificial war," and of owners as "generals" in this war, as well as promotion of PSALs which were to train the next generation of leaders was clearly related to the so-called "cult of the strenuous life" of which Theodore Roosevelt was the most visible proponent. Widespread perceptions of a softening of manners throughout the 19th century created the environment from which sports emerged as a tonic, a cure for the widespread panic caused by a shift in emphasis in the life of the middle class subject from production to consumption, from creation to negotiation and salesmanship. The worship of force in controlled form helped a self-conscious bourgeoisie deal with a kind of envy of the working classes (Lears 101-117).

Yet, in baseball stadiums, it allowed middle class owners to think themselves part of what seemed like an ongoing revolution while actually containing unrest. Bleachers, high ticket prices, daytime baseball, security forces and the elimination of renegade ownership helped keep the more radical members of society either outside the gates entirely or tucked safely in segregated areas. All the while, the accommodation of passionate behavior for middle class men in the stadium allowed for temporary transgressions of class-based behavior. Even though seating kept patrons largely segregated by income and behavior and

exorbitant ticket prices excluded many of the "million" who could afford a pass to, for example, Coney Island, middle class spectators did get to take part in something which didn't happen often in the turn of the century American City — large-scale male bonding with members of diverse ethnicities, neighborhoods and ages. Being a fan, joining temporarily their brothers in rooting for the home team (or, in many cases, rooting against them), superseded most perceptible forms of difference.[45] The internal jostling in stadiums — between betting men, between teams on the field, between umpires and everyone else — were all contained within the emergent middle class ethos of sport. Not real battles, but simulated ones, baseball games and the ones being played in the stands helped inform an

[45] To emphasize the success of Spalding's construction of baseball as our national game, I would point out the degree to which middle class moralists and even genteel reformers seemed to be willing to overlook the supposed sins of the game which gave the owners a sense of purpose in the 1870s. In 1915, for example, in *Popular Amusements*, a moralizing monograph treating the problems of popular amusements, Richard Henry Edwards provides a very telling taxonomy. He catalogues and discusses, type by type, all major forms of American popular amusement and ranks them in terms of their "goodness." He declares some amusements, such as "men only" shows, to be sites of absolute debauchery, intemperance, immoral sexuality, crime and late-night hours. He calls others, such as amusement parks and bowling alleys, for the most part, good, wholesome amusement. When he gets to baseball, however, he become oddly ambivalent. After cataloguing the various sins and abuses transpiring nightly at ballparks, and after expressing extreme wariness about a sport that had become so utterly professionalized, he ultimately finds it necessary to give the sport an uneasy nod in the affirmative. The dissonance between the evidence he presents and the conclusions he draws is not unlike that found in Landecker's treatment of Jacobs Field. Though he has seen enough rowdy behavior and gambling at games to earn his condemnation, he ultimately concludes that "rowdyism... is usually the rowdyism of a small section of the crowd rather than of the players... The morality of American professional baseball, especially in the major leagues, is on the whole nothing less than a national achievement and expression of America's love of clean sport in honest, hard-fought contests." Consuming and propagating Spalding's fiction — that baseball is the "national game," a uniquely American sport reflecting a singular set of values and skills — Edwards shows himself desperate to overlook baseball's underworld because the stadium environment promised solidarity amidst rampant atomization. Popular imagination of the turn of the century American Baseball stadium scene thus functions as a fantasy of an America not torn apart by ethnic, racial, and regional tensions; meanwhile, the actual scene in stadiums was a result of a series of compromises at once maintaining certain segregations and giving off the scent of democracy.

achieved middle class commonality — revolution as symbol divorced from material conditions, a revolution of the individual spirit.[46]

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It should thus be clear that promotion of baseball as more than mere sport emerged largely in response to a crisis of middle class identity and purpose in the late 19th and early twentieth centuries. Landecker's remarks about Jacobs Field, informed by a thoroughly internalized and by now reified belief in the particular value of baseball, suggest a similar crisis today. The boom in downtown ballpark construction has occurred in the wake of an unprecedented widening of the gap between rich and poor in America. This gap is in large measure the logical conclusion of an economic crisis in the mid 1960s and the oil shortages of the early 1970s which forced American businesses to reinvent themselves. In the wake of this seven or so year period of economic uncertainty, capital was forced to become increasingly disorganized, flexible and global in scope. As a result, the

[46] Contemporary rhetoric surrounding sporting events is, of course, indebted to this legacy. From Gerald Ford, who played football at Michigan to Jack Kemp who quarterbacked the Buffalo Bills, politicians regularly highlight past heroism on the athletic field when discussing their qualifications for leading the nation's government. Similarly, a standard trope of promotional spots for televised baseball is the showing of vintage tape of older games accompanied by voice over narration asking the viewer questions such as "who will emerge as the hero today?" Moreover cultural icons from George Will to Kevin Costner, like Landecker, do not think twice when calling baseball the "national pastime," even though registration figures for youth sports show that a more-recently-imported sport like soccer has dwarfed the number of participants playing the game. In short, Spalding's construction of baseball as the "great democratic game" has taken a firm hold in the public's imagination even during a time when, judging by most standards such as average attendance, youth participation and average television ratings, it has been eclipsed

American manufacturing base, long the engine driving the economy and providing steady if unspectacular jobs to the masses, has moved across the borders. In its place, a service-oriented economy of lawyers, financiers, technocrats and entertainment moguls has emerged producing unprecedented prosperity for many during the 1990s along with widespread despair for those left behind. New baseball stadiums, virtual signposts for the decade, have become the centerpieces in efforts to renew the American city previously torn apart by racial riots, suburban flight and the exodus of capital. These downsized venues, seating fewer, but more prosperous patrons, and providing them with a host of side activities on which they can spend their money, are extremely valuable symbols — manifestations in concrete and steel — of the need to package "authenticity" to an audience giddy with its own prosperity but somehow conscious of the historical nexus between its ability to think itself part of an egalitarian and fair society and its very middle class status. In short, part of what makes downsized stadiums resonate as sites of urban democracy, even though the audience's homogeneity is obvious to anyone who looks around at a baseball game, is the legacy of middle class propaganda about the democratizing qualities of the sport.

Ironically, the very stadiums being replaced, the massive, sterile multi-purpose venues like Cleveland Stadium or Baltimore's Memorial Stadium, just might have been sites of an unprecedented democracy of consumption. Now categorically dismissed as cold eyesores, these relics of an age of American mass

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by a variety of other sports. For more on this construction of baseball as something larger than

production in fact accommodated social mixing and access merely gestured toward by historical baseball rhetoric. Enormous structures, seating as many as 85,000 people, these stadiums rarely sold out. This kept ticket prices down, ensuring the availability of walk up, game day tickets. It also prompted management to reach out to the community and give away thousands of tickets nightly to less affluent populations. Furthermore, because they were constructed in an era when technological innovations allowed for better floodlights, these stadiums were the first to truly offer the possibility of attendance to most all Americans. Hosting the majority of their games in the evening, they allowed for the first time widespread access to workers and families who had to work during the day.

Moreover, unlike Spalding's Lakefront Park and unlike new parks, these stadiums tended (and still tend) to flatten out consuming alternatives within the park. Built for the most part without luxury boxes, places like Cincinnati's Riverfront Stadium (now Cinergy Field) or Pittsburgh's Three Rivers Stadium do not set up the kind of symbolic hierarchies which so trouble Landecker in Jacobs Field. Though box seats still cost more than bleachers and even though some of these older parks have been retrofitted with a few revenue-producing luxury suites, the majority of the seats in the house are relatively evenly priced. In fact, with so much space to fill up, these stadiums usually provide enormous bleacher sections where tickets can still be purchased for less than ten dollars.

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sport, see White.

Ironically, the very undesirability of these parks allows for the expression of the kinds of creativity and solidarity that Spalding's rhetoric constructed as central to baseball's appeal. The exile and emptiness of these stadiums accommodates vernacular manifestations of pleasure unimaginable in the newer parks. For example, in Washington's Robert F. Kennedy stadium, in which Frank Howard used to launch massive blasts in the direction of the few outfield Senator faithful and which has recently been abandoned by the N.F.L. Redskins for the luxurious environs of suburban Jack Kent Cooke Stadium, a largely immigrant and poor soccer audience now delights itself by bouncing in unison in the north grandstands, in the process causing the whole section to shake up and down.[47] Similarly, in Cleveland before the Indians moved to Jacobs Field, a loyal gathering of faithful fans would, night after night, assemble in the huge, and mostly empty, bleacher section of Cleveland Stadium, painting themselves up like Native Americans, sitting under a tee-pee and banging on drums.

This group of creative die-hards was commemorated in a widely dismissed 1989 movie entitled *Major League*. This film, largely derivative of the more critically-acclaimed 1988 hit *Bull Durham*, nonetheless manages to articulate the burgeoning class animus of the late eighties baseball scene. In a stirring opening credit sequence, the movie deftly expresses the ironies and tensions involved in downtown Cleveland's process of gentrification, its own *beneficient* revolution.

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[47] D.C. United, in the four-year-old Major Soccer League, is now RFK's only steady tenant. United's audience, fiercely loyal to the squad and passionate about its Latino players is estimated to be 75percent Latino. United succeeds through low ticket prices and relaxed security in the

In this segment, the director juxtaposes shots of the rising new glass, stone and steel downtown of renaissance Cleveland with other shots of working people playing ball on a small patch of dirt outside their soon-to-be-closed refinery and talking hopefully about the Indians over coffee and pie in a diner. Meanwhile, the bleacher crazies are shown readying their headdresses, baseball mitts and megaphones — the accouterments of their vernacular form of stadium pleasure — while workmen lay the brick final bricks of a new corporate office tower which will come to form part of the backdrop to the exclusive Jacobs Field.

All the while, we see glimpses of Rachel Phelps, the new owner of the Indians and the locus of greed and class privilege against whom the fans will be pitted. We learn immediately that she has entered into a secret arrangement with the city of Miami to move the Indians if she is able to escape her lease with Cleveland. An ex-showgirl who inherited the team when her husband died during the off-season, she announces her evil plan to her lackey general manager in her posh office filled with signifiers of privilege — servants, expensive tea settings, fancy furniture. This fictional office eerily anticipates the lavish digs of the real Indians' management after the city built Jacobs Field a few years after the film's release. The comfort Phelps enjoys there stands in sharp contradistinction to the modest environs of the working people we just saw during the opening; it also is radically opposed to the plain old cavernous stadium we see just outside her window. Having sold off all of her good ballplayers, she orders her general

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stadium which allows and even encourages a more spontaneous and high-charged atmosphere

manager to assemble the biggest bunch of losers he can in order to make the team so bad that attendance drops below eight hundred thousand for the year thus allowing her to act on a fine-print clause in her contract and leave Cleveland in favor the sweetheart deal in Miami.

In 1989, this character seemed preposterous, a card-board cut-out of greed and nouveaux riche whimsy. But, of course, in the 1990s (just as it had in the 1890s), life has imitated art. Art Modell packed up and took Cleveland's beloved Browns to Baltimore because the State of Maryland made him a sweetheart deal on a new stadium; the Pittsburgh Pirates and Montreal Expos baseball teams both annually conduct fire-sales of players in order to leverage their cities into paying for a new stadium or in order to lower revenue sufficiently to make a case for them being able to relocate to whatever Sun Belt city happens to be wooing them; and Miami not only got an expansion team, but was able to buy enough talent in its fifth year of existence — Moises Alou from Montreal, and Bobby Bonilla, originally from Pittsburgh, were the cornerstones of the new team — that it won the World Series title in 1997.[48] Immediately after this victory however, cynical Wayne Huizenga, the Florida Marlins' owner and a real-life Rachel Phelps, began dismantling the club, selling off all but one starter in order to lower the club's payroll so that he would profit more when he sold the team.

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than one found in the venues of other American professional sports leagues.

[48] Outside of the Sun Belt, the Washington D.C. area seems to be the most efficacious pawn in the game of chicken that owners play with their municipalities. No fewer than six teams, the San Diego Padres, Milwaukee Brewers, Houston Astros, Pittsburgh Pirates and Montreal Expos have flirted with moving their teams to the nation's capital in order to extort sweetheart stadium deals

The film's portrayal of Rachel Phelps helps the director mourn the passing of cultures in downtown Cleveland as it undergoes its famous renaissance. Throughout the movie, the evil owner becomes pitted against Jake Taylor, a washed-up catcher holding on tenuously to one more year in the "show." Jake of course is the very dramatic embodiment of the kind of "authenticity" emergent in over a century's worth of middle class baseball rhetoric. In one scene, Jake tails his ex-girlfriend, the erstwhile working-class Lynn Wells, who has left her old life behind and now directs a special collections room in the Cleveland library. She drives a Volvo while he still prefers his beat up Buick. He follows her to what he believes is her apartment and ends up at a snooty dinner party in the digs of her new man, a young rich attorney. Jake, in his jeans, t-shirt and sports coat, is forced to engage in pleasant conversation with the empty suits and cocktail dresses of new downtown Cleveland. While "Eine Kleine Nactmuzic" plays in the background, Jake is confronted with not-so-subtly demeaning questions about his financial plans after baseball. He is the regular old guy, juxtaposed with effete and tight-assed respectability; as such, of course, he winds up winning back Lynn's affection. In the movies, working-class machismo routs yuppie pretension every time.

But, this is just the movies. It was only after the city did pay to replace working-class Cleveland Stadium with Jacobs Field that the Indians stopped threatening to move. It was only after Cleveland cut its own enormous sweetheart

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with their own towns. Only the voters and government in Montreal have called the bluff. The

deal, that the Indians began to generate sufficient revenue to buy themselves a contender, breaking their four-decade long slump and finally winning a pennant. Despite the inevitability of such trends, despite the fact that the decade following the movie's release has seen a straightforward correlation between capital and on-field success, the movie clings desperately to the type of fantasy contained within the century old baseball rhetoric.[49] It holds on to the belief that "pluck, verve and vigor" can help ordinary Americans win despite odds decidedly stacked against them. Typical of underdog sport films, this movie shows fans gradually warming up to Phelps' rag tag collection of players who defy the odds and force a play-off game with the Yankees for the American League East championship. A full house shows up at Cleveland Stadium banding together with the team against the evil owner who is, by now, furious that her plans have been foiled. Panning around the crowd, showing us what Phelps sees, the camera captures visions of retreating working-class Cleveland. It reveals a sea of bad haircuts and fake leather jackets, a mixed bag of bleacher faithful in Native American head-dress, bikers, sheet metal mechanics and secretaries, all of whom identify with the underdog outcasts on the field. This seems to be the point of the film, the essence of its mythology. Cleveland and baseball itself, both traditionally unaffected, are threatened by emergent downtown culture represented by Lynne's fiance' and

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five other teams will be in new ball parks by 2001.

[49] In 1998, for example, four of the five best teams in baseball were also the wealthiest. The Yankees, who set a modern major league record for wins (both in the regular and post seasons) also had the second highest payroll in baseball history.

friends and by greedy owners like Rachel Phelps. The old stadium is the last refuge of a particular kind of "pre-post-Fordist" solidarity. [50]

Of course, one of the main reasons the film was uniformly panned is its highly derivative nature. Its primary conceit, its central rags to riches to rags again story, tropes everything from *Huckleberry Finn* to *Rocky*. In short, it merely seems to regenerate the cant supporting the belief system of American bourgeois capitalism. Yet, overlooked by most film reviewers is how well it chronicles, intentionally or not, the passing of an age in which "unappealing" urban public spaces like multi-purpose stadiums provided the possibility of vernacular forms of pleasure to a large segment of the population which is now economically excluded.

In the age of simulacra, however, even this appeal of the "unappealing" has been appropriated by savvy managers and architects. Franchises with new

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[50] The movie itself represents a last-stand of sorts. Its sequel, *Major League II*, released in 1994, elides most of the class considerations which made the first one watchable in the first place. This time, the owner is not the representation of evil in the film. The players, spoiled by their success which earned them all seven figure salaries, have lost touch with the passion that enabled them to overachieve in the original. Mirroring the transformation of allegiances within the game itself, the movie pits heckling fans against pampered, spoiled ballplayers. As in real life, class resentment gets deflected from the owners to the players. Randy Quaid plays a bleacher bum who relentlessly heckles the underachieving team. Yet, the movie which offers a critique of the new "nouveaux riche" in baseball, is itself hopeless denuded. As cynical as its own message, this film passes off Baltimore as Cleveland, Oriole Park at Camden Yards as Cleveland Stadium. This does not work at all. The best part of the first film was its examination of the dynamics of a place — downtown Cleveland and the old Stadium. The tension caused by the pressure of the new on the old captured an anxiety central to urban redevelopment of which Jacobs Field was the crowning achievement. The sequel is merely a baseball film, a series of set pieces and one liners highlighting the quirks of characters played by Charlie Sheen, Tom Beringer, et alia. Conversely, the first film incorporates a few scenes shot at Cleveland Stadium with much of the action staged at Milwaukee's County Stadium. The filmmakers did not have to dress up the Milwaukee stadium much given the similarities in the two. In Chapter One, I discuss as one of the fundamental differences between multi-purpose and new baseball only stadiums the articulation of "uniqueness" in the new. The fact that County Stadium looked so much like Cleveland Stadium

parks now spend a great deal of time and creative energy imagining ways to replicate vernacular forms of pleasure available in older ballparks. Much like Spalding and his middle-class colleagues, who in response to duel charges of elitism and rowdyism, mined the sport for discursive signals of baseball's "authentic" qualities while inventing ways to segregate and exclude, modern management compensates for a lack of economic and racial diversity in the stadiums by offering witty cultural forms of "otherness" to an audience primarily composed of the new urban and suburban professional classes. Like the emergent middle class a century ago, "post-Fordist" professionals find in baseball ways to negotiate their ambivalent feelings regarding their own normative status. In my next chapter, I will show how this ambivalence is responsible for the creation and mythologizing of bleacher sections in new-old parks. Simulacra, or replications of sites of "authenticity," these spots have become the most popular in the park. Contrary to Landecker's claim that the symbolic juxtaposition of bleachers with the gaudy club restaurant diminishes the pleasure of the new park, I will assert that it augments it. I will argue in fact that patrons flock to the bleachers precisely *because* the section promises residual connection with forms of outsider culture and primitivism central to the identity formation of an American middle class.

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emphasizes the mass produced quality of the older stadiums, an aesthetic against which the new stadiums react.

## *Chapter* 3
## Where the Outside is In

"Let me first call your attention to the bleachers. This is the place to be, the place where the *real* fans sit." Jacobs Field tour guide.

By beginning the tour of the new Cleveland ballpark this way, the young tour guide encapsulates much of the fantasy behind pleasure at retro ballparks. Uttering this line on the first stop of the tour, the state-of-the art press room on the mezzanine level of the stadium, he asks tourists to consider the weighty juxtaposition he has set up. Surrounded by fax machines, video-replay monitors, headsets and microphones, etc. — the technology mediating the experience for the television viewer — the tourist looks out onto the no-frills bleacher section and is asked to consider it a final refuge of authenticity. Where the "real fans sit" is fundamentally different from the couches of television viewers, or the lounges of the luxury boxes flanking the press box, or the fancy dining room tables of the elite club restaurant overhanging the concourse on the first base side. It is encoded as both a site of unmediated experience and a place where "real fans" can reject an overabundance of comfort in sky boxes and living rooms in favor of some previous order of things.[1]

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[1] Throughout this chapter I will reference Jean Baudrillard's ideas about how older objects help bestow "aura" or "authenticity" to sacred ground. In *The System of Objects,* Baudrillard discusses the sacredness of churches in ways that seem applicable to retro stadiums. Both rely on antique symbols — crosses, shrouds or replica bats from baseball heroes of the past — to endow them with "a shard of absolute reality ensconced" (79). The tour guide's juxtaposition of technology with the old-time simplicity of the bleachers reminds me of what the French theorist identifies as two, intertwined, needs of the contemporary, worshipping subject: "It is our fraught curiosity

A huge, stand-alone box, perched entirely in open air underneath the Jumbotron (part of the world's largest stand-alone scoreboard), the bleachers form the only section segregated from the rest of the park, the only one requiring a specific ticket for entrance and the only one with its own concession stands, rest-rooms and other amenities.[2] Passage into this exclusive zone therefore marks bleacher inhabitants as special within the inverted psychic economy of the ballpark. The corporate and upper-middle classes have their luxury sky boxes, true, but the *real* baseball fans have their bleachers.

Exposed to the elements, segregated from the rest of the patrons, the Cleveland bleacher patrons who sit in this section embark every evening on a nostalgia trip. They are able to purchase a taste of the working class experience in its most attractive form — in a scenario where marginalized culture holds the appeal of the "authentic." They choose this section, always the first to sell out before the season begins, and twice as expensive as the cheapest seats at Jacobs Field, in order to tap into the outsider eroticism of ballparks past. Memories, stories and legends of unruly or eccentric behavior in the "cheap seats" of earlier decades overlay their experience promising them psychical fellowship with traditional bleacher dwellers. Purchasing a ticket to this section thus enables them

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about our origins that prompts us to place such mythological objects, the signs of a previous order of things, alongside the functional objects which, for their part, are the signs of our current mastery. For we want at one and the same time to be entirely self-made and yet be descended from someone: to succeed the Father yet simultaneously to proceed from the Father" (83).

[2] In general, the experience of attending a game in Jacobs Field is meant to replicate an open-air promenade in an urban space like Hyde Park, or perhaps even more apropos, Union Grounds in Brooklyn, home to the first enclosed ballpark. But the bleachers, significantly, break up this continuity. By doing so, they immediately set themselves apart as a location of privilege.

to participate in a simulated culture of the 'castoff,' one which gets its cachet from ghosts of the past. In short, they pay for a spot here expecting to experience 'carnival' like the urban poor — laborers, African-Americans, and immigrants — who historically occupied the bleachers out of statutory or economic necessity but then found the sections able to accommodate a wide range of behaviors unacceptable in more reputable public social venues.

Nonetheless, this (or any) attempt to reconstitute a site of "authenticity" is problematic. For one thing, the actual class status of contemporary bleacher dwellers limits their ability to think themselves outside the margins. Simple economics have excluded the poorer Clevelanders. Since no single game tickets are available, a family of four would have to buy an expensive season ticket or partial plan and thus shell out a minimum of $2,000 for the rights to sit there.[3] For another, as Jean Baudrillard points out in *Simulacra and Simulation*, by bringing mummies into view, we destroy them.[4] In other words, an attempt to package an experience as *real* denies the potential for sought-after feelings of absolute originality or truth. Despite bleacher patron's desire to see themselves as *real* baseball fans (and in part *because* of it), their experience is always 'post-referential,' or a simulation of previous experiences.

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[3] This figure based on the price of a game ticket plus parking, a hot dog and a soda.

[4] Replication, to Baudrillard, even as it attempts to use science and technology to preserve memory of forgotten places or items, tends to undermine what the pure symbolic order has conserved. A replica, itself by nature artificial, seeps into the symbolic order and thus renders even memory of the original similarly artificial. See pages 9-11 of *Simulacra and Simulation* for a detailed analysis of the exhuming of the mummy Ramses II.

To advance and build upon this notion in this chapter, I will first give a brief history of the bleacher section, showing how it gradually came to be invested with the authenticity of the urban outcast. I will then examine a book-length essay describing one man's quest to integrate himself into the particularly storied bleacher culture of Chicago's Wrigley Field and thus pitch himself into this world of "anti-privilege" privilege. Understanding the longing inherent in Lonnie Wheeler's attempt to flee from suburban simulacrum to urban authenticity via a summer spent in the outfield of the hallowed park underscores an important crisis affecting the contemporary American middle class. I will link this crisis — a crisis of authenticity — to the wild popularity of retro ballparks.

A virtual embodiment of suburban longing, the Jacobs' bleacher section promises both institutionalized access to a vanquished past and communion with increasingly remote urban American working-class subcultures. Yet the obvious distance between these forms of longing and the desired objects of the longing reveals a lot about utopian fantasies invested in re-urbanization as we approach the millennium. Ultimately, I will describe how the essential "post-referentiality" of retro stadiums, magnified in the bleacher section, textures the fan experience at these parks with a sense of belatedness highly representative of late-millennial middle-class American culture.

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The term "bleacher" first emerged in the middle of the 19th century, most probably as a double entendre. Its most obvious meaning derives from the fact that these sections were uncovered. Thus, a lack of protection from the sun and rain guaranteed that a patron in this part of the park would be "bleached."[5] However, a less-known trope of the word referred directly to the *people* populating the sections. In the late 19th century, the term "bleacher" also would have signified "slacker" or "bum" after the colloquial meaning of the verb "to bleach," which meant to skip or to cut. So, for example, Harvard students who "attended morning prayers more in 'spirit' than in body" were called "bleachers."[6] This doubled-meaning is crucial. The sections were not simply devoid of amenities such as a roof and concessions, but they were also coded as sites of transgression. Thus, part of their appeal from the very beginning was that they were *un*appealing, a place for the downward mobility of decorum.

An extension of the "bettor's ring," or the pens constructed in earlier enclosed ballparks to both accommodate and contain unruly behavior, these sections indeed both allowed for and even promoted illicit activity. Baseball owners made sure beer flowed freely for the sun-parched fans in the bleachers, many of whom were already "bleaching" from work. The bleachers as an

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[5] For a detailed description of the scene at 19th century sporting events, Rader. Also see Nasaw for a break down of the class and race dynamics of bleacher sections at the turn of the century.

[6] *Dictionary of American Slang*, s.v. "bleacher."

innovation thus further institutionalized a large part of the appeal of baseball as a spectator sport for men of various vicissitudes of the middle classes. They afforded them a public space free from the prohibitions characteristic of their lives outside the stadium. They gave men a safe haven, a place to drink, curse, spit, gamble and even loudly voice discontent with authority in the form of umpires and management. In short, bleachers allowed men to take their "saloon behavior" to an open space with a slightly better reputation than clubs and brothels.

As bleachers became more popular later in the century, they began to become the center for much of the activity that had taken place previously in the bettors' pens. Furthermore, as immigrants began to take an interest in the sport and as a few African-Americans were able to afford tickets to ball games, bleachers gradually also became a site of a modicum of social mixing impossible in many other public venues. Though hardly a radical space, after all they were constructed to insulate wealthier and more decorous fans while profiting from the desire of poorer citizens and members of the Victorian male sporting community to see games, they did facilitate a certain brotherhood. They allowed men from various neighborhoods, occupations, ethnicities and sometimes even races and classes to temporarily join together, rooting for the same team or jeering the same umpire.[7] While bleachers enforced economic and, in some parks, racial segregation, they simultaneously began to provide a site for the generation and

[7] See Nasaw's chapter on baseball for a more detailed discussion of social mixing in turn of the century stadiums. Throughout, he emphasizes that, despite the continued prevalence of exclusive and segregating policies in stadiums, male patrons were able to bond with a larger group of men from a wider background than they were in most other contexts.

rehearsal of oppositional meanings and behaviors. In short, they enabled a degree of solidarity among the economically-exiled, as well as among those middle-class men who chose to exile themselves.[8]

This dynamic of simultaneous exile and energy as well as the cheaper entrance fees made bleachers most popular in towns with large ethnic, particularly German and Irish, populations. The two Lake Front Parks in Chicago, built in 1878 and 1883 respectively, housed the largest bleacher sections in the major leagues in order to accommodate masses of fans from the South Side and Bridgeport. The five incarnations of the Polo Grounds in New York each had large, mostly German and Irish, bleacher sections.[9] But, perhaps the wildest bleacher section of the late 19th century arose in St. Louis. The original Sportsman's Park was built in 1881 largely from money provided by Chris Von der Ahe, who owned a beer garden down the street from the original Grand Avenue Grounds and who made his biggest profits selling beer to thirsty spectators. He objected vociferously to plans to cover the grandstands at the new park, realizing that out of the sun, fans would not work up quite the same thirst.

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[8] John Fiske, in "Productive Pleasures" writes that this form of expression is derived from the ability of people to produce meanings *from* the text rather than simply being subject *to* its inherent meanings. Popular "productive" pleasures, such as bleacher behavior, arise "from the social allegiances formed by subordinated people, they are bottom-up and thus must exist in some relationship of opposition to power (social, moral, textual, aesthetic, and so on) that attempts to discipline and control them" (49). I do indeed believe that the word "bleachers" is invested with the cachet of this kind of "bottom up" sub-cultural social movement. However, to see "bleacher exile" as purely a product of economic or racial segregation would be problematic. Clearly, even from the beginnings of the bleachers, many middle class men chose to sit there for it provided them a opportunities to enjoy types of freedom to which they were not usually accustomed. Also, later in the chapter, I begin to explore the difficulty in theorizing this behavior when it is more thoroughly appropriated in a simulacrum by members of a more legitimate class.

Eventually though he compromised with architects when he was promised that the new park would accommodate a large bleacher section. Thus, selling a "scuttle of suds" for a nickel and a baseball ticket for two bits, Von der Ahe was able to build his Browns around "a keg of beer and a barrel of pretzels" (Lieb 6).

In Chapter Two I discuss Von der Ahe's particular bleacher section in more detail, arguing that a large part of its appeal was that it gave Browns' fans a space where they could act out in resistance to the newly professionalized ethos of both baseball and the middle classes that came to dominate it. The bleachers in St. Louis stood out in a park which itself was already pushing the limits of the emergent baseball establishment's boundaries of decorum. This spot hosted the inversion of social status by orchestrating a type of 'anti-privilege,' whereby the worst seats in the house became the best, the most marginal patrons became the most storied. Reaching its heyday in the late 1990s when Von der Ahe turned the whole park into his "Coney Island of the West," the St. Louis bleacher section helped establish this area in the ballpark as a world apart, an island for workers, immigrants, African-Americans and self-isolating middle-class white men.[10] Compensating spectators who sat there with freedom from larger societal restrictions, with community, and with the privilege of *producing* ballpark energy rather than simply *consuming* it, this section was then accented (if not replicated)

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[9] Ironically, the gap between the grandstands and the bleachers helped preserve the latter section when the rest of Polo Grounds #4 was destroyed by fire in 1911. See Lowry 192.

[10] For a complete description of the "Coney Island of the West," see Chapter Two. Also, see Lieb, Gershman and Levine.

in most of the first wave of great concrete and steel parks under construction during the first couple decades of the 20th century.[11]

In fact, in many of the stadiums that are now direct models for new parks such as Brooklyn's Ebbets Field (of which an exact likeness is proposed as a replacement for Shea Stadium in Flushing Meadows), the bleachers seemed implicitly invested with the production of their own specific characters and rituals. In turn, these characters and rituals became a central part of the experience of attending a game there. For example, some Dodger fans such as Eddie Battan, who constantly tooted a tin whistle or Jack Pierce who, game after game, would scream "Coooookie" in honor of his favorite player, Cookie Lavagetto, became as famous as the ballplayers themselves. Furthermore, because their team, year after year was so bad, because fans felt that, after the 1925 death of founder Charles Ebbets, the management cared more about the bottom line than they did about the ball club or the comfort and enjoyment of the ballpark's patrons, Brooklyn bleacher bums took to the invention of their own manifold forms of pleasure. The unauthorized Dodger symphony, for example, brought in kazoos, pots, pans, or whatever else they could find in order to form their own version of a baseball marching band, parading around playing parodic music, mocking players, management and umpires alike. For example, when the umpires entered the field they were ritually serenaded with a rendition of "Three Blind Mice." Thus, in a time before the public relations arm of baseball teams

[11] For more on the cultural meaning of these great parks (Boston's Fenway Park, Detroit's Tiger

hired men in chicken suits to stir up stadium energy, fans, particularly those in bleacher sections, were largely responsible for creating "atmosphere."

Clearly then, when the Jacobs Field tour guide points to the bleachers as the last refuge of the *real*, he accents the legacy of "Dem Bums" in Brooklyn and the beer-drinkers in St. Louis, etc. "Reality" in the case of Dodger fans references the impulse to subvert institutional neglect by creating their own experience. Their exiled status inspired and enabled picaresque and creative activities while simultaneously allowing them freedom to protest the status quo. The tour guide's words bespeak a desire to experience the fantasy of being *on the outside looking in*, of being in the subject position of someone who, with nothing to lose, is able to express him or herself freely, cleverly inverting the structures of normative society. By doing so, however, these words simultaneously gesture toward the limitations of the experience of attending a game at a retro park.

The words of the tour guide begin to describe the belatedness of contemporary fandom. For one thing, the material conditions of the patrons in the original parks were radically different from those in the modern stadium. The bleachers at old Ebbet's Field truly were a refuge for people who were economically or statutorily denied entrance to other parts of the park. Blacks-only sections in the bleachers and dramatically stratified admission charges elsewhere in the park enforced actual segregation. In contemporary stadiums on the other hand, segregation is more of an elective. Like the middle-class men in the

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Stadium, Philadelphia's Shibe Park), see White 10-46.

Victorian sporting community, people *choose* their own exile; they *choose* to locate themselves in contradistinction to the markers of the elite in the form of luxury sky boxes and elite dinning clubs. In fact, they pay *extra* for the privilege. For another thing, the heyday of Ebbet's Field took place before the era of televised sports. Back then, the only way to see a ball game was to attend one. By contrast, today the truly exiled can only afford to watch games at home.

Nonetheless, whereas the oppressive forces creating the need for outcast culture of the bleachers were more tangible in the early part of the century, they still exist, albeit in more subtle forms. I would suggest that today they have more to do with the "terroristic hyperreality" of the experience of being a member of the white, American middle class in the late century (Baudrillard, *Transparency of Evil* 79-80). With some exceptions, ballpark patrons historically entered the bleachers out of economic, racial or social exigency. Now bleacher patrons consist primarily of middle-class suburbanites who are looking for recompense for a lack of community, for a lack of edge, and for a lack of belief in their ability to impact the course of their own lives; they want to produce instead of merely consume.

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Many of the psychical details of this imagined flight from suburban hyperreality are present in Lonnie Wheeler's 1988 book, *Bleachers: A Summer in*

*Wrigley Field.* Importantly, Wheeler gives us insight into this form of longing at exactly the same moment that the first retro park, Oriole Park at Camden Yards in Baltimore was being built. This suggests at the very least that the same impulse to find a "real place... one that feels different from other places" — the impulse which leads Wheeler to spend and entire summer in the Wrigley bleachers — was very much in the air at the dawn of this new era in stadium construction (1).

Wheeler begins the description of his quest with words that fill-in around the edges of the Jacobs' tour guide's commentary:

> The bleachers seemed ... like baseball's stomping ground — companionable, passionate, fundamental, unaffected, and gloriously human. I imagined them as the place where the game met the people; as the place where a ballgame felt like a ballgame, and a season felt like a season. (2)

Wheeler's words here bespeak a desire for connection, for entrance into community, which he expresses to the reader through the most "insider" of rhetorical devices, the tautology. Anyone in the know instinctively understands the feeling of a "ballgame" or a "season." Excessive language or description thus becomes unnecessary, decadent, an antithesis to the "fundamental." His confidence about the signifying potential of this tautology mirrors one of baseball's primary appeals — the fantasy of pure signification or a one to one relationship between sign and referent. When a center-fielder leaps at the wall and fails to come down with the ball, we all understand perfectly and instantly the

feelings of impotence and disappointment signified by the expected drop of his head; likewise, when a first baseman digs out a low throw and raises his glove triumphantly, every spectator in the stadium, in unison, understands the meaning of his triumphant pantomime — be they in Cleveland, San Diego, Duluth, or the Bronx. Cultural difference and semiotic ambiguity vanish in "baseball's stomping ground" providing spectators a respite from the more complex system of signification they are faced with in the outside world.

But my purpose here is not to simply recast Roland Barthes' arguments into the stream of baseball discourse.[12] Instead, I want to flesh out some of the implications of Wheeler's vision of the bleachers as a utopian place of the "people," where entrance, like the understanding of a tautology, codes you instantly as an insider. His longing for a place where "a ballgame felt like a ballgame" signals his desire to experience the sensation of community associated with signifying certitude. The bleachers, he suggests, provide an antithesis to the world he was forced to grow up in, a "cookie-cutter suburban universe" where every shopping mall was like another "with five shoe stores, a chocolate-chip cookie shop, and patient husbands sitting around the fountain" (12). Semiotic homogeneity distinguishes a suburban mall from a 'real place' like the Wrigley Bleachers and thus forbids the kind of hyper-understanding one gains from being

[12] Here I am referring to Barthes' famous critique in "The World of Wrestling" from *Mythologies*. In his essay, Barthes explores the semiotic system of professional wrestling, ultimately suggesting that the sport's appeal can be linked to its promise of a completely knowable universe of signs and reference. One symptom of the post-modern condition for Barthes is the fantasy of pure signification, the reactionary nostalgia for a time of racial, class and ethnic insularity which seemed to produce absolutes of morality and identity.

part of a clan, community or group with a common, yet unique, system of signification. Growing up in suburbia, Wheeler had always felt cheated out of participation in a community of people with a unique cultural tradition and language — a set of communal assumptions endowing them with instant and profound understanding of their world and of each other. [13] In short, he came to Wrigley to experience the sensation of being a cultural and linguistic 'insider,' one of the mythical "people" that the game comes to meet in the bleachers.

Shortly after arriving at the ballpark, Wheeler quickly befriends one of these very 'insiders.' He meets Mike Murphy, a sales representative and self-described "bleacher historian," who gives him a first-hand account of the beginning of "Bleacher Bum" notoriety. According to Murphy the Chicago bleachers had always been an interesting place; but their spot in baseball folklore had not been established until the mid to late '60s when about 15-20 loyal and lonely Cubs fans came to recognize in each other a shared tragi-comic sensibility. "We were a raucous group... a little friendship among people... with nothing to do but talk to each other," he tells Wheeler describing how, by that point, he could often count on two hands the number of people attending games in the right-field bleachers. He then describes to the writer just how an accidental group of outcasts emerged from this isolation, learning to not only accept, but to enjoy

[13] In *The Way We Never Were*, Stephanie Koontz seeks at every turn to de-romanticize nostalgic beliefs about American social history. She argues that the housing boom of the late 40's and early 50's coincided with increased tension among the generations populating American urban households. Oppression caused by the very type of shared cultural and linguistic assumptions romanticized by Wheeler combined with the sudden availability of nuclear family housing and

their marginal status (13-14). Sitting together, they made an art form out of taunting opponents' outfielders and conducting dollar wagers among themselves. During this time, the outcome of the game mattered much less to them than the camaraderie they enjoyed.

However, after a year or so of this, the fun abruptly ended when a strange and unexpected thing happened — the Cubs started winning. The team "became a hot story in '69, (and) all of a sudden everyone wanted to join the bandwagon" (14).

> There were four newspapers in town then, and they were all trying to get an angle on the Cubs. One time a reporter came out and asked, "Who are you guys?" We said, "Ah, take a hike. We're just a bunch of bums out here." The next day the headline said something about 'bleacher bums' this or that, and all of a sudden all these TV crews are out there looking for the Bleacher Bums. Before we knew it, NBC was out there, the *Wall Street Journal*. We started wearing yellow helmets because when we went to St. Louis the Cardinal fans threw things at us; pretty soon, they're selling yellow helmets on the street corner. The Bleacher Bums became synonymous with Cub fans in general. We didn't set out to make ourselves a group. The press made us a group. The press created us (qtd. In Wheeler 13-14).

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reliance on the automobile generated the very impulse toward suburbanization which made Wheeler's experience seem denuded and atomized.

Here Murphy demonstrates many of the qualities implied by Wheeler when he imagined the bleachers as "passionate, fundamental, unaffected, and gloriously human." The colorful "bleacher historian" carries a healthy suspicion of power; he is independent, defiant and, above all, non chalant. Being a true bleacher bum requires one to think him or herself but an *accidental* member of a group of outsiders. Membership cannot be bought on a local street corner and it cannot be self-conscious. Thus, the concept of "Bleacher Bums" itself becomes a theoretical impossibility at the very moment that the "bums" become recognizable as an entity. Self-consciously marginal behavior differs enormously from instinctive behavior. It forces the subject into a quid pro quo economy. Motivations become tainted; actions become more tied to performance than simply *being*.[14] The simplicity, the "unaffected" quality, fantasized by Wheeler is subsumed by the logic of capitalist exchange. Therefore Wheeler's attempt to enter and understand this community is, by nature, problematic. He will, regardless of his earnestness, always be on the outside looking in at his beloved outsiders.

The pilgrim's quest, just like the nightly quests of the Cleveland bleacher contingent, is of course a naïve one. Whereas Wheeler rhapsodizes about old ballparks providing him an escape from his "cookie-cutter suburban universe,"

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[14] Dick Hebdige, in *Subcultures*, claims that the kind of group identification Murphy refuses is the source of power for members of subcultures. Because of this, I think it important to think of Murphy's group as an "underworld" rather than a "subculture." Unlike the punks of which Hegdige writes, the increased visibility of Murphy's group threatens its very existence. In Chapter Five, when discussing Don Delillo's appropriately named novel ***Underworld***, I compare the experience of taking part in a visible versus an invisible subculture.

Murphy remains sanguine (4). The "Bleacher Historian" realizes that the energy of an *authentic* place is, by nature, ephemeral and accidental. To him, the end of the real "Bleacher Bums" began to occur shortly after they were formed and was hastened when the press commodified them with a name. By simply coming into consciousness of themselves as a group, the "bums" threatened the very sense of independence giving this loose collection of working-class and white-collar romantics its gusto.

This demise of their fun was then further sped along when the Cubs' on-field success began to attract a wealthier clientele. New patrons to the park, like Wheeler himself, could perhaps mimic the ways of the "Bleacher Bums," shouting down opponents' outfielders and making dollar wagers during the game, but they would never share the original "bums'" capacity for irony; they would never be able to tap into the extreme sense of marginalization which created the initial group solidarity in the first place. Murphy's words clearly demonstrate that he recognizes the significance of the campy yellow helmets sold on street corners. Like Anasazi pottery or other sacred remnants of vanquished Native American culture purchased at gift shops on land once actually inhabited by natives, the helmets, to the original bleacher bums, represent imminent replacement — of themselves by the bourgeoisie, of their ephemeral experience with an object that concretizes as it commemorates.

It was fun while it lasted. During the first year or so, Murphy and his friends had managed to produce what John Fiske would term oppositional

meanings of self-empowerment (Offensive Bodies 69-102). Creative manifestations of pleasure had provided the "Bleacher Bums" a way to counter psychically the effects of the hierarchy mapped by the social and economic segregation of Wrigley Field as well as the inevitable heartbreak of yet another losing season. Virtually ignored by stadium management just like their progenitors in Brooklyn and St. Louis, etc., the "Bleacher Bums" in Chicago found themselves relatively free to engage in unauthorized yet charismatic behavior like heckling, betting, and shouting down figures of authority. In exile, they were able to safely vocalize their discontent and imagine a new order for themselves. It is this kind of energy — the creative energy of the exiled — that Wheeler seems to long for when he exits suburbia. Leaving behind the sterile world of his upbringing required him to enter carnival, to temporarily assume a new identity: in short, to try to become Murphy.

Yet, based both on Murphy's beliefs about the belatedness of the contemporary "Bleacher Bum" craze and on his knowledge about the ephemeral quality of this kind of Saturnalian experience, we must see his quest as vexed. The very fact that he has knowledge of the Wrigley bleachers as an *authentic* place undermines its authenticity. The "fundamental" form of energy and community accessible previously by Murphy and the gang comes to Wheeler only in commoditized form, as part of baseball folklore. Wheeler's pilgrimage and the book he wrote after it, as well as the Jacobs' tour guide's linguistic shorthand for

describing the bleachers as a site of authenticity, all result from and perpetuate that very folklore.

Nonetheless, the nightly reconstitution of Murphy's bleacher experience at Jacobs Field is, just like Wheeler's pilgrimage, a uniquely late-century response to an authentic American crisis — the chasm separating a longing for authenticity and the atomizing results of an increasingly suburbanized and commercialized world. In Cleveland, the "Bleacher Bums" have evolved into a "Bleacher Bourgeoisie" whose members return at night to the same suburban neighborhoods as the occupants of the lower boxes and the corporate suites. Within the reworked psychic economy of the modern stadium, they simply purchase privilege, a taste of Murphy's *authentic* experience. Inside a partially faux urban space with an appeal directly linked to virtual reality — experiencing baseball, the transcendent game, once again played in idyllic pastoral spaces accented with simulated forms of the turmoil and energy of the retreating 20th century city — the bleachers are ground zero in the re-constitution of the "real."[15]

Furthermore, in addition to thinking themselves close cousins to the "Murphys" of ballparks past, the Cleveland bleacher patrons nightly nourish the fantasy of having influence, of being producers or 'players.'[16] When a sports owner or coach proclaims that "our fans are the best in the league," he or she

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[15] See White for a discussion of the relationship between the emergence of "permanent" urban ballparks in the early part of the century and baseball's status as our "national pastime." Also see John Bale's introduction to the anthology, *The Stadium and the City*. In it he discusses the symbolic content of the enclosure of open urban space.

implies that the stadium environment — with its boisterous fans acting as a sixth, tenth, or twelfth man, depending on the sport — goes a long way toward affecting the outcome of the game.[17] Sports fans don't just spectate, they participate. This fantasy would have obvious psychological cachet in Cleveland, a town where earlier this century workers literally crafted the raw material to build a nation.[18] In turn, this form of participation saturated with meanings from an earlier era satisfies many other needs missing from the fabric of suburban, consumer-based existence — from catharsis to cathexis to nationalistic tribalism. Fans scream out daily frustrations in a place that welcomes such behavior, express their love for mythic heroes and feel themselves part of a large group effort so often missing from contemporary middle-class American life.

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It is precisely this kind of tribal fantasy I now want to examine closely. In *Bleacher Bums*, a play written by Joe Mantegna in 1977 to celebrate the exploits of the Wrigley fans, the wildest stretch comes when a character identified as

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[16] To be a 'player' in the business world means to be one who makes things happen, a deal maker. To be a 'player' in hip-hop lingo means to be successful sexually with many women. To be a 'player' in the sporting world means of course to participate rather than to watch.

[17] This locution is part of the traditional cant of sports franchise owners or coaches when making speeches or accepting championship trophies.

[18] The most recent "rebirth" of Cleveland, by necessity, renounces the notion of Cleveland as a town of production. Instead, in its new incarnation as a haven for tourists, baseball fans, and conventioneers, Cleveland has become a site of large-scale consumption. Thus, whereas one's civic duty in earlier eras was to produce, one's most important function now is to consume. So, sitting underneath gray floodlight poles, exposed steel purlines and mammoth trusses meant to

"Cheerleader" returns to the bleachers and begins to lead the regulars in homophobic, personal attacks on the opponents' right fielder as well as deleterious schemes to affect the outcome of the game.

Previously, the Cheerleader had been ostracized and exiled from the section when he had attempted to lead the bleacher bums in a series of positive cheers. "We don't do no singing here. Go back to left field," he is told by Zig, one of the regulars in the bleachers. This rebuff underlines how an outsider to the world of the bleachers would fail to understand the tragi-comic ethos of the section. History has told the bums that their team will, somehow, find a way to lose, so the regulars focus not on the standard telos, but rather on their own ends. They make bets with each other on the outcomes of each plate appearance, they occupy themselves with smaller acquisitions, getting their friends to buy them hot dogs and chocolate malts and making unwanted advances toward the occasional woman who lands in the right field stands. Many even bet against the Cubs as a way to offset the inevitable disappointment of losing.

The Cheerleader's attempt at being a "team-player," allied in spirit with the Cubs' corporation, shows him to be ignorant of the dynamics of pleasure in this male-dominated, anti-establishmentarian underworld. His behavior augurs the imposition of the ways of the legitimate world just off stage, and, by extension, the unwelcome colonization of the bleachers by a less marginal crowd so thoroughly bemoaned by real-life bleacher bum Murphy. Yet, when the

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remind visitors of the now-closed steel mills just across the Cuyahoga from the stadium, bleacher

Cheerleader returns in the later innings, he brings with him the outsider erotic of carnival and comes not only to be accepted by the bleacher bums, but lionized. This time, rather than imploring the outfield cynics to cheer for the Cubs, he bets them that his verbal abuse will get the opponents' outfielder to "climb the vines," or get so mad that he turns his back on the game and tries to enter the bleachers (44).

Pulling out a book of facts he has compiled on all major league players, the Cheerleader climbs down toward Cardinal outfielder Anderson and begins to hurl a stream of homophobic insults:

> Hey you look pretty good in your uniform now, you know that? You should keep those dancing lessons up. I bet you look good in tights and a tu-tu. Too bad you can't play baseball. Hey, isn't your mother ashamed of you? She thought you were a regular guy and now she hears you're going out with Lou Brock. You fruitball turkey! You're stuffed Anderson, you're stuffed like my dummy here! (45)

By calling into question Anderson's sexual orientation, he not only angers the outfielder, but also publicly reinforces his own hetero-masculinity. Throughout the play, Mantegna has made clear the gendered component of the enjoyment of bleacher exile. All of his main characters, but especially Zig — who is a stand-in for Murphy — react most strongly against threats to hetero-masculine privilege in the bleacher underworld. They harass the few single

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patrons look to gain a kind of ancestral connection with a more muscular past.

women who dare to enter this boy's club and they close ranks swiftly when the wife of any of the bums enters unexpectedly. In fact, both in the play and in real life, one of the ties that bind, one thing that seems to produce constant solidarity amidst the constant bickering, betting and bad-mouthing is a shared sense of masculine panic leading to a circling of the wagons around masculine privilege.[19] Thus the Cheerleader's public display of homophobia allows him instant insiders status. He really does belong in the bleachers now that he too has testified to the sanctity of the bleacher hetero-normativity, now that he has renounced gender bending and embraced a paranoia that helps keep this space exclusive of women and gays.

Yet, interestingly enough, despite Mantegna's obvious embrace of the notion that the Wrigley bleachers were a final refuge of masculine privilege, eventually in the play class identity comes to subsume other politics of identity. And once again, the playwright uses the reaction of his bums to another of the Cheerleader's exploits as a litmus test helping to gauge their affinities. This time, after having established his heterosexual orientation, the Cheerleader engages in an activity aimed at helping the bums, a collection of unemployed, formerly blue-collar workers, actually influence the outcome of the game. He gives high-

[19] Wheeler describes the saloon-like atmosphere around the entrance to the bleacher section in Wrigley like this: "On Easter morning... there was a guy wearing a hat bearing the likeness of two female breasts in a bikini top. Another fellow had a hat with a middle finger sticking out of it. Another wore a T-shirt with the letters DAMM, which stood for Drunks Against MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Drivers) Mothers" (31). Then, later he writes, "the sixth inning Tuesday was almost as bad, the Giants scoring five runs against Sutcliffe. Undaunted however, two guys in right-center tried to get friendly with three nurses. They teased them about being yuppies.

pitched whistles to every one in the section and has them blow simultaneously when each Cub batter swings. This temporarily deafens the St. Louis outfielder, blocking his ability to hear the crack of the bat which subsequently throws off his timing. He misplays a fly ball so badly that it becomes a rare inside-the-park home run for the home team.

> Cheerleader. An inside the park homerun. We did it! (Everyone goes nuts.)
>
> Richie. That wasn't fair.
>
> Cheerleader. All's fair in love and baseball!
>
> Zig. We did that! Marvin you owe me! (36)

Two crucial ideas are at play in this section. The first, the notion that "we did it," points to the transcendent and rare thrill of having influence. The enervating feeling of being merely a consumer was temporarily replaced by the sensation of producing. No longer invisible, unproductive, irrelevant outcasts, the "Bleacher Bums" for this one fleeting moment made an impact on the visible, inside world. It is a moment in which the spirit of carnival is reenacted. The dichotomies of oppressor/oppressed, athlete/spectator, powerful/powerless, bum/citizen, corporation/consumer are turned topsy-turvey. Yet, the second idea at play here, the one articulated by Richie's words, is just as important. It serves to register a reminder that the economy of the bleachers, an underworld economy, is delightfully marginal even within the confines of the stadium.

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Finally, one of the nurses tired of it. 'We're not yuppies,' she said fiercely, 'and I resent the hell

To emphasize this, the playwright brings on stage a security guard shortly after this incident.

> Guard. Yeah, I'm looking for whoever was heckling that outfielder down there. We got a complaint from the St. Louis bench. (Cheerleader moves away from him.)
>
> Decker. (Pointing to the other bleachers.) Uh, I think it must've been somebody over there —
>
> Guard. If I don't find out who it was, I'm gonna have to clear out this whole section.
>
> Richie. It was him. (Points at Cheerleader.)
>
> Guard. Alright, come on. Let's go.
>
> Cheerleader. I didn't do nothin.
>
> Decker. Hey, hey, wait a minute, officer, it was me. I did it.
>
> Guard. Okay, you're coming too.
>
> Zig. No, wait officer, it was me.
>
> Rose. No, no, it was me.
>
> Melody. No, it was me... (Security guard leaves in disgust during this melee). (49)

This exchange points to several important aspects of the bleacher underground. Like in mafia culture, the ethos of "omertá" prevails. Literally translatable as "honor," the Italian term more-roundly signifies loyalty above all

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out of that. We're nurses. We work nights. We wipe ass. We're not impressed'" (36).

else to one's clan. The security guard, like the carabinieri and government officials dispatched historically from Rome to bring Sicilian culture into the fold, represents the unwelcome imposition of "legitimate" authority onto a closed, fully-functional, yet renegade system. His very presence ensures solidarity amidst endemic internal turmoil. The Cheerleader as well as Rose and Melody had previously been ostracized because they represented elements of the anti-masculine. But, now they are embraced by the community. In Mantegna's fantasy of the bleachers, identity tied up with class and community — a community comprising a collection of working-class underdogs and outsiders — supersedes troubling differences based on gender and sexual orientation.

If then, this implied ethic of "omertá" based on something akin to class identification (if not actually to class identification) and a shared outsider status is at the center of the appeal of bleacher exile, the bleachers of Jacob's Field, populated by a less marginal class, would seem to need to find a replacement for the lost charge. Consciously or not, the designers of the ballpark and Indians management come through with just such a series of replacements.

Brilliantly, the organization has set up the ocular arrangement of the bleachers vis a-vis the rest of the park to encode sensations of class *otherness*. In this island for class cross-dressing 'cast-offs,' the bleacher benches are situated in just such a way that they force patrons to look up from their hot dogs and sodas to their right in order to witness Cleveland's elite dining on steak and lobster in the glassed-in four star restaurant overhanging the left field concourse. Additionally,

when looking toward home plate, bleacher patrons simultaneously take in the view of the city's corporate classes ordering champagne from the waiters catering to them in the luxury boxes ringing the mezzanine.

Most importantly in this regard, bleacher patrons are the only ones allowed to turn their backs on the mother of all televisions, the 150 foot Jumbotron perched behind them. In Chapter Four I discuss in detail the psychic lift this symbolic refusal to watch the game as television affords bleacher patrons. Suffice it to say here that, not bombarded with advertisements, sheltered from the constant repackaging of the event via instant replay, reverse angles, slow-motion, etc., the bleacher patron is freer to imagine a more one to one relationship with the game. Reality in this sense clearly means a return to the days before "hyperreality," when one's experience was less mediated by television, when one lived in the city instead of watching dramas about city life, when one *went* to a ballgame instead of *watching* it on the tube. Significantly in this regard, the rest of the park caters extensively to patrons not only comfortable with, but insistent on access to many of the comforts of the "hyperreal."[20] Throughout the park — in luxury boxes, club restaurants, and even above urinals — 660 televisions broadcast the game to its *live* spectators.

This strategic ocular arrangement, combined with the standard baseball vernacular maintaining the *realness* of bleachers, itself accenting the legacy of bleacher eroticism in places like Wrigley, does in fact seem to inspire a fair

amount of horseplay. In contradistinction to the rest of the park, where cheering tends to happen primarily as a response to prompts by the scoreboard operators imploring patrons to "MAKE SOME NOISE!!!" or "STOMP YOUR FEET!!!" in the bleachers, patrons do occasionally organize themselves in impromptu cheers for their team. And, although cursing is curbed by ushers and security guards, bleacher patrons in Cleveland do often yell at opposing outfielders. The section is clearly the most rowdy in the park. Because it is self contained and thus allows for a bit of freedom of movement, the bleacher section in Jacobs Field is the most popular spot for families with children who run, scream, and, like Zig and Murphy, invent their own activities independent of the game. So, to a large extent, the Jacobs Bleacher bourgeoisie does hold up its end of the bargain implied by the tour guide. Yet, bleacher energy in the new park, as family style entertainment, though clearly gesturing back to the original, lacks the edge of 1967 Wrigley Field or Ebbets Field after the death of Charles Ebbets.

Of course, there is no real underworld at Jacobs Field like there is in the Wrigley Field represented by Mantegna in *Bleacher Bums* or by Murphy when he describes the heyday of his group of outsiders. Instead, the Jacobs bleachers provide an orchestrated simulacrum of an underworld. It offers virtual reality access to the kind of *authentic* experience of the exile, enjoyed by Murphy and Zig and fantasized about by Wheeler and Mantegna. The greatest irony of this promise, of course, is that the very idea of *the bleachers* is most powerful as long

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[20] For a description of how televised versions of sporting events has changed how fans process

as it remains just an idea. Actually attempting to reconstruct *the bleachers* via accents of the past in effect blurs and distorts the past by tying memory up with the present. The result then of any *good* simulacrum is that both the original and the copy are rendered artificial. The past comes across as too shabby or "other," and the present comes across as too tidy.[21] However, leaving these sections as memory, purely products of the symbolic order, would have required a renunciation of a bedrock capitalist belief in the power of acquisition. Reconstructing the bleachers of past eras, we attempt to restore a visible order and, by doing so, assure ourselves that our tendency to accumulate has meaning.

This very paradox stands at the center of any discussion of pleasure at retro ballparks. Designed to appeal primarily to the corporate classes and to the family, Jacobs Field is the sports world's logical extension of Disney World. Like its cousin in Orlando, the ballpark originated as an attempt to reproduce but also contain carnival. Disney was designed as a replication of New Orleans — keeping the parades, the architecture and theme of celebration — while officially renouncing the bawdy, the rude and the gluttonous; Jacobs Field was constructed similarly with places like Wrigley in mind. Both the original Disney World and Jacobs are utopian in vision, each attempting to permanently reproduce the

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games, see Morris and Nydahl.

[21] Perhaps this is why Hollywood has a hard time coming up with historical films or period pieces that seem authentic. Advanced technology and consumer demand for complex simulation forces a projection of the present into the past. Perhaps theater, in particular low-budget theater which relies on words more than on special effects and costumes, can be said to be a better place for historical reenactment. Of course, Baudrillard would refute this, saying that, in a televisual age, everything we see is tempered through the lens of a simulacrum. In other words, a contemporary viewer's expectations of the Polo Grounds in 1951 are almost invariably first formed by televisual

communal and celebratory energy of the city in a space that is clearly not supposed to be suburban, but which does not quite seem to be *urban* either. Each represents a uniquely 20th century attempt to package the experience of marginalization and community to folks like Wheeler who feels his middle class suburban upbringing denied him the opportunity to be of "the people." In short, the Jacobs Field bleacher section promises patrons the ability to experience the fantasy of being a *real* baseball fan, one of the people who knows instinctively when a ball game feels like a ball game and a season like a season.

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representations or by cinematic replication. See Chapter Five for a discussion of the stadium as simulacrum. Also see Baudrillard's *Simulacra and Simulation.*

## *Chapter* 4
## Consuming "Blackness"

In 1990, when Rickey Henderson was on the doorstep of breaking the major league record for stolen bases in a career, the speedy African-American outfielder began to appear in a rather interesting television commercial.[1] In this advertisement for an antacid, a white catcher sits alone in a dark room watching a black and white Super-8 loop of film showing Henderson stealing base after base off him. Like Marlowe floating down the river toward the heart of darkness, the catcher finds himself in preternatural fear of the "other." He trembles, he slumps low in his chair, he pops antacid after antacid. The other players and even the coaches have deserted him as he attempts to use an outdated technology to help him find some weakness in Henderson for the next day's game, some way to stop the assault, or, short of that, some way to soothe his panic attacks (through pharmaceuticals). He is the last line of defense against a virtual epidemic of theft, yet the advertisement implies that his quest is quixotic. The gates are open, the fortress is indefensible. He will never be Henderson's equal. Better to just scarf down heartburn medicine and accept it.

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[1] *Now that Spells Relief. Rickey Henderson.* Rolaids, 1990.

Yet, in the catcher's face we see something more than simple fear and loathing. We also see a profound reverence for Henderson's god-like athleticism. The catcher's clenched jaw drops and he manages a brief, uneasy smile at the sight of the beautiful base-stealing predator. He watches in awe as Henderson, muscles rippling through his tight uniform, explodes out of his crouch toward second base where, with characteristically reckless abandon, he slides head first underneath the throw. In many ways, this tableau enacts a standard psycho-visual relationship between the white male spectator and the black athlete. The catcher feels the threat of African-American physicality so acutely that he literally becomes ill. Yet, because Henderson's movements are so graceful, a Platonic ideal of the kind of athlete every baseball player would like to be, the beleaguered warrior cannot take his eye off of him.[2]

By extension, the commercial, which is intended to sell its product by portraying the catcher as a kind of work-a-day "everyman," over-stressed by pressures at work and threatened daily by the dangerous world outside, invites the viewer to identify with the dyspeptic protagonist. Its director positions the camera immediately behind the catcher, allowing the viewer to see the Henderson

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[2] In many ways, this is the perfect commercial in an age of backlash against affirmative action for it links two standard white dystopic narratives: whites must work harder to earn what they have and white men cannot compete physically with black men. The second narrative of course is as old as the history of slave owning in America. After emancipation, a century of lynching black men for alleged sexual activity with white women underscores this deep anxiety. The first narrative, suggested by the fact that the catcher sits alone at night, still dressed in his dirty uniform long after everyone else has gone home, points to the remedy for this quandary. The endangered white athlete, in order to continue to compete, must find other means. The catcher employs both technology (still disproportionately in the hand of whites in an age of continued economic disparity) and good, old fashioned hard work (again, traditionally associated with the white athlete) to reclaim his advantage.

threat through the white player's eyes and thus take on the racial dilemma as his own. In this way, the advertisement constructs the gaze as white and suggests race as a central factor underlying the anxiety of the contemporary American white man, left chewing or guzzling antacid behind desks, on couches, in dugouts and in film and board rooms.

By juxtaposing the two figures in this darkened room, the commercial generates a series of racially-coded dyads underscoring the basic "essentialism" of sports (and American social) discourse. Its central set of antitheses, the catcher and the base-stealing outfielder, organizes a barely submerged belief system regarding the respective qualities of the races. The white catcher is cerebral, defensive, disciplined, protecting, fundamentally-sound, and perhaps not very athletic by nature. The black outfielder, conversely, is physical, offensive, reckless, stealing, flashy and graced with innate natural athleticism.

In this chapter, I will first flesh out this series of dyads arguing how they help give shape to a peculiar love/hate relationship between the white spectator and black athlete.[3] In part a historical byproduct of institutionalized segregation, these pairs of traits help the white male spectator distinguish himself from, and in some contexts identify with, the black male athlete. I will then show how this ambivalence is simultaneously reenacted and negotiated in new urban stadiums.

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[3] In *Love and Theft*, Eric Lott engages in a discussion of white working class ambivalence about black male bodies. Though one could search almost any 20th century cultural form and find constructions of the black body similar to the ones in the Henderson commercial, Lott describes the implications for "whiteness" that a simultaneous love and hatred engenders. Many of the assumptions I make in this chapter are indebted to Lott's formulation.

I will describe how a central part of the pleasure for white audiences at retro parks is their ability to reproduce vicissitudes of mastery and fear of "blackness."

During the past decade, in the face of overwhelming evidence that the sport is becoming more and more white, baseball management has attempted to introduce "blackness" as a replacement for black people. From hip-hop music piped in between batters to high-topped, shade-wearing and pelvic-thrusting mascots, the contemporary stadium scene is replete with images and sounds suggestive of standard white projections of African-American hipness. The choreographers of this liminal urban space replicate valuable forms of black oppositional culture in order to endow the spot with elements of the primitive; in so doing, they simultaneously titillate and reassure a mostly white audience.

Stadiums like Jacobs Field, constructed literally on top of a razed area which used to be home to legitimate and illegitimate black-owned businesses — check cashing shops and open air drug markets alike — invite white audiences to "black up," to inherit the cool abandon, the vitality and esprit de corps of the erstwhile dark city or at least to come into contact with it. In other words, even as large-scale urban projects such as Jacobs Field work to re-colonize the city according to white, suburban desire, there remains an inevitable white/black dialectic — much like the one enacted in the Henderson commercial — for the suburban consumer. The following discussion of this dialectic aims to provide an understanding of the cultural cachet of "black" simulacra at retro ballparks and to

show how urban renewal centered on sports facilities can engender subtle and not-so-subtle forms of institutional racism.

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Amazingly, in the 1997 season, which major league baseball dedicated to the late Jackie Robinson who had heroically crossed the color line fifty years previously, not a single starting catcher was African-American. Considered the "quarterback" of baseball, the catcher calls pitches, makes positioning adjustments, and serves as a counselor/tutor to the pitcher. Typically unimpressive athletically, the catcher is supposed to be the brains and the heart of the team. He must not only organize his side, but do the gritty, dirty work of blocking the plate when an opponent barrels into him. Despite the existence of some brilliant African-American catchers since integration (Roy "Campy" Campanella of the Brooklyn Dodgers comes immediately to mind), this position, like the quarterback in football, has remained almost exclusively white. Conversely, in the outfield where Henderson plays, a position demanding pure speed and/or power with an emphasis on good offensive skills, two-thirds of the league's starters are African-American.

Cause and effect is of course complicated. Something less than overt racism is the primary factor contributing to this segregation within the game. Yet residual attitudes and lingering beliefs about African-American athletic and

intellectual capabilities versus those of whites on the part of management and scouting staffs surely contribute to this racial dynamic. In other words, the story behind the Henderson commercial — the narrative of the construction of the racially coded dyads helping us imagine the distinctions between white and black ballplayers — begins with a description of the history of baseball's institutional segregation.

Baseball had been blossoming as America's primary recreational pursuit for close to forty years before the exclusion of blacks became statutory. However, in the 1870s and 1880s, when a group of owners consolidated themselves into a singular entity, The National League, the race question began to heat up. Facing pressure from genteel reformers to clean up their act, to make the experience of watching and playing baseball a more salutary endeavor, this new breed of middle class entrepreneurs engaged in a simultaneous housecleaning and propaganda campaign designed to make baseball resonate as a pursuit which transcended mere sport.[4] The 1887 agreement among International League owners to "approve no more contracts with colored men" which set stage for the quick displacement of the twenty five or so black professional ballplayers at the time, coincided with a widespread effort to package baseball as a signifier of American election (Peterson 28). No longer just a game, the sport was promoted as the "national

[4] For a long description of the early years of the National League, see Chapter Two. In this section I chronicle in more detail both the kinds of pressures from reformers these owners faced and how they negotiated them through often racist and classist rhetoric. Also see Rader, *American Sports,* and Peterson, *Only the Ball was White,* particularly Chapter Two, "Pioneers in Black and White."

pastime," both a source and a reflection of the cherished qualities in the American male.

Clearly, it was at this point that the black game and the white game began to diverge. Locked out of the organized leagues, still without a league of their own, most African-Americans who wanted to continue to play for pay took to the barnstorming circuit.[5] All-black teams began traveling the country, often playing three games in three towns on a single day in a perpetual search for competition and a reasonable gate. However, along with simply playing a baseball game like their white counterparts, they were expected to provide alternative forms of entertainment for their largely white, very curious, audience.

Often white entrepreneurs would organize a black troupe which would be expected to provide a minstrel show, music, and other carnival attractions to go along with their baseball exhibitions. Jack Marshall, who played for, among other teams, the Cincinnati Clowns, describes his experience as a player/entertainer in an itinerant baseball troupe.

> A white Canadian named Rod Whitman...wanted two Negro ballclubs, he wanted a minstrel show, and he wanted a band.... So I organized this group for him, and I got a five-piece band and six other people as the minstrel show.... At six o`clock the Texas Giants and the New York All-

[5] The Negro Leagues as viable entities began in 1920. Prior to this, several attempts to organize Black leagues had failed. In 1887 for example, in immediate response to the beginning of institutionalized segregation, the League of Colored Baseball Clubs was formed. It soon failed however, victim to poor and undercapitalized management and to the same kinds of barriers handicapping any African-American owned business just a few decades removed from

> Stars would play a game....Now, when this ballgame was over, then the midway would open up again. While the midway was open, he would put this colored minstrel show on. With the midway and the minstrel show going on at one time, this man is coining the money! Now, when the midway closes, then the band would play for the dance. That's another admission, and the dance would go till one o'clock. Damndest operation you ever saw! (Peterson 8-9)

Marshall's description of his experience makes it clear that African-Americans had to be versatile entertainers to play the game for pay. They did not have the luxury of devoting their entire energies simply to perfecting the craft of ball playing. In an era when organized white baseball was literally recreating its own image — undertaking massive rhetorical campaigns equating baseball playing to such earnest pursuits as soldier and leadership training — itinerant black operations had to play to the tastes and desires of provincial audiences, rabidly enthusiastic about minstrel shows and clown demonstrations which both soothed their anxieties about blackness by infantilizing African-American performers and tickled their illicit curiosity about race.[6] In other words, African-American ballplayers were forced to participate in the naturalization of racist beliefs about black style over substance in order to "coin money" for whites.

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emancipation. See Peterson. Also, see Tygiel for a description of the early years of the Negro Leagues and Burk, particularly Chapter Four, "Retrenchment and Revolt, 1885-1890."

[6] For a discussion about white "ambivalence" toward race, see Bhabha. In his article, Bhabha theorizes white response toward race through an examination of the consumption of black culture or cultural images. He sees this race-inflected consumer pattern as a simultaneous celebration and

Meanwhile, the white game was becoming increasingly regularized and disciplined. What had been a loose affiliation of hundreds of leagues became, by the beginning of the twentieth century, a single entity with agreed on rules of codes and conducts. As such, this erstwhile fluid game with techniques and strategies as numerous as the players playing it, became highly rationalized and predictable. During this time, the very notion of fundamentals was able to emerge because the white version of the sport was creating the institutions — youth training leagues, instructional magazines, spring training programs — that could allow them to codify in the first place.[7] Thus, we can see how many of the racial dyads giving meaning to the Henderson commercial are simply products of historical and institution segregation. The catcher, for whom fundamentals are paramount, has remained almost exclusively white even as the rest of the game has become more integrated.

Of course these particular constructions of racial traits did not arise, and still do not occur, in a vacuum. Baseball is part of a larger culture which has generally ensured that a poor black man's "only capital is his body."[8] Historically denied access to power and wealth, their bodies the vehicles with which slave owners accumulated their own fortunes, African-Americans have long responded to these oppressions in part by creating a rich body of cultural

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exploitation of race. Also see Lott's "White Like Me" for a similar discussion of white love of minstrelsy.

[7] For a more detailed description of both the formation of these institutions and the rhetoric generated through them in order to elevate baseball's public standing, see Chapter Two. Also, for a discussion of the importance of Public School Athletic Leagues in terms of the construction of fundamentals, see Levine 109-112.

forms emphasizing action, dynamism and kinetics. From the second lining rhythms of the bayou, to the brilliant paintings and dance emerging out of the Harlem Renaissance, to bebop, hip-hop, boogie woogie and break dancing, black American dynamic or kinetic culture has been in the vanguard of American popular culture for more than a century. As Nathaniel Mackey points out in "Other: From Noun to Verb," African-American cultural icons like Zora Neale Hurston and Amiri Baraka have long argued that a large part of the genius of Black American culture has always been the gift of improvisation and kinesthesis brought to bear on more static cultural forms.[9]

We can thus easily see how the emergence in Negro baseball of so-called "Coonsbury Rules," or play based on instinct, cunning, improvisation and pure physical ability, could have come about similarly from a position of exile.[10] Abruptly cut off from the very institutions which created and enforced "fundamental play," black professional baseball players came to rely on riskier, cagier, more physical methods. Speed, aggressive base running and "tricky ball," or "any way you think you can win, any kind of play you think you can get by

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[8] Robert Lipsyte in introduction to C.L.R. James' *Beyond a Boundary*.

[9] Baraka emphasizes the skill of a performer like John Coltrane who is adept at "versioning" or not merely replicating a tune: "Instead of the simplistic though touching note-for-note replay of the ballad's line, on this performance each note is tested, given a slight tremolo or emotional vibrato (note to chord to scale reference) which makes it seem as if each one of the notes is given the possibility of "infinite" qualification... proving that the ballad as it was written was only the beginning of the story" (Mackey, 52 quoting from Leroi Jones, *Black Music*, 66). "Versioning" is of course an antecedent of today's hip-hop practice of "sampling." Similarly, Hurston, in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, describes black storytellers' ability to take white language and culture and invest it with infinite possibility: "They became lords of sounds and lesser things. They passed nations through their mouths" (53, quoting from Hurston, 9-10).

with," became characteristic of the less organized, largely barnstorming black version of the game.[11]

The legacy of white response to these "Coonsbury Rules" helps invest the Henderson commercial with a large part of its signifying capital. Cocky and brash, young Henderson arrived on the professional baseball scene in the late 1970s, an era prior to the present one of widespread assimilation and co-optation of urban culture.[12] In fact, early in his career, like a "villain" in professional wrestling, he seemed consciously to be cultivating an image and an act based specifically on his ability to infuriate white audiences. For example, when a pop fly came to him in the outfield, he brashly employed his signature "snatch catch." A boldly anti-fundamental gesture, the "snatch catch" entailed using the glove hand only to grab a pop fly before sharply snatching it down as if to add insult to the batter's injury. Similarly, as a base stealer, he danced, he feinted and he taunted opposing catchers and pitchers throwing off their rhythm and destroying their concentration. Finally, he revisited the role of the barnstormer by being one of the first players to take full advantage of newly-liberalized rules about free agency. He jumped from team to team, selling his services to the highest bidder,

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[10] The term "Coonsbury Rules" was a popular one among Negro League and barnstorming ball players. It mocked the regimented "Queensbury" (or Marquis of Queensbury) rules for boxing fundamentals and conduct. See Peterson.

[11] Ex-barnstormer Newt Allen quoted in Tygiel, 21.

[12] By this I mean the manifold ways that hip-hop has emerged as a mainstream cultural force in the 1990s. From mortgage company commercials set to James Brown's formerly counter-cultural rhythms to the kinds of black-based images and sounds in the primarily white ballpark which I will examine in more detail later in the chapter, to the simple truth that the rap audience is disproportionately white, suburban and teenage, it becomes clear that black cultural production is largely available for and amenable to white commodification and consumption. For a discussion some of the meaning of white youth consumption of black culture, see Jones

arriving just in time to help solidify an organization's pennant hopes. He was, in turn, regularly booed by opposing team's fans and condemned by the media for his somewhat unorthodox technique, for his showboating style and taunting and for a perceived lack of loyalty.

This form of white response to his defiant behavior places Henderson in good company. Above all, he joins Satchel Paige, one of the most entertaining showboaters of all time. Paige, arguably the greatest pitcher ever, arrived in the major leagues shortly after Robinson crossed the color line. The African-American hurler was both the consummate showman and an intensely cunning and powerful, yet unorthodox, player. At a time when most black barnstormers were fortunate to make $150 a month, Paige combined his "Stepin Fetchit" coon act with exceptional success on the mound to pull in about $40,000 per year.[13] In a career that spanned almost thirty years, he attracted record crowds as a player in the Negro Leagues, as a barnstormer and later, at the incredible age of 48, as a pitcher for Cleveland in the Major Leagues.

One of the oldest players ever to compete in the major leagues, Paige was also one of the most flamboyant and innovative. He named his pitches: the "bee ball" which he said "buzzed" when he threw it and the "trouble ball" were among

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[13] For a discussion of Stepin Fetchit, nee Lincoln Theodore Monroe Andrew Perry, see Bogle. Fetchit was, in the 1930s, the best known and most successful black actor working in Hollywood. Considered the "arch coon" for his popular portrayal of "lazy, no-account, good-for-nothing, forever-in-hot-water" and loved-by-everyone servants, Fetchit draws invariable comparisons to Paige (41). Both performers were known for their idiosyncratic body movements and antics. Plus, both were well known for their extravagances and sexual exploits off the field and off screen. Finally, both played for wildly enthusiastic white audiences and, against the odds, became quite wealthy as a result.

his favorites. He was prone to stunts like calling in his outfielders to taunt opposing batters and energize the fans. He spoke to the press using minstrel show one-liners. And he dominated opponents. In 1934 and 1935, for example, he toured opposite Dizzy Dean, thought to be the best white pitcher of the decade and beat Dean's team — comprising the finest white hitters in the game — four out of six times. A full decade later, he did the same and out-dueled Cleveland Indian great Bob Feller.

Yet, two years after Robinson broke the color line, when Paige finally got a chance to play in the majors, he had to endure charges among the baseball establishment that his unorthodoxy was making a mockery of the game. The *Sporting News*, the quintessential sporting magazine of the establishment yet also the most popular source of information and opinions about baseball for more than half a century, opined that Paige's appearance demeaned the "standards of baseball in the big circuits."[14] Because the magazine had previously come out in favor of integration, it was unable to use race as the ostensible reason for condemning Paige. Instead, its writers criticized his actions based on more nebulous, yet racially-inflected, arguments about propriety. They suggested that Paige's advanced age and his unconventionality made him simply a kind of carnival attraction, a publicity stunt. They even insisted that, had the pitcher been white, Cleveland owner Bill Veeck would have simply overlooked him.

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[14] Tom Spink in the *Sporting News*, July 14, 1948. Reprinted in Tygiel 229.

The magazine's stance was of obviously dubious merit, however. A handful of white stars such as Ty Cobb and Cy Young had signed large contracts in their mid forties and Veeck's Indians were already drawing large crowds and thus did not need an attendance boost, even if Paige's arrival was sure to improve the bottom line. Instead, the "standards of baseball" which Paige was supposedly demeaning were surely ones of technical orthodoxy. Ignoring or having not been privy to technical "advances" of the past few decades, Paige still wound up his arm as if he were cranking an old automobile. Sometimes this cranking would last six revolutions, sometimes two. Sometimes, instead of pitching overhand, he threw sidearm or even underhand. Often, he would hesitate during his pitching motion or wiggle his fingers on the ball in order to throw off the timing of opposing hitters. This employment of "Coonsbury Rules" incensed many opponents and members of the white baseball establishment who Paige kept off balance all summer during one of the most captivating pennant races of all time. Never before seen crowds, sometimes in excess of 80,000 and, by some estimates up to 40 percent African-American, came to see this almost 50 year old rookie pitch, swagger and joke as he helped the Indians move to the top of the American League.

Yet, after a few rough outings in September, he was abruptly dropped from the Indians' rotation. Unable to reproduce the fabulous results of the summer months, Paige found his off-the-field behavior a subject of severe public scrutiny. He was criticized by members of both the black and the white press for

refusing to give up his playboy lifestyle and for arriving habitually late to team functions. Common sentiment among these critics was that his actions stood to jeopardize the still tenuous position of other black baseball players looking for acceptance in the league. After all, in 1946, Brooklyn Dodger general manager Branch Rickey had chosen Robinson to step across the color line over a plethora of similarly and more accomplished African-American ballplayers largely because he felt the young second baseman was possessed of an almost super-human amount of poise. He knew that, if the experiment were to work, his martyr would need to be someone capable of turning the other cheek to the torrents of abuse and indignities destined to be suffered. And sure enough, during the first few years, when Robinson carried with him the hopes and dreams for the advancement of millions, when he was cleated regularly at second base, beaned by opposing pitchers and forced to stay in separate hotels and eat in separate restaurants, the second baseman did more than just live up to expectations. A former collegiate football and track star with but one season of experience in professional baseball with the Negro League Kansas City Monarchs, the young player set the league ablaze. He provided the game with a theretofore unseen combination of power, speed and daring base running; and, perhaps more important to Rickey and the other white liberals who initiated and closely monitored this "noble experiment," he comported himself quietly and stoically off the field, helping to contradict prevailing racist attitudes about the black athlete.[15]

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[15] For the two best accounts of Robinson's career, see Tygiel and Peterson.

The fact is, all the young players who succeeded in the first few years of integration — Robinson, Roy Campanella and Larry Doby, etc. — walked a middle-ground on the field, displaying a keen awareness of the "fundamentals" while infusing the sport with some of the daring and innovative play of Negro League "tricky ball."[16] To a man however they all also comported themselves extremely cautiously off the field, aware of their roles as racial ambassadors. Paige, on the other hand, accustomed to the freedom of his barnstorming days, refused or was unable to walk the line. Although this refusal probably cost him the right to pitch in the big leagues into his fifties, it did open up a wider space for athletes like Henderson who followed him. Paige's brief stint with the Indians, more than the careers of Robinson, Campanella and Doby, helped introduce the legacy of Negro League and barnstorming showmanship and crafty play into the major American sports scene.

Between Paige and Henderson of course stands the awesome figure of Muhammed Ali, a prominent figure during Henderson's youth and the quintessential adherent to "Coonsbury Rules." Now revered as perhaps the greatest living American sports figure (in no small part because, afflicted with Parkinson's disease, he is nearly speechless and thus less of a threat than he was when he was young and vocal during the heyday of black power), Ali refused to capitulate to the desires of white liberals with respect to the black athlete. A

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[16] "Tricky Ball" is another term (like "Coonsbury Rules") used by Negro League players to describe the kind of crafty play used by Negro teams to keep them competitive with their white counterparts who enjoyed advantages in technology and an infrastructure that promoted fundamental play

converted Muslim, Ali shocked the establishment and even went to jail for refusing to register for the draft. He spoke openly against oppression and racism, attaching the rhetoric of sports braggadocio onto a burgeoning discourse of black power.

Nonetheless, in his showboating he found perhaps his most unique and efficacious voice. Not content to suppress his personality to placate the sports community, he danced and taunted, insulted and baited as he found a way to set down one opponent after another. Undoubtedly the most crafty and intelligent heavyweight of all time, Ali brought the legacy of "tricky ball" into the modern era of televised, excessively-hyped sports. Ali's showboating was both political expression and part of a brilliant system of smoke and mirrors tactics enabling him to beat bigger, stronger, faster opponents. He refused to box according to the standard idioms of the establishment. His "rope-a-dope" playing-possum trick, like Paige's "bee ball," advertised in front of a national television audience that African-American culture could draw from a rich history of strategies and ideas at least equal to — but perhaps even more effective because they arose out of greater exigencies — those of white culture. In other words, Ali proved conclusively to the world that the white way was not necessarily the right way.

Growing up in the sixties and early seventies, Rickey Henderson would have been inundated with images and words from the self-proclaimed "greatest of all time." Moreover, even if he did not model his "snatch-catch" or his home-run strut on any of Ali's specific gestures, there is undeniably an element of

kinesthetic cultural memory in the way he carried himself on the field as a young player. Henderson's "snatch-catch" is part of a performance which, perhaps (on a non-cognitive level) kinesthetically embodies the problematics of race from the perspective of subaltern culture.[17] That is to say that the very movement involved in carrying out the 'snatch catch' is potentially tied up with the legacy of showmanship in the Negro leagues. It is at once a byproduct of Jim Crow segregation, a fulfillment of expectations of black performers on the part of largely white audiences and a reaction to oppression. But, it is also a product of the kind of tremendous innovation and creativity to which Baraka and Hurston point as endemic to black culture.

Thus, the discourse surrounding showboating, which tends to be largely critical and sanctimonious, would benefit from widespread acknowledgment of the very constructedness of such things as fundamentals as well as an appreciation of non-fundamental movement and play. The 'snatch catch,' like Ali's taunting, is at least in part a political gesture signifying "fuck you, Whitey," for it defies the limitations of behavior, self-expression and cultural inheritance imposed upon Robinson and the first generation of African-American ballplayers in the modern major leagues. It is part of a heritage of language and gesticulation, articulated through the body, which underlines the enormous historical ability of African-Americans to re-create and re-describe the world into which they were born. It is also a residual minstrel gesture, like the antics of Paige and his barnstorming

[17] For more on subaltern memory, see VeVe Clark and Cindy Patton.

contemporaries, which furnishes a largely white audience exactly what it paid to see. In the next section, I will continue to praise the showboater, fleshing out the implications of my belief that the very spectatorial relationship between the white audience and the black player has been historically, and still is, set up to encourage showboating.

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Norman Mailer, by attempting to connect the coolness of 1950s "hipsters" to something essential to the African-American experience in his controversial 1957 essay "The White Negro," gives us insight into white longings for identification with the black male body.

> It is no accident that the source of Hip is the Negro for he has been living on the margin between totalitarianism and democracy for two centuries.... And in this wedding of the white and the black it was the Negro who brought the cultural dowry.... Any negro who wishes to live must live with danger from his first day, and no experience can ever be casual to him, no Negro can saunter down a street with any real certainty that violence will not visit him on his walk.... Knowing in the cells of his existence that life was war, nothing but war, the Negro (all exceptions admitted) could rarely afford the sophisticated inhibitions of civilization, and so he kept for his survival the art of the primitive, he lived in the

> enormous present, he subsisted for his Saturday night kicks, relinquishing the pleasures of the mind for the more obligatory pleasures of the body, and in his music he gave the infinite variations of joy, lust, languor, growl, cramp, pinch, scream and despair of his orgasm. ... So there was a new breed of adventurers, urban adventurers who drifted out at night looking for action with a black man's code to fit their facts. The hipster had absorbed the existentialist synapses of the Negro, and for practical purposes could be considered a white Negro. (340-41)

Mailer's comments serve as an early explanation of the dynamics underlying white consumption of black oppositional cultural when it hits the mainstream. His notion that hipsters sought a "black man's code to fit their facts" describes at least part of the appeal of contemporary iterations of black resistance consumed largely by young white audiences. "Gangsta rap" as well as "attitude" on the field or on the court appeals especially to white youth because they relate to it as a better signifier of oppositional attitudes and sensibilities than anything else to which they have access. White youth look to black culture, whose forms have emerged from centuries of hardship and opposition, because it provides a more realistic and resonant description of their experience vis-a-vis traditional bourgeois cultural forms.[18]

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[18] Of course Mailer's ideas of "blackness" are also tied up with somewhat tired notions of sexual and racial essentialism. His belief that "Negro consciousness" could become a revolutionary force in this country is a product of the kind of envy/fetishization of the black male that Lott discusses in *Love and Theft*. Lott argues that the writing and performance of a large number of 20th century white icons like Mailer, Mick Jagger, and Elvis Presley would be impossible if it weren't for a legacy of black-faced minstrelsy. Minstrelsy, like Mailer's notion of the "white negro" has more

Faced with a crisis related to declining interest in the game in the beginning of the 1990s and trying to combat a sense that, in comparison to other sports, baseball was "un-hip," the major leagues have taken a page out of Mailer's book. As baseball cultivates a younger and younger demographic — not just teenagers who now have more of their own money to spend but also *twenty-somethings* who long for the lost erotic charge of the adolescent outsider — it has stepped up its promotional campaigns intended to bill the sport as an endeavor for the interracially cool. For example, it has set one of its "Catch the Fever" promotional advertisements to a rap beat and aggressively marketed "bad boy" stars such as Albert Belle (with his icy glare) and Barry Bonds (with his slow, cool home run strut).[19] In mostly white modern baseball environment, perhaps the "hippest" contemporary venue of *family* amusement, black forms — so often subject to censure in other contexts — reemerge as sources of meaning and pleasure, albeit in often bowdlerized and/or sublimated iterations. Mailer's piece, its elevation of projections of the "primitive" to an art form, tells us a lot about

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to do with white perceptions of, and desires for identification with, blacks than with anything essential.

[19] For a discussion of white youth appropriation of and participation in black culture, see Jones. While his focus is on Reggae in urban working class and mixed raced urban England, he is very clear about the role of black music in the lives of white youths in America. "The cultural needs and aspirations of many young whites in the early 1950s had gone largely unfulfilled by a mainstream entertainment industry unequipped to register the changing patterns of leisure consumption in post-war American society.... Various social groups have championed and 'borrowed' its (American black music's) oppositional meaning to signify their 'non-conformity' with the cultural mainstream" (xxi-xxiii). I should point out here that, throughout his book, Jones makes clear that the relationship between white British youth to Afro-Carribean music is different from that of white American youth to African-American music. In England, where working class sections of the city do not tend to be as segregated, white youth's engagement with Reggae culture is mediated by contact with Afro-Carribean people. It thus remains a bit more genuine to the experience because of shared class status.

middle class white anxiety during periods of relative peace and prosperity. The co-optation of black subjectivity, the absorption of "the existential synapses of the Negro," by the "hipster" and, by extension, the young white male baseball fan, shows how much the American white male relies on a fetishization of the black experience for his own affirmation.

This form of fetishization, of course, also allows the white spectator to have it both ways. While he loves the black athlete for giving him access to oppositional forms of meaning and pleasure, he is simultaneously able to renounce his "savage" quality. Seeing the black athlete as "primitive" or as "pre-fundamental," the white male spectator reaffirms his own civilized and fundamental status. Able to both consume Henderson's antics and renounce them, the spectator holds firm to the belief, central to the ethos of any member of a dominant culture, that there does in fact exist a right and a wrong way to do things. Through sports anxious white spectators can lay to rest threatening notions of moral relativism. The logic of multi-culturalism and post-modernism are refuted by belief in baseball tradition and orthodoxy.

Perhaps it is exactly this need to rehearse moral absolutes, to use sports to reaffirm a ruling class ethos of right and wrong, that continues to kindle the love/hate relationship between Henderson and the mostly white audience in front of which he plays. As he approaches retirement age, the base-stealing king has toned down his "show boating" act. However, many baseball aficionados and sportswriters will privately suggest that this transformation itself is a form of

"tricky ball." The buzz at conferences on baseball, among sportswriters and expansive baseball junkies at spring training venues seems to hold that Henderson is simply playing the "trickster" by trying to mend fences at the eleventh hour with sportswriters who will soon vote on his induction into the Hall of Fame.[20]

This fascination with Henderson's motivation points to the double bind faced by black baseball players. He seems to be locked into the equally problematic roles of "coon" and "Uncle Tom." If he were to continue his showboating act, he would be accused of lacking fundamentals and integrity; as he reforms himself, he is said to be simply trying to win white favor. To underscore this dynamic, I need only compare Henderson's plight to that of his white contemporary, Cal Ripken, Jr.[21] In 1995, when Ripken, the ultimate symbol of team play and hard work, broke Lou Gehrig's consecutive game record, baseball literally stopped in its tracks. When the famous game became official in the fifth inning, other games around the league were suspended so that fans in every city could watch on their stadiums' telescreens as the iron man took his dramatic victory laps. It was a remarkable sight. Ripken was feted by the league in a manner never before seen in the Major Leagues. He was universally written

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[20] For example, at the excellent "Diamonds in the Desert" Conference which took place in March, 1998 at Arizona State University, I overheard three such conversations among baseball scholars. During these conversations, I also heard refreshing suggestions that simply holding Henderson to these standards was subtly racist. When the group then went to see a game between Henderson's Athletics and the team he just left, the San Diego Padres, this same topic of conversation, without self-consciousness about race, was on the lips of several fans in attendance.

[21] I should point out that an understanding without nuance of such traditional black roles as "coons" and "toms" does history a disservice. For example, as Bogle points out, the kinds of roles available to African Americans in early film and in the theater were subtly subversive. In discussing Stepin Fetchit, Bogle suggests that, underneath the utter buffoonishness and servitude

up as a savior to a sport desperate for an image makeover after a player's strike two years before had caused cancellation of the World Series. Never much more than an above-average player, Ripken (along with Mark McGwire) nevertheless is widely considered the most important ambassador of the game today, a shoe-in for an All-Star appearance year after year despite his often unimpressive performance; he is also considered a lock for first ballot entry into the Hall of Fame. Conversely, Henderson, whose career has spanned roughly the same years as Ripken's, who has compiled statistics dwarfing Ripken's, but who has played for seven different teams while Ripken has remained with the Baltimore Orioles (a team for which he was a bat boy when he was younger and for which his father spent his entire career as a coach), finds himself in the position of having to remake his image in order to make the Hall of Fame where his gaudy statistics should have already made his entrance incontrovertible. Ironically, it is Ripken's image — as a company man — that the groundbreaking, formerly arrogant and always creative "phenom" Henderson is now said to be emulating. He, himself, is thus said to be becoming more like the catcher in the antacid commercial .[22]

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of Fetchit's act exists a kind of reverse mastery of the masters which would eventually evolve into more latently powerful roles for blacks.

[22] Of course, self-promotion and image creation is what the Hall of Fame is all about. The Hall is located in Cooperstown, N.Y. a town chosen as the "birthplace" of baseball because A.G. Spalding, Chicago White Stockings owner and president of the league at the turn of the century, decided it would make a good genesis story. Thirty years after Spalding commissioned a group of "experts" to authenticate the historical accuracy of the apocryphal story, the Hall of Fame was opened and he was inducted as a charter member. Since that time, of course, the Hall has served as the temple in which players lives and careers are turned to narrative and subsequently worshipped. See Chapter Two for more on the history of Spalding's rhetoric. Also see Levine 109-114.

Yet, fans just cannot seem to let go of their antagonism toward Henderson. In 1998, at the Athletics' spring training compound in suburban Phoenix, Henderson comported himself as a model citizen. Day in and day out he extended himself in order to chat with kids in the stands and to sign autographs and pose for photos. Nonetheless, at every step he was heckled by mostly white male fans who saw his transformation as merely a cynical attempt to earn a place in the Hall of Fame. Rejecting a conversion narrative — a bit surprising given the plethora of similar narratives in sports — these fans held fast to their anger toward Henderson of past years. Letting go of this hatred would, for them, psychically diminish the importance of Ripken and indeed, the importance of all the hard working, white journeymen catchers (like the one in the antacid advertisement) with bodies like their own, who have overachieved and held fast against the intrusion of the kind of uncontainable athleticism and eroticism represented by Henderson. The fans' ruthlessness toward Henderson displayed an element of American male whiteness at its most transparent — a whiteness which could not exist sans dystopic fantasies of black otherness and exoticism. The young Henderson, muscles rippling through his tight uniform as he launches a ball over the fence or as he darts from base to base, antagonizing fans by selling his services to the highest bidder, defying fundamentals with his infamous "snatch-catch," is the image without which the achievements of Ripken (and the generation of work-a-day whites who identify with him and with the catcher in the commercial) would be unremarkable.

A few years ago, during a mid-summer game between the Chicago White Sox and the New York Yankees, baseball rehearsed a real life morality play between a white catcher and an black outfielder. Carlton Fisk, former Red Sox legend at the end of his career, considered a "throw back" player for his hustle, hard work, no-nonsense attitude and willingness to play with pain engaged in a fascinating verbal scuffle with young "Neon Deion Sanders." Sanders, perhaps the flashiest player in the major leagues, after hitting a towering fly ball, began walking perfunctorily down the first base line. This enraged Fisk who got out of his crouch, ran behind Sanders and started screaming at him to "run it out." Not surprisingly, the mainstream media was quick to applaud Fisk for standing up for the integrity of the game; it was also quick to denounce Sanders for being part of its ruination.[23]

This scene and the discourse it generated is nothing short of a leitmotif of contemporary sports. Acts of showboating and their quick denunciation by the press are so commonplace that we can practically link them together as two scenes of the same act. Like Newton's first law of physics, every end-zone dance by Sanders (when he is playing in the N.F.L.), or mock slashing of his throat to

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[23] In light of what I've already argued about the relationship of black cultural "movement" to hipness, Sanders' action and Fisk's response almost require no glossing here. Nonetheless, it seems that Fisk's criticism was even more than normally double-edged. On one hand, Sanders' action (or inaction) defied the white ethos of fundamental play. Part of baseball fundamentals hold that you never know what good things might happen if you hustle. The very act of hustling, especially in a lost cause, is ennobling. Sanders, by not running, exposes the constructedness of this act that Fisk, as a member of the dominant culture, had deeply internalized. On the other hand, Fisk's condemnation of Sanders is interesting because it is an instance of a white man criticizing a black man for *failing* to perform publicly, for failing to move quickly and gracefully. It thus adds another layer of complexity to the relationship between the white catcher/spectator

antagonize visiting team's fans by basketball star Chris Webber, or every attitudinal home run strut by Barry Bonds seems to find an equal and opposite reaction in the next day's paper or on that evening's SportsCenter. Each act is greeted by both a moralizing newspaper editorial and a day-long loop of footage on sports networks and CNN replaying it again and again.

Recently, ESPN, the nation's first all-sports channel, while celebrating its 20th anniversary, initiated a dialogue examining its own role in promoting this kind of condemnable showboating behavior. A common supposition among sportswriters is that players now actually plan their acts in order to become looped into Sportscenter's repeat footage. Almost to a person, the Sportscenter anchors past and present simultaneously denounced acts of showboating inspired by the possibility of being shown on their show and acknowledged that these same acts provide for exactly the kind of entertainment their audience pays to see. Love and hatred, worship and fear are thus widely considered the components of audience reaction to the black body commodified perhaps to an extent greater than ever before on increasingly prevalent nightly cable sports programs.

In fact, the most popular sports film of the decade, *Jerry Maguire*, dances desperately between expressions of this kind of love and hatred. Its spectacular unevenness as a film is perhaps attributable to the fundamental insolubility of the dichotomal white male response to the black athletic body. The film's central message about the need to return to "simplicity" gets hopelessly jumbled at least

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and the black athlete whose athleticism, and sheer bodily grace, is a subject of simultaneous

in part because the filmmakers were unable to sort out the complexity of the relationship between race and sports charisma. Try as he might to "reform" his client, the film's titular white protagonist, a sports agent who suddenly wakes up with a conscience, has to come to an uneasy acceptance of the football star's showboating behavior. Showboating, the movie ultimately seems to suggest, is simply part of being a man. Once Jerry Maguire stops trying to reform his client and instead adopts some of his oppositional posturing behavior, he is able to differentiate himself from the white institutions that oppress him, inherit his birth right as an American individual and thus reclaim the fortitude necessary to do right by his wife. In this sense, we might say that the catcher in the antacid commercial would have done well to follow up his viewing of Henderson's thievery with a screening of *Jerry Maguire*. By doing so he might have learned that, even though he could never replicate the physical power, speed and grace of his antagonist, he might be able to loosen up a bit, to discover the artist within himself, to become more reckless and carefree: in short, to become a "white negro."

He thus might have taken care of his heartburn by retouching with what has long been culturally-constructed elements of American masculinity. Undeniably, a frequent trope of 20th century popular culture equates the outlaw figure with solid manhood. From Jessie James, to James Dean, Elvis Presley and of course, Frank Sinatra, all of whom chose to do it "my way," we have created

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anxiety and worship.

legends of those figures who operate on the margins of acceptable decorum and who bring to the public eye their own distinctive swagger. Of course, as Eric Lott points out in *Love and Theft*, this swagger itself is an act of black-face. Presley, Dean, Sinatra and even Mailer are all white performers whose acts rely on the trying on of "accents of 'blackness'" inflected as "hip," "masculine," or "independent" (6). Henderson, Sanders, Webber, Bonds and the whole generation of young athletes routinely taken to task for their excessive showmanship are all a continuation of that lineage and not, as sanctimonious sportswriters, fans, and ex-players like to suggest, part of some new trend prefiguring the ruination of sports as we know them. In short, part of the solution of the catcher's dilemma would have to have become more "black" as constructed by people like Norman Mailer.

Of course, Mailer's beliefs about the revolutionary potential of "blackness" are, to a large degree, a product of his historical moment. Writing after a decade of baseball integration produced hope that sports might lead the way toward a truly integrated culture, during a time when the grass roots of the civil rights movement were taking hold, Mailer could afford to see white love of "blackness" as a potentially galvanizing force. Today however, even though there is no longer statutorily-imposed segregation, the logic of simulacra has allowed for the commodification of this love, in turn both easing the pain of segregation now based largely on economic disparity and providing pernicious forms of compensation.

During the remainder of this chapter, I will explore the problems associated with a culture that replaces hope for and belief in true integration with simulated forms of racial mixing and with opportunities, like those enjoyed by Jerry Maguire, to black up, to racially cross dress as compensation for anxieties about both race and masculinity. I will show how, responding to overwhelming evidence that the game has been for two decades becoming more white on every level, baseball has been busy generating its own simulacra. Although the major leagues have taken some real steps toward re-cultivating an interest among black youth players and fans and has worked to reform its hiring practices in the 1990s, its greatest efforts on race have gone into the production of a culture of commemoration and replacement. I'll now describe this culture, beginning with a description of the social and economic forces responsible for its genesis and following up with a critique of emergent white urban institutions reliant on commodified forms of "blackness" for their own validation.

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With great fanfare, Major League Baseball celebrated the 50th anniversary of the integration of the league in 1997. At ballparks around the country, banners bearing the face of Jackie Robinson were hung next to gift shops selling official Negro League team jackets for $240. President Clinton and Robinson's widow Rachel took the field at New York's Shea Stadium to throw out the first pitch at

the official game commemorating the former Brooklyn Dodger's first appearance. Players and umpires attached patches with the logo "Breaking Barriers" to their uniforms. The league organized parties, sponsored lectures, and produced television specials as well as enforced a league-wide retirement of Robinson's jersey number.

The official dedication of the season to Robinson was, in many ways, the culmination of a ten-year effort on the part of the major leagues to get its racial house in order. In 1987, when Dodger vice-president Al Campanis touched off a firestorm of protest by telling Ted Koppel on Nightline that blacks lacked the "necessities" to manage major league clubs, the league had been forced to examine its still questionable record on racial hiring. In the aftermath of the Campanis debacle it was revealed that, forty years after Robinson heroically crossed the color line, African-Americans were still virtually shut out of high-level decision-making and managerial jobs.[24]

However, even more strikingly ironic about the celebration of big-league integration than the dearth of high-level positions filled by black men and women are the trends suggesting a possible disappearance of African-Americans from

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[24] Since that time, the league's record has been encouraging if not exactly earth-shattering. In 1993, Bob Watson became the first black general manager in baseball and, shortly thereafter, four African-Americans were hired as managers. Also in 1993, the league commissioned an "Equal Opportunity Committee" which has since helped facilitate a significant number of minority hires in administrative positions. By 1997, non-player, off-the-field minority employment was at 22 percent. Nonetheless, at the highest levels of administration, the gains are insignificant. Watson remains the only general manager of color in the league and qualified African-Americans are routinely passed over for managerial jobs. During the year preceding the Robinson dedication, nine managerial jobs changed hands; yet, each went to a non-latino white. Additionally, no African-Americans own ballclubs and very few so much as hold organizational vice-president

even the most visible sectors of the American baseball scene. Even as affirmative action programs open up a few spots here and there for minorities in baseball administration, the percentage of African-American players populating big-league rosters steadily decreases. For every new, highly visible, and marketable African-American star like Ken Griffey Jr., hundreds of young African-American children are tuning out, playing other sports, and ignoring baseball. The numbers of African-Americans in the major leagues dropped from 19 percent to 17 percent in the season preceding the year of Robinson; and, two years before a beaming President Clinton threw out that first pitch in front of a national television audience, two teams, the Philadelphia Phillies and the Minnesota Twins, went through the majority of their seasons without even one African-American on the active roster.

Moreover, this downward trend seems likely to continue. More than 90 percent of Little League baseball teams come from mostly white suburban and rural areas. Urban ballfields which only two decades ago were producing a generation of now aging or recently retired stars like Eric Davis, Darryl Strawberry, Ozzie Smith and Eddie Murray — all from South Central Los Angeles — now lay largely fallow and neglected. All of these trends, if followed to their logical conclusion, suggest that the major leagues could once more be absent of African-American players by the seventy-fifth anniversary of integration.

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positions. For more on the troubling racial atmosphere in baseball, see Starr 56-7. Also see

On top of this, the composition of baseball spectators is becoming dramatically more white as well. African-American fans are simply staying away from the parks in record numbers. By 1987, only 6.8 percent of baseball game attendees were black. In majority black cities like Atlanta and St. Louis, executives recently discovered that only four percent and three percent of their respective team's patrons were African-American. "It's pretty much a white crowd out here, and ballplayers notice that," said former Braves third baseman Terry Pendleton (Smith sec. 1:1). Of course, numbers like this aren't lost on management either. So, in response to these alarming figures, the Braves immediately hired a "multi-cultural marketing manager" who, by pitching ticket deals to black churches and colleges and by including an occasional promotion targeting black patrons, was able to bring the number up to 8 percent — better than the national average, but still paltry considering that the city is 60 percent African-American.

Of course, explaining this virtual disappearance of African-American fans and players from the game today requires one to take into consideration a complex matrix of factors. Clearly, young African-Americans are choosing basketball and football, sports without such a brutal history of exclusion, over baseball. Comments like those by Campanis, who represented the almost exclusively white power structure of baseball, help fuel the sense that baseball is a white man's sport. Additionally, the game's infrastructure works against large-

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Weinstock 93-95.

scale African-American participation. Says Reggie Brown, a teenager who recently moved to Flushing, "Around here you have to take a couple of buses just to get to a field" (Smith 1:1+). On top of all this, inner-city blacks who do play the game are largely overlooked by the old boy network of scouts working for major league teams. Joe Morgan, one of the best second basemen ever to play the game and currently one of the most well-respected baseball commentators sees this as a thinly-veiled backlash against hip-hop black teenage identity. "A black player's attitude is always the first thing judged by white scouts and it's something they don't understand" (Smith 1:1+). Of course, simple economics are also a large part of the etiology. Admission costs at major league ballparks have risen dramatically in the past few years excluding lower-income fans who are disproportionately African-American.[25] Yet, perhaps the biggest reason blacks interest is on the wane is cultural. Baseball has simply reached a point where it runs the risk of seeming "un-hip."

Mailer's ideas on hipness again come into play here. His beliefs that hipness derives largely from a position of danger and edge and that only black urban spaces fulfill this need describe perceptions of a sanitation of the game

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[25] Regardless of its origins, this ugly reemergence of the color line in professional baseball clearly has the establishment worried. Only the most unreconstructed baseball administrators fail to see lack of diversity as a trait that diminishes the game. Furthermore, to a person, they understand the serious economic consequences of re-segregation. Although teams with new urban ballparks continue to pack their stadiums night in and night out with a ninety four percent white audience, they stand to lose millions of dollars annually if the market for baseball apparel and paraphernalia dries up completely in the black community, and if television ratings (for television is the one place most people can afford to see the game) among African-Americans continue to drop precipitously. They also face a large-scale backlash from the liberal white community if they allow the game's African-American presence to, once again, fade toward its vanishing point. For

wrought by thirty years of stadium flight to the suburbs.[26] Between 1950 and 1970, the critical indicator of whether a baseball team moved was not stadium age, team record, or even attendance — but the racial composition of the neighborhood. Teams that left went from areas that had an average black population of fourty-nine percent to ones that were just sixteen percent black. Those that stayed put were in neighborhoods that had, on average, a twenty-four percent black population (Starr 57).

Since the beginning of the 90s, however, the trend has reversed. Widespread dissatisfaction with suburban locations has brought teams back to the edgy streets of Mailer's city in search of an integrated experience where patrons can once again combine dining, shopping, and walking with an evening at the ballpark, where they can soak up a dose of city energy as part of their experience. Yet, the spaces they return to are articulated as the "urbanesque," rather than the urban, carefully controlled environments more like Disney's town of Celebration than for example the area around Brooklyn's Ebbets Field, the first and most notoriously jilted locality during an era of franchise relocation.[27] In these new

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a discussion and critique of marketing Negro League gear and other black-oriented baseball products, see Baron 48.

[26] On page 348, Mailer writes that as one of the origins of black hipness is the fact that "no Negro can saunter down a street with any real certainty that violence will not visit him on his walk."

[27] Celebration is the recently opened theme "town" attached to the Disney complex in Orlando. Eerie and arch, this new themed, old-style town development of properties that sell for an average of $400,000 allows people to live a Disney life, to fantasize about what small town living used to be like. Walking Main Street, one encounters upscale coffee shops with signs falsely stating that they were established in 1905 as well as Musak wafting, in stereo, from of speakers hidden in metal mushrooms in the planters throughout downtown. See Susan Willis, *Inside the Mouse*, for a description of how Celebration, promised by the Disney Corporation as long as thirty years ago, was originally a way for executives of the corporation to convince local municipalities to install

urban playgrounds, the cultural cachet of "blackness," much more than the actual presence of African-Americans, helps remind its visitors that they are, indeed, in the city.[28] "Blackness" invests this space with the electricity and danger of the city while an awesome police presence and repressive policies against ticket scalpers and panhandlers as well as the simple demographics of the game of baseball simultaneously code it as just as safe and controlled as a suburban shopping mall.

In Chapter One, I describe in detail how the logic of gentrification has enabled the transformation of the area around Cleveland's sterling new Jacobs Field. What recently was a home to marginal African-American enterprises, some legal, some not, is now in transition to a location more accommodating of the thousands of suburban visitors who now routinely pass through. I describe how, along with a massive police presence and newly-bricked sidewalks which

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sewer hook ups and electric lines for free. Originally, Disney World was supposed to be a mixed use, utopian community of workers and executives who would maintain a theme park.

[28] In the five years immediately prior to the move which shocked the nation, multi-ethnic Brooklyn had been the most prosperous franchise in the major leagues. Nonetheless, owner Walter O'Malley claimed that Ebbets Field, the home of "Dem Bums," was beyond repair. It seated only 35,000 spectators, had parking spaces for only 700 cars, and, most important, was located in a decaying neighborhood. For O'Malley, Los Angeles proved to be a bonanza. He obtained exclusive rights to move his franchise into the nation's third largest metropolitan area which promised not only an increase in attendance but a large television market uncontested by other big league clubs. The city agreed to provide the Dodgers with an ideal site for a new park, the Chavez Ravine — 300 acres in downtown Los Angeles with easy access to several freeways. Originally, however, the site had been scheduled for a public housing project for the poor, but a 1958 referendum to block the use of the land by the Dodgers narrowly failed. While the Dodgers bore the costs of the actual stadium building, the city and county of Los Angeles spent some $5 million preparing the site for construction. The new stadium, completed in 1962, held 53,000 spectators and had parking spaces for 24,000 cars. Just like in Cleveland, the Los Angeles government, when faced with a choice between housing and large-scale urban entertainment, opted for the latter. In this sense, it is clear that O'Malley's is one of the founding fathers of all sweetheart deals. Ironically, by the time that the O'Malley family sold the team to Rupert Murdock for a record half billion dollars in 1998, Walter O'Malley and his son Peter had come to

are intended to reassure patrons of their safety in this liminal space, Indians management and the city have teamed up to provide a host of commemorative forms of the culture being replaced. For example, "scalp-free zones," family-style areas for face-value exchange of tickets, enable patrons to participate in a simulated form of "carnival" behavior harking back to an era of unregulated scalping.[29] Along the same lines, exhibits celebrating the history of Negro League teams which used to play in the neighborhood grace the all-but-abandoned store fronts of previously black-owned check cashing shops and five and dimes now being cleared out to make way for more upscale bagel and coffee franchises.

Similarly, inside the stadium, a space which has become as homogenous as it has been at any time since Robinson first crossed back over the color line, Indians' management provides compensation for the lost thrill of urban racial integration by creating simulacra of blackness. Of course, as I've already argued, showboating and other actions and symbols encoding white fantasies of black "attitude" and "subaltern culture" are omnipresent, helping restore the idea of "urban" to the spectator's experience. Yet, Henderson's "snatch catch," or Bond's glare at opposing pitchers, or any other display of "attitude" on the part of

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be considered keepers of the old guard, traditionalists invested with the preservation of baseball's past. For a more detailed description of the O'Malley's sweetheart deal, see Gershman 186-8.

[29] My guess is that "scalp-free zones" would not stand up to a constitutional challenge of their infringement on civil liberties. In essence, when such a zone is created, the local police force is granted probable cause justification for arresting anyone seen selling tickets outside the specified area. Inside the cordoned-off space, plain clothes and uniform police as well as team security guards keep an eye on transactions to make sure nobody profits on the resale of tickets. In Chapter One, I detail how, in reality, this eliminates a primary reason for members of the urban poor to be in the area around the stadium on game nights; it furthers the white-washing of urban space. In Chapter One, I also theorize the psychic thrill of simulated carnival for patrons who come to the "scalp free zones."

African-American athletes (not to mention their constant repackaging on scoreboard highlight reels, and gift-shop posters) are only among the most visible forms of "blackness" in urban ballparks.[30]

To re-create the energy of the city for the mostly white audience, management also inflects a large percentage of the stadium's package of extra-curricular images and sounds with borrowed remnants of chic, hip-hop culture. For example, the music, excerpted and piped in before and after each Indian hitter, is mostly rap that has been selected and censored to be non-offensive to a middle-class white audience while still containing the perceptible energy and racial inflections of the genre. Crowd control and demographics have eliminated most of the subversive heckling and cat-calling so much a part of the stadium experience at earlier incarnations of urban ballparks like Ebbets Field. Thus the rhythms of the city game are replicated with music coding similar sentiments of aggressive confrontation, yet in a form now controlled and authorized by the establishment.[31] This use of rap by corporate America underscores the awesome

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[30] In Cleveland, the stadium tableau, which at first glance appears almost lily-white, is actually bursting from the seams with residual traces of the African-American presence that the construction of the stadium complex on top of an enclave of legal and illegal black business has almost entirely succeeded in vanquishing. For one thing, as was the case at places like Monticello or Mount Vernon, an enormous, yet practically invisible population of African-Americans works behind the scenes to maintain the sterling quality of the place. Before the fans arrive, a workforce comprising almost exclusively black laborers cleans, polishes, mows, and vacuums the stadium. In Chapter One, I discuss how this semi-visible presence of black labor, or at least of the facts of their production, helps enact the liminal. For more on middle class replication and appropriation of the carnival moment, see Stalleybrass and White.

[31] In "White Like Me" Lott quotes from Berndt Ostendorf in *Black Literature in White America*: "Lower class folk in Western society and blacks among them, have served the dominant classes in two ways: first in setting up the material basis of high civilization, second in healing the injuries of that civilization by maintaining alternative lifestyles and cultures" (77-78). The set up at Jacobs Field seems to support Ostendorf's sense about the dual roles of the dispossessed. Black *people*

power and adaptability of capitalism which shows time and time again an ability to co-opt most forms of avant-garde or oppositional culture. It also further diminishes the potential for angry speech because, blasting from speakers throughout the park, it drowns out any attempts at heckling. In short, the between-batter music at Jacobs Field both reconstitutes and represses ballpark anarchy in a manner acceptable to the painters of "the big picture."[32] It appropriates the single-most recognizable form of contemporary culture currently being produced primarily by African-Americans in order to signify a type of energy that has been meticulously orchestrated out of this new urban space. In the most ironic of shifts, it then also plays a tangible role in crowd control by silencing traditional verbal gestures of discontent.

Similarly, the Indians' mascot Slider is all "attitude," a hip-hop carnival character who both signifies the vanquished African-American presence and helps the audience master it at the same time. Conceived in the offices of a public relations firm employed by Indians' management as a gesture toward outraged Native American groups agitating for an end to the infamous "Chief Wahoo" mascot, Slider is part human, part beast, yet also none of the above.[33] Ten feet

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cook and clean behind the scenes while black *culture* serves as the stadiums' folk culture, its locus of energy and *authenticity*.

[32] See Chapter One for origin of this use of the term "big picture."

[33] Chief Wahoo, whose face still appears on Indians' jerseys and caps, is an animated Indian, a trickster figure with a devilish grin, a cardinal red complexion and a single feather in his cap. He is cousin to centuries worth of racist anglo depictions of Native Americans. In fact, his visage is remarkable similar to that of "Funnyface," George Tilyou's mascot from Coney Island's original Steeplechase Park. For a picture and criticism of "Funnyface," see Kasson 60.

It is worth noting here that a new wave of legal challenges based in copyright law is helping Native American groups pressure the Indians and other organizations that maintain racist mascots or nicknames to change. In April 1999 for example, a group of Cheyennes successfully

tall, vaguely aardvark-like, purple with a fuzzy yellow nose that doubles as a mouth and a rotund midsection bulging out of his too-tight Indians shirt, Slider struts around the park in enormous, untied high-top tennis shoes further advertising his "attitude" with a baseball cap worn sideways and, occasionally, dark sun glasses. He is a grotesque amalgam, a middle-aged "wigger," (the name popularized in the early 90s by teenagers to describe adolescent white male "wannabees") with a gigantic body proportionately similar to that of an out-of-shape 40-year-old ex-jock and the clothing of his rap-obsessed teenage son.

Slider is a predatory and polymorphous sensualist, acting out taboo sexual fantasies to the delight of his audience. Dancing to disco, he cruises the ballpark groping teenage girls and retirees, young ushers and balding 30 something-men alike. Sometimes he dances the "Freak" — a pelvic thrusting 1970s version of the Lambada — his ambiguous genitalia sandwiched in between those of two teenage girls dressed in short wrap-skirts or spandex and hired by Indians management to be his "escorts." At other times he sneaks up behind unsuspecting patrons or ushers and consumes them under a "golden shower" of whiskers.[34] His appetite for flesh is insatiable; his actions fly in the face of restraint.

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argued in front of a three-judge trademark panel that the Washington Redskins' football team name is in violation of the 1946 Lanham Act which "bars registered trademarks that are disparaging, scandalous or contemptuous." In the wake of this decision, the National Coalition on Racism in Sports, is preparing a racial discrimination suit challenging the Indians and their use of "Chief Wahoo." For more on this type of litigation, see Masters.

[34] Because of its connotations of aberrant sexuality, this particular act is reminiscent of Italian stripper-turned-parliamentarian "Ciciolina's" signature "Doccia d'Oro." The climax of this famous dance called for Ciciolina to urinate on front-row audience members.

Slider's "otherness" is of course related to his sprite-like acting out against standards of hetero-normativity. Part of his schtick requires him to appear completely, decadently comfortable in his grotesque body. When he poses for a picture, he stretches out in mock languor, one arm akimbo, the other brushing his hair out of his eyes, as if posing for a bathing suit pinup. Often, when the police and stadium workers are surveying the crowd between innings, he'll assume a position behind a male usher or policeman on top of the dugout. He'll then caress and rub the man's head, or seductively hug him from behind, rubbing his chest with his fuzzy arm wrapped around him. With this gesture, of course, he takes the edge off the feelings spectators might have of being overly-policed and brings into the level of discourse the obvious existence of ballpark homo-eroticism. Balding men, police and other figures of authority are brought low through campy gestures of the homo-erotic. Consistent with this motif, the mascot dances to the most swish music of the 1970s — K.C. and the Sunshine Band, Queen and Donna Summer. He is at once Tony Manero, Barney, Lady Champagne and Biggie Smalls.[35] Supposedly a draw for children, Slider more accurately twists and contorts, gyrates and thrusts in order to express the submerged potential, the

[35] For a discussion of the class implications of Manero's panic about being a "physically-striving man," see Ehrenreich's essay on "Saturday Night Fever" in *Hearts of Men.* The character, she argues, runs away from working class identity in exactly the opposite way that today's man, regardless of actual class status, runs toward it. Barney is of course the purple dinosaur from children's television and video who looks a lot like Slider. Lady Champagne is the African-American transvestite who made such a splash flirting with the John Cusack character in the 1997 film, *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil.* And, Smalls is one of the most well-known and marketed "Gangsta" rapper of the past few years. This list could probably go on, but it is enough to realize how, as a non-representational character, Slider is invested with wiggle room for the rehearsal and replication of so many forms of popular culture eroticism.

repressed erotic energy of the bourgeois spectator class.[36] In an atmosphere of imposed family values, he is an open signifier of all the demons of a repressed, heteronormative and racially-insular life. His costume and act at once allow him to engender elements of the hip-hop, queer, adulterous, and free-spirited.

As such, he is a creature straight out of the collective unconscious of his audience. As a non-representational, non-human character, he is free to transgress all boundaries of decorum and taste. Sure, he might be shaking his grotesquely large mid-section in the direction of a teenage boy or girl, but he *is* only a fuzzy mascot, after all. In fact, Slider's entire act revolves around humor generated by the juxtaposition of children's character/runaway sexuality. His fuzzy costume allows for the prurient sexualization of such standard icons of American innocence as the teenage girl and the elderly woman and provides cover as he gives form to elements of the barely submerged homoerotic omnipresent at sporting events among men. In short, he is what cultural critics from Bahktin to Stallybrass and White would consider the re-articulation of suppressed longings of the bourgeoisie through re-emergent carnival.[37]

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[36] Indians' Vice President for Public Affairs Bob Dibiasio says that the club has had to hire two actors to portray Slider because he is so popular at family gatherings. For example, during the day, when not performing at the stadium, he is routinely double-booked for childrens' birthday parties. One can only imagine the scene if he carries on with his sexualized schtick in homes full of four-and five-year olds. Presumably he tones it down a bit.

[37] As I suggested in Chapter One, most contemporary critics since Bahktin no longer discuss carnival as something that has been eliminated from modern life. Instead, like Stalleybrass and White they watch for the displacements of the "carnivalesque" onto bourgeois cultural forms. See "Bourgeois Hysteria and the Carnivalesque." In this sense, I am indebted to another thinker, Susan Willis, who builds on Bahktin. In her essays for *Inside the Mouse,* Willis gives me a great model for thinking about the implications of Slider-like mascots as re-emergent carnival figures. Also, in "I Want the Black One," Willis provides a useful and creative reading of Mickey Mouse as "black."

But the fact that Slider's act draws so heavily on elements of African-American culture in order to code it as carnivalesque is rather problematic in ways with which neither Bahktin nor Stallybrass and White are equipped to deal. Clearly, it is his hip-hop clothing that instantly alerts a spectator to his liminal status. He is both innocence and experience, pre-sexual and libidinous, cuddly and dangerous, a harmless stuffed animal and a potentially dangerous teenage boy, whereas the second of each pair of dyads refers to his "gangsta" garb. Slider's presence — in a transitional space increasingly bereft of most other signifiers of African-American culture — thus reinforces stereotypes of the young black male as dangerous, overtly sexual, and not to be trusted. Conversely, the presence of otherwise threatening African-American music, dance, clothing and swagger mediated by a harmless, children's character, helps members of the largely white suburban audience contain their fear about the space they have entered when coming downtown for a ball game. Hip-hop attitude is assimilable within a type of carnivalesque minstrel show, consumable fun produced for the pleasure of the whole family. Polymorphous and powerful sexuality, once again tied up with images of African-American masculinity, both titillates and dissipates within the same act.

Clearly, in many ways, the Indians' mascot is a politically-correct reenactment of a century-old baseball side show with even more overtly disturbing racial overtones. Slider's historical antecedents — the first mascots in baseball — were African-American men paid to make fools of themselves in front

of white audiences during late 19th century games. Some blacks who were hired originally to clean locker rooms and perform menial tasks for the organization, were eventually "adopted" as team "mascots...crowd pleasers and good-luck charms" (Levine 101). They were expected to act as idiot children for the amusement of the fans, performing such stock vaudevillian roles as "pickaninnies," "coons" and "nigs."

Perhaps the most famous of Slider's predecessors is Clarence Duval, the "mascot" of the Cincinnati Reds who amused the home crowd for over a decade:

> Because his grin is broad, his legs limbre, and his face as black as the ace of spades...Whenever anything goes wrong, it is only necessary to rub Clarence's wooly head to save the situation, and one of his celebrated 'double shuffles' to dispel all traces of care, even on the gloomiest occasion. (Levine 101)

In thus praising Duval, the *Cincinnati Enquirer* writer underscores the types of pleasure enjoyed by white audiences in this specific type of minstrel situation. Because he is performing *for* them, because "his grin is broad," Duval embodies fantasies of genial blackness, African-American masculinity diffused of its most dangerous potential. Like Slider's, his body appears grotesque to the white audience as he contorts and shakes his "limbre" legs. Yet, this grotesqueness, a visible manifestation of racist fear of otherness, is thoroughly contained because he performs not only for the audience's amusement, but also in their interest. Rubbing his "wooly" head, the patron not only crosses a taboo threshold by

initiating physical contact with a black man, but is able to turn Duval's frightening otherness into a mere talisman serving the expansive fan.

Duval and other African-American mascots allowed baseball players and fans to reenact fantasies about slave-owning. To illustrate this, I need only describe Duval's treatment during A.G. Spalding's ground-breaking international tour of 1888-89. As part of its act, Spalding's American all-star team claimed it "captured" Duval in Omaha, "recovering" him to serve them during the trip (Levine 101). This kind of language almost requires no glossing. Though it is unclear what Duval was doing in Omaha when he was "recovered," it is clear that the way the players and management described how he joined the traveling group references the tragic plight of many escaped slaves and freed blacks before emancipation. On the trip, several ballplayers forced him to wear a catcher's mask and gloves and then paraded him about the Cairo railway station, tethered by a rope, "as if he were some strange animal let loose from a menagerie" (Levine 101).

In short, Duvall's experience exemplifies how the power dynamic between baseball audiences and their mascots have historically involved some kind of mastery. Duval, smiling and thus appearing to condone his bondage, allowed the white players and fans to revisit patterns of race relations by that time statutorily forbidden. Slider, a carnival character whose liminality is dependent to a large measure on the iconography of young black masculinity, allows for similar

fantasies of mastery, albeit in a form much more diffuse and carried out subconsciously.

Perhaps this fantasy of mastery resonates in direct proportion to sensations of being overly regulated or controlled on the part of contemporary audiences. Of course, gentrification requires intense crowd control and surveillance in order to allow the new and the old to coexist peacefully. From the elimination of scalpers and panhandlers on the streets to electronic monitoring devices mounted throughout the stadium to simple ticket prices ensuring a wealthier audience, the Indians and the city go to great lengths to suppress the more frightening elements of the culture being replaced. In doing so, however, Indians' management potentially endangers one of the baseball stadium's central appeals: access to cultural forms of anti-establishmentarian pleasure or the rehearsal of behavior outside the normative.

The ballpark, after all, has long offered a sanctuary for this kind of rehearsal. In the earliest days of professional baseball, owners set up separate "bettor's rings" in order to accommodate the desire for gambling, drinking and other ordinarily unacceptable behaviors among otherwise respectable middle-class men. In this century, famous bleacher sections in, among other places, Ebbets Field in 1930s Brooklyn, and Wrigley Field in 1960s Chicago, have become mythologized for their provision of transgressive space. More recently, in the nether-regions of cavernous multi-purpose parks like the now demolished Cleveland Stadium, spectators have felt themselves free to speak out publicly

against authority (usually embodied by umpires, players and owners), to yell, curse, and, in general, to perform a range of behaviors unacceptable in most other places.[38] In short, pleasure for many consumers of the game in these rarefied spaces has long been tied up with experiencing freedom, real or imagined, from institutional discipline. In the cozy confines of new retro ballparks, however, allowing this kind of behavior would work against management's efforts to draw a wealthier, more family-based clientele.

So, in order to provide abundant recompense, management packages and manages the symbols of outsider culture for an anxious middle class audience, ambivalent about its own social status. They use accents of race in order to simulate vernacular forms of urban freedom endangered during gentrification when the outside becomes "in." They choreograph the return of "blackness" to the gentrifying urban space in order to help an almost exclusively white audience feel itself outside the tight grip of control that this very gentrification demands. By commemorating and compensating in this way, the architects and choreographers of the modern stadium movement attempt to give white patrons a way to solve the problem presented by the Rolaids commercial. Instead of looking in vain for a way to "throw out" the threat of the black male body, they turn to love and their own form of theft. As white culture reclaims and colonizes the physical space of downtown, baseball stadiums help a large segment of

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[38] In Chapter One, I describe the non-obvious appeal of the "multi-purpose" stadiums now considered obsolete. As unwanted commodities, they opened up spaces for forms of oppositional or "productive cultural pleasures." For a discussion of vernacular forms of pleasure made

visitors imagine themselves as trustees to the cultural estate. Simulated forms of "blackness" available for consumption in new urban parks invest the space with the energy that a largely suburban audience perhaps perceives as missing from its daily life while providing convenient cover for a new capitalist order pushing African-Americans further to the margins.

To emphasize this replacement, I need only sketch a portrait of the new face of welfare in Cleveland. In order to keep the ball club in the city, the local government has spent over a billion tax dollars constructing, maintaining and policing the new stadium for Indian ownership. In turn, this form of *corporate* welfare benefits the primarily white audience who can afford $2,000 for an average price partial season ticket plan. Meanwhile, the nearby Kingsmen neighborhood, which remains the largest African-American section of town, lost a full 17 percent of its total income in the first year of so-called "welfare reform" (Bartimole, "Who Really Governs?"). If then I am correct in suggesting that a large part of the catchet of the Henderson commercial was a desire on the part of the white catcher to not only vanquish his African-American counterpart, but to *become* him, it seems clear that urban stadiums are enabling that fantasy in the most ironic of ways. Cleveland's new welfare "kings and queens" do not occupy

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possible by racial, cultural or economic marginalization, see Fiske, "Offensive Bodies and Carnival Pleasures."

the increasingly depressed slums of the inner city; instead, they sit in the bleachers, box seats, luxury suites and owner's boxes at Jacobs Field.[39]

[39] Here of course I reference Ronald Reagan's pernicious use of the term "welfare queen" to conjure up racial hatred and to suggest that black women, living easily off the largess of Aid to Families with Dependent Children, were responsible for the country's massive debt and economic downturn. For the most comprehensive description of corporate welfare for sports franchises, see Rosentraub.

## *Chapter* 5
## Delillo's City of the Instant

This is what Technology does. It peels back the shadows and redeems the dazed and rambling past. It makes reality come true. Marvin Lundy in *Underworld*

The first section of Don Delillo's epic novel *Underworld* takes the reader back to the Polo Grounds, the long-time home of the New York Giants on its most famous day, October 3, 1951. This was the afternoon, of course, when Bobby Thomson, with a dramatic ninth-inning home run, struck the final blow erasing the Brooklyn Dodgers' three run lead inspiring Giants broadcaster Ross Hodges to issue perhaps the most famous call in broadcast sports history: "The Giants win the pennant! The Giants win the pennant!"

In classic Delillo fashion, the writer allows us to experience the moment *Rashomon* style, weaving in pages of fictional detail during the few moments in time that it takes Thomson to circle the bases and Hodges to make the call.[1] We see young Cotter Martin, a 14-year-old African-American boy watch the ball travel in his direction in the outfield bleachers: we see J. Edgar Hoover in the VIP's box behind first base studying a Life Magazine shot of the Bruegel painting "The Triumph of Death" which has come floating down with other debris from the second deck: we see Jackie Gleason vomiting remnants of beer and hot dogs on Frank Sinatra's shoes in the same box. All of which is framed by the familiar

[1] *Rashomon* is Akira Kurosawa's 1950 cinematic masterpiece in which four different characters give competing narratives of a rape-murder in which they participated.

raspy shouting of Hodges "I do not believe it," a call which, as Delillo points out, has been immortalized for us because one man in Brooklyn happened to be taping the broadcast that day. In short, we see the complexity of Delillo's "historical metafiction," history as a combination of conjecture, documented fact and, most important, the fantasy of the writer himself all working backwards to supplement the indelible media image.[2] Like the footage of the Kennedy assassination captured on the Zapruder film which became the starting point for Delillo's meta-fictional *Libra*, the Hodges' call of the Thomson home run is ground zero for the writer's reconstruction of Cold War America.

Of course, the fictional Hoover's presence at the game gives Delillo space to comment throughout the novel on the curious way that history descends and becomes commodified. On the very same day that Thomson hit his so-called "shot heard round the world," the Soviet Union exploded an atomic bomb inside its own borders, confirming its nuclear capabilities and heightening American post-war paranoia about threats to its sovereignty. The Russian blast was an opening salvo in the arms race that escalated simply into the Cold War. On the front page of the next day's *New York Times* the Thomson home run and the Atomic blast ran side by side, partners in this highly-charged historical moment. Yet, the event in the Soviet Union has been virtually lost to the memory of a culture that has immortalized that afternoon's scene in the Polo Grounds.

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[2] For a description of theorist Linda Hutcheons' use of the term "historical metafiction," see Duvall 287.

The answer to why this has happened is, at least to a degree, tied up with the power of television. Because the game was being broadcast live, hundreds of thousands of people were able to become eternally caught in the "aura" of the moment. Television produced a kind of "city of the instant" linking people on rooftops, in pool halls and in living rooms huddled around their sets, together yet apart, witnessing "history" as it unfolded (Virilio and Lotringer 87). Because footage of the home run then became inserted in our official history as an endless film loop during sports casts and as part of advertising spots promoting baseball on television, the charge of the experience of 'being there' has become magnified in retrospect. The Soviet blast, meanwhile, had no such cachet. Its furtive nature allowed for no live broadcast and no visuals for posterity; in fact, most people were simply unaware of it until they picked up the paper the next morning.

In this chapter, I will first focus on two of Delillo's characters, Nick Shay and Marvin Lundy, connected by their search for the authenticating object of the more famous moment, Thomson's home run ball. Both characters — one mired in a mid-life crisis, the other faced with old age and imminent death — are motivated by what I will call the 'will to nostalgia.' Each searches for reassurance about his own end through the illusory search for a visible continuum with the past. Both, however, come to understand their quests as vexed, their acquisitive impulses ultimately laying bare what Baudrillard calls the "precession of simulacra," a search for truth leading to the conclusion that there may be no truth at all (The Evil Demon 13). I will then demonstrate how this 'will to

nostalgia' forms an integral component of the infrastructure of contemporary baseball. By constructing, patronizing and playing in fashionable "retro" ballparks throughout the league, contemporary baseball management, fans, and players — much like Nick Shay and Marv Lundy — engage in their own quests to stockpile the past in plain view. Ultimately, I will show how this kind of quest is symptomatic of a post "urban," post "fandom," post "post modern" millennial condition with severe race, class and psychological implications.[3]

Delillo's description of how history is replaced by an event commodified through technology speaks volumes about what Baudrillard calls the "terroristic hyperrealism of our world, a world where a 'real' event occurs in a vacuum, stripped of its context and visible only from afar, televisually" (*Transparency* 79-80). To Baudrillard, experience in post-industrial America has no relation to reality whatsoever. It is its own pure simulacrum, producing a semiotic system of reality and perception based on the flawed capitalistic logic of exchange. Within this system, the post-modern subject merely traffics in commodified representations of the real. Delillo's novel gestures toward the Hodges as a signal of the transformation into Baudrillard's world of the "hyperreal." The novel thus provides its own myth of origins, invoking a 'reverse big-bang theory' pointing backwards toward Thomson's 'original blast' as representative of the inception of the primacy of simulacrum.

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[3] My use of these terms is informed by the work of Steve Redhead, who in *Post-Fandom and the Millennial Blues*, creates a framework for discussing the hyperreal nature of late-millennial sports

For this very reason, I chose to conclude my project with an explication of *Underworld*. I believe the novel describes in a very savvy way the psycho-cultural forces informing the desire for retro authenticity in ballpark construction. Stepping back somewhat from the methodology of my previous two chapters — social and historical critiques born primarily from peripatetic analysis — I attempt to flesh out some of the parameters of post-modern determinism. Instead of highlighting my own observations, I instead foreground Delillo's description of life in an age of simulacra in order to help forge a richer understanding of the psychology *behind* the political economy of late-millennial ballpark construction.

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In *Underworld,* Nick's quest begins when he first telephones Marvin to inquire about the Thomson home-run ball. Answering the phone, the retired dry-cleaner, who himself had spent most of the last stages of his life tracing and authenticating the object's lineage, reacts with great skepticism.

> You're a loyal fan retired in Arizona with a heart valve they implanted with dacron cuffs and you developed a sweetness for the old days. You spent your career in mergers and what, acquisitions. Made millions but

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consumption. These terms also accent many of the ideas of Susan Stewart, whose *On Longing* gave me a starting point for thinking about the psychology and political economy of collecting.

you're still dissatisfied. You want one last acquisition that's personal from the heart. (190)

During his own journey, Marvin has come to realize the folly in acquisition-as-soul-salve. A wealthy, but admittedly dissatisfied retiree himself when he began this search, he too had fantasized about the ability of the collectible to rekindle the intense feeling — in this case a kind of Keatsian "negative capability" — he experienced as a Dodger fan, crushed when Thomson's ball cleared the fence. This passage shows his expectations of Nick as an "Ivan Ilych" character, a hardened man, who had submerged his spiritual and emotional life into thoughts of daily commerce until a late-in-life awareness of mortality forces him to conduct a double-time search for meaning.[4] In fact, as Marvin recounts, he's already fielded dozens of calls from such "men with grainy voices...polymer packed in their gums...with quadruple bypass," men on their last legs searching for coherent meaning before it's too late. If, indeed, Nick is searching for cheap grace, Marvin lets him know emphatically that he has called the wrong number.

Yet, Nick's response strikes Marvin as refreshing. "I'm not a fan anymore...I'm not retired. And I haven't made millions," he tells him. "And I don't know exactly why I want to buy the ball" (191). Marvin delights in the fact that Nick is not "palpitating in his mind for the old Giants or the old New York." Wizened as he is by his own search, the old man is content to let the city of the Polo Grounds and Cotter Martin and the thousands of other details of the famous

day rest in peace, part of an unrecoverable past. He recognizes that, just as part of his own innocence took flight the moment that Ralph Branca's fastball left Thomson's bat, and just as the Dodgers and the Giants had pulled up stakes six years after the blast for greener pastures in California, the spirit of old New York had somehow exploded outward as well: shards and fragments, ex-New Yorkers and their offspring, dispersed chaotically in late-twentieth century mirages like Phoenix and Los Angeles.

It is clear then that Nick's sanguine nature and his own connection to a disappearing old New York prompts Marvin to sell him the ball. The old man has had plenty of offers, but now he finally has found the opportunity to pass the ball on to someone struggling with meaning the way he is. He sells because he is impressed with Nick's ignorance regarding motivation. After all, the narrator tells us, this was Marvin's own "exact status. For years he didn't know why he was chasing down exhausted objects." It was his own status, that is, until he came to reevaluate the terms of his quest. "Chasing down exhausted objects" was not ultimately about recovery, but about loss itself. Recovery of memorabilia brought nothing back to him. Instead, at its best, the quest merely placed Marvin at times in the subject position of the historian, connecting the dots of history in order to produce a narrative, both related to and oddly independent of fact. At its worst,

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[4] Here I refer to the titular character of Tolstoy's *The Death of Ivan Ilych*.

the quest placed him, as owner of the object, in the position of an antiquarian, trying to live off the "aura" of exhausted objects.[5]

This distinction between "antiquarian" and "historian" is a crucial one. Susan Stewart, in her book about memorabilia, *On Longing*, argues that "the social disease of nostalgia," or the "antiquarian's" search for authenticating objects is representative of the misguided action of the modern subject acculturated to an exchange economy. She argues that the attraction of the souvenir is that it promises, falsely, connection to a pre-commodified self, substituting a "context of perpetual consumption for its context of origin" (135). By this she means that the object advertises access to the "materiality" of an event which exists now only in narrative. But, of course, the souvenir is by definition always incomplete. Its operating principle is metonymy, providing merely a sample of the original scene. In Nick's case, the ball is metonymic to the whole set of lost referents — the rooftop on which he listened to the game, the thoughts of his furtive romance with Klara Sax — which were part of the original experience. In short, his investment in it is a partial gesture toward recovery of all of the details of the original experience, which Delillo as novelist attempts to (re)create in his meta-fictional world. Delillo, in this sense the "historian," is in the privileged position of being able to supplement the "impoverished and partial"

[5] Most discussions of "aura" begin of course with Benjamin. In "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," he discusses how technology allowing for mechanical reproduction has completely changed how we look at artistic objects. Allowing for consumption without the presence of the original shifts the central ingredient of the experience from authenticity to a type

souvenir with narrative, both "attaching onto" the ball's origins and creating his own independent myth of those origins.

Seeing Nick's most futile sentimentality thus as the impossible longing of an antiquarian helps explain his existential dilemma at the end of the novel. His final thoughts, coming to us as he sits alone in his Phoenix study fumbling with his trophy ball, gesture directly toward the crisis of the modern subject that Stewart identifies: "I long for the days of disorder," he says. "I want them back, the days when I was alive on the earth, rippling in the quick of my skin, heedless and real. I was dumb-muscled and angry and real"(810). The ball, merely a *trace* of the authentic experience, tortures middle-aged Nick with all that it is not. It is not a fountain of youth, able to bring back the libidinous desire of his teenage years; it is not a time machine, recreating the disordered streets of pre-suburban flight Brooklyn; and, most important, it is not an object that can exist independent of narrative, collapsing the temporal space between signifier and signified. In short, it fails to ease the pain of the capitalist subject who longs for a relationship to the world independent of exchange value.

In this sense, his contrast with the more resigned Marvin is crucial. Marvin, as "collector" rather than "antiquarian," is at least able to see this form of consumption as a way to forget rather than a way to remember. In other words, Marvin's collection — its structure of organization and exegesis — is about

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of collection and longing. As he writes, "that which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction is the aura of the work of art" (220).

Marvin himself. By assembling his collection — a miniaturized, but proportionally accurate Polo Grounds scoreboard, an assemblage of gloves, bats and shirts, etc. all self-contained in his basement — Marvin produces a finite semiotic system. The point of his collection is not to close the temporal space between body and memory, but instead to recreate the world in his own image. Marvin, with the help of his wife Eleanor, comes to realize that the only reason for collecting is to tell his story. By thus becoming the narrator, Marvin has been able to make every moment a point of origin, thrusting forward, whereas Nick gets stuck trying to diminish the temporal space separating him from the moment of lost innocence.

Nick's disappointment with the ball is also part of Delillo's critique of the most grotesque impulses toward privatization in late-stage capitalism. By buying the ball, Nick attempts to move history into the realm of the private. Prior to Nick's acquisition of it, the ball had functioned as the single most important unifying force in Delillo's fictional universe. For example, it had put Manx Martin, an African-American hustler from Harlem in contact with Charles Wainwright, a Madison Avenue executive. Because they shared an interest in the ball, Manx and Charles were able to reenact the classic American Huck and Jim dyad, sharing shots of whiskey from a flask on their symbolic "raft," or the landing just outside the ticket booth at Yankee Stadium. Delillo makes it perfectly clear that, independent of the ball, the two would have been economically and even statutorily impeded from this kind of interaction in 1950s

New York. The ball thus enables utopian fantasies of public racial and male bonding. Therefore, by taking it out of circulation through acquisition, Nick effectively short-circuits its real value within the novel's economy.

Nick seems acutely aware of this form of short-circuiting as he sits alone in his study pondering the ball as empty signifier. "This is what I long for, the breach of peace, the days of disarray when I walked real streets and did things slap-bang and felt angry and ready all the time, a danger to others and a distant mystery to myself" (810). "Real streets" is in this context a particularly charged description. As a citizen of Phoenix, a town built around automobile travel, Nick no longer is able to participate in a community of the streets, one which privileges public, spontaneous interaction. His life is atomized and sanitized, a bourgeois subdivision existence which keeps him and his family insulated from the kind of "slap-bang" (alternatively sublime and horrific) situations of his youth. These very situations of course resulted in the most exciting romance of his life, when he discovered his sexuality via an elicit tryst with older, married Klara Sax; they also resulted in his most troubling moment, when he accidentally shot and killed a man. Nick's words suggest that passion and "negative capabilities" are only accessible on "real streets."

"Real" in this context also gestures toward Nick's growing into an awareness of his tenuous subject position in an increasingly hyperreal world. In many ways, his Phoenix is a perfect Baudrillardian simulacrum. An enormous, sprawling city constructed in the heart of the Sonoran desert, Phoenix expands by

first bulldozing the majestic Saguaro cacti, ocotillo, and luscious red soil indigenous to the region, then constructing a suburbanized approximation of the very desert it replaces. Hence, citizens of Phoenix can dine at places like the Cactus Café where "traditional southwestern dishes" are served up on tables painted with designs reminiscent of Anastazi pottery next to planters filled with desert cacti. Compounding the troubling nature of this bizarre world of "replacement" is the fact that the servers at just such a restaurant are themselves likely to be representatives of vanquished cultures. Mexican and Native Americans, who inhabited the land long before the invention of the automobile and advances in irrigation and water diversion allowed for its large-scale Anglo colonization, now in large measure comprise the service community, making the lives of their colonizers more comfortable or, perhaps more important, less like living in the desert.

By forcing himself to compare his present status (middle-aged, middle-class and a resident of hyperreal Phoenix) to that of his former "self" (young, working-class and a resident of Brooklyn), Nick loses faith in his ability to live anything other than a simulation. "I know the ghosts are walking the halls," he says. "But not these halls and not this house. They're all back there in those railroad rooms at the narrow end of the night and I stand helpless in this desert place looking at books" (810). His particular locution, "desert *place*," not a desert but like a desert, of course underlines the notion of Phoenix as a real world "Disneyland," a replacement of the desert with an air-conditioned, green-lawned

simulacrum. His helplessness, however, gestures toward something even more troubling — the notion that Baudrillard might be right. Disneyland, itself, Nick seems to be discovering, just might be the "real America."

*In Simulacra and Simulation*, Baudrillard argues that the phenomenon of Disney originates from a need for what he calls "deterrence," or the presentation of a simulated world which "rejuvenates the fiction of the real in the opposite camp" (13). In other words, Disneyland and the ubiquitous other theme parks springing up in the second half of the 20th century exist in order to advertise themselves as unreal and thus reaffirm our belief that the cities they tend to appear in are "real." However, Los Angeles, the prototype for the sprawling late-century American city and the origin of Disney, provides merely a network of "incessant, unreal circulation." To Baudrillard, Los Angeles, like Nick Shay's Phoenix, is a city of "incredible proportions but without space, without dimension" (13). In this simulated world...

> People no longer look at each other, but there are institutes for that. They no longer touch each other, but there is contactotherapy. They no longer walk, but they go jogging, etc. ... One reinvents penury, asceticism, vanished savage naturalness: natural food, health food, yoga. (14)

As an adult, Nick has become acutely aware of both the lack of tactility the world of his "desert place" presents him and the constant Baudrillardian "reinvention" of experience defining his life in the suburbs. Driving through the desert in search of Klara, he notices the sterility of his experience inside his Lexus, "a car assembled

in a work area that's completely free of human presence" (63). Attending a Dodgers game in Los Angeles for the first time, he sits in the Stadium Club, "glassed-in at press level," the announcer's voice "shot in clearly, transmitted from the booth," the crowd remaining "at an eerie distance, soul-moaning like some lost battalion" (91). In fact, he calls his life in suburban Phoenix akin to being in "the Witness Protection Program," cut off from every past experience or connection that defines and locates one in life (66).

If indeed the baseball is to him "all about losing," what he has lost is belief in the "real," and this is the hardest thing for him to accept. The baseball, and all its stored up images — of Thomson circling the bases and of the slugger and Ralph Branca, the man who pitched the ball, appearing together in photographs with a succession of presidents — cannot give him a reflection of the reality of the moment. Nor can it mask or denature a profound reality or even hide the absence of a profound reality. Instead, it allows him access to nothing at all that seems like reality: It merely is part of its own pure simulacrum.[6] In short, no matter how badly he wants back the "days of disarray" and the "real streets" of Brooklyn, the best he will be able to find is a simulation. His world is Disney. Yet, he is a hero in the novel for at least recognizing this "precession of simulacra" and hungering for something more.

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[6] Again, this logic allows us to see Delillo's essential perspective as Baudrillardian. See *The Evil Demon of Images* for a description of the "precession of simulacra" (13).

Delillo's meta-fiction supplements Baudrillard's take on the post-modern condition by giving it a series of originating myths. In *Libra,* of course, he focuses on the legacy of the 6.9 seconds of film shot by Zapruder. The endless film loop and all the supplemental narratives — of TV news reporters, government officials, presidential historians, and conspiracy theorists alike — spin off from the event, constituting a hyperreal constellation of truth which is, in reality, nothing but the symbolic exchange of rhetoric and camera angles. In *Underworld*, he describes Hodges' famous call as another such seminal event in the constitution of the hyperrealistic nature of reality and perception in Cold War America. In its wake, televised versions of baseball games — and by extension, of geo-political news events — precede the actual referent.[7] So, for example, when a child enters a big league park for the first time, most likely his or her first thought is tied up with the relationship between this panorama and the more familiar, or more "real," one seen on television. Then, as the game approaches its culminating moments, his or her expectations are raised by familiarity with the original referent. Thus, each and every 9th inning rally since the one in the Polo

[7] Baudrillard of course points to no such originating events. He simply sees the origin of the hyperreal in the beginning of industrial capitalism. "Thoughout history it was capital that first fed on the destructuration of every referential, of every human objective, that shattered every ideal distinction between true and false, good and evil, in order to establish a radical law of equivalence and exchange, the iron law of its power." See *Simulacra and Simulation* 16. By now it should be obvious that my sense of hyperreality is more in tune with Delillo's. Television, and before that, film, if not initiating widespread hyperreality, certainly sped it along. Furthermore, instant replay inside the stadium, a kind of authenticating set of images that help the modern patron see 'what really happened' during any particular play represents another step in the path toward a blurring of referent and image. See Morris and Nydahl for a discussion of the theoretical implications of multiple cameras and instant replay. One of their basic premises is that, as a result of television

Grounds has been, and continues to be, refracted through the lens of the Hodges broadcast, producing an endless spin cycle of reality and perception.

In addition to this ability to inform expectations vis-a-vis perception, televised sports since Hodges also helps negotiate the eerie replacement of urban *space* with broadcasting *time*. Delillo comments on this phenomenon by making his fictional Russ Hodges well aware of his own role in this transformation of the event into simulacrum. Early in the broadcast, when the broadcaster's stat-man tells him he looks "pensive," Hodges takes time to reflect on his odd mood. At first he simply attributes his disquietude to the fact that, on this day of days, when the two local teams are culminating the most exciting pennant chase in baseball history, twenty thousand seats remain unsold. At the outset, he is shocked that so many people would pass up the opportunity of being there. Yet, as the game goes on, he seems to begin to understand why. "It's funny, you know...but I think it was Charlotte put the look on my face," he tells his colleague, referring to the job he once had in North Carolina doing re-creations of baseball games for radio broadcasts (25). During these re-creations, (not coincidentally, a job held by a young Ronald Reagan, who epitomizes the presidency as telegenic simulacrum) he would take facts clacking in over the wires and invent all of the other color, from the young, carrot topped boy in the grandstands who caught a foul ball to the burly first baseman adjusting his grip before stepping into the batter's box.

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watching, our expectations of what we witness are as follows: Live action, followed by a reaction shot of coaches, players, cheerleaders, etc. followed by slow-motion instant replay.

During the Dodgers/Giants broadcast, Hodges comes to remember that in Charlotte he had dreamt of nothing else but broadcasting "real baseball from a booth in the Polo Grounds in New York" (25). But now, invested as he is with Delillo's perspective of the world as simulacrum, the fictionalized broadcaster begins to realize that the baseball game itself, the real referent, or, as he says, "the thing that happens in the sun," disappears into the very broadcast of it. Of course the stadium was half-full, Delillo seems to be saying. The game (in this case I'm talking about "the game," post-referent after the broadcast invested it with its particular aura) did not really happen until it ended. 'Being there' thus meant listening to the call on the radio or on television as much or more than it meant being in the stadium.

To hammer this point home, Delillo has Hodges engage in a mini-drama about the fitness of his voice. "I hope I don't close down. My larynx feels like it is in a vice" (26). Yet, Delillo's audience knows that having Hodges stop broadcasting is not really an option. For one, the reader has already experienced the game's ending before even beginning the novel. From Delillo's first line — "He speaks in your voice, American" — the inevitable telos becomes Hodges screaming of "The Giants win the Pennant!" Because this moment has become part of a film loop, played time and again in promotional spots for televised baseball games, Hodges' wild, jubilant call endures more tenaciously in the American imagination of history than even an image of the Russians exploding an A-bomb, more than all the other events, big or small, that happened on that

day. To write this out of his script therefore would force Delillo to alienate the reader considerably, to change the course of "history" as it has descended in an era of "hyperreality." The best he can do, he seems to be suggesting, is to invent hundreds of fictional details to fill in around the basic "fact" of Hodges' broadcast. In this sense, Delillo *is* the young Hodges in a Charlotte studio, taking facts from the wire and infusing them with color and meaning, interweaving Hodges' description of the game with an fantastical account of J. Edgar Hoover, Toots Shor, Frank Sinatra and Jackie Gleason sharing a box behind the first base dugout. He is also Marvin Lundy, the collector, taking fragmentary images, the "waste" of post-modern history, and producing his own coherent semiotic system.

In addition to commenting on the strange way that history descends in a hyperreal world, Delillo uses Hodges in this section to engage in a critique of the atomizing capability of mass media. The writer suggests that an equally powerful reason why Hodges' voice cannot give out is his rarefied position in the kind of broadcast community which urban theorist Paul Virilio finds so troubling. In *Pure War,* he discusses the 'disappearing' live fan, arguing that, in an era of televised sports, the spectator is merely a body helping fill up the stadium so that it won't look empty.

> Once the stadiums were full. It was a magnificent popular explosion. There were two hundred thousand people in the grandstands, singing and shouting. It was a vision from ancient society, from the agora, from paganism (Virilio qtd. in Redhead, 62).

If the real event was Hodges' broadcast of the game and not the game itself, "being there" meant being present in the city of technological space instead of geographic space. Thus, the fictional Russ Hodges, who has the privilege of Delillo's advanced temporal position, can reject some of the theories about the empty seats bandied about by his broadcasting crew and instead focus on his own place in the construction of a kind of global technological village. Instead of accepting his colleagues' speculation that overcast skies or lack of advanced ticket sales kept the crowd size down on this historic day, Hodges can focus on the incredible shift of which he is a major part. His call of the culminating moment allowed audience members like Nick Shay, listening from his rooftop, to experience the game in a way that even Cotter Martin, who sneaked into the outfield bleachers that day and who came away with the home run ball could not. Yet, whereas Baudrillard writes glibly about this threat to belief about the "causal and logical order of the real and its reproduction" — if anything he delights in that it exposes the folly of searching for the "original" in an age of simulacra — Virilio, from whom much of Baudrillard's work derives, finds it deeply disturbing. The accelerated culture of broadcasting is part of a matrix of forces threatening the existence of public life and hence democracy.

Mike Davis and other contemporary historians have shown in great detail how shady associations between American oil and car companies and the Federal government paved the way for the construction of Los Angeles' ecologically and socially disastrous infrastructure. The replacement of public transportation with

highways, of urban planning by land grabbing of greedy developers, has produced a racially insular, atomized world of sprawl, smog, and solitude.[8] Virilio's main contribution to this body of discourse is to show how the insertion of television into the fabric of our daily lives similarly enables suburbanization and sprawl. Psychically, television makes the city obsolete. Nobody needs to live in Soho any more now that one can experience it vicariously through shows such as "Friends" which relocate suburban situations, pre-occupations and energy into a simulated urban setting. In short, nobody *needs* to go to ball games, or by extension to the city, anymore.

All of which points precisely to the crisis Nick faces at the end of *Underworld*. His status is clearly one of a "post-urban, post-fan." He no longer lives in Brooklyn and he no longer attends games. Yet his experience feels horribly incomplete. Any relationship he has with the urbanism of his youth takes place through metonymy, or the substitution of symbolic objects for experience. Delillo's description of his protagonist's life draws a line between Nick's existential crisis at the end of the novel and his experience listening to the game on the radio at the beginning. A consumer of broadcast reality on his rooftop, Nick learns early about the immateriality of the city during the burgeoning era of the hyperreal. This unfortunate lesson prompts him to dislocate himself from his "real" streets and instead float around in the post-referential universe of his

[8] In both *City of Quartz* and *Ecology of Fear* Davis exposes the tragic relationship between social injustice and the problems of contemporary Los Angeles. In the former book, he focuses on solitude and atomization and in the latter one, on perceptions of natural disorder.

adulthood. Understanding this trajectory, Delillo seems to be saying, is key to understanding America's symbolic shift from New York to Phoenix, from the Yankees to the Diamondbacks, the Brooklyn Dodgers to the Los Angeles Dodgers, from Cotter Martin's bleacher seat in the Polo Grounds to the luxury sky boxes Nick's business associates occupy in Dodger Stadium. In short, Nick's trip through the hyperreal is one from community to solitude, from the public realm to the private.[9]

It is crucial that Delillo locates Nick's first discussion about the hollow meaning of his souvenir in the Stadium Club of the Los Angeles ballpark. Constructed in 1962 with the help of $5 million of public money, Chavez Ravine, or Dodger Stadium, is the prototype of the modern sports arena. Located on three hundred acres near downtown, on a parcel of land that had originally been set aside to be affordable housing for low-income citizens, the stadium was equipped with amenities and security measures to attract a wealthier clientele than typically attended baseball games. The Stadium club and home plate boxes provided waiter service and insulation not just from the cheering masses but from the game itself. Seating just 53,000 but providing parking for more than 27,000 cars, the stadium allowed suburbanites quick, safe and easy access to a "downtown" event without forcing them to come into contact with actual downtown residents.

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[9] The Arizona Diamondbacks are one of baseball's two newest teams. They play their games in the futuristic, retractable roof stadium, Bank One Ballpark. This new stadium comes complete with a swimming pool in the outfield, scores of luxury boxes on its mezzanine, and risibly, an anachronistic dirt path dug from the pitcher's mound to home plate to remind visitors of 19th century diamonds which, for largely unknown reasons, carried that feature.

Reluctant to even patronize this bastardized home of his pirated ball club, Nick is not surprised when he discovers for himself the kind of insulation one could purchase at the new stadium.

> We were set apart from the field, glassed in at press level, and even with a table by the window we heard only muffled sounds from the crowd. The radio announcer's voice shot in clearly, transmitted from the booth, but the crowd remained at an eerie distance, soul-moaning like some lost battalion... Glassic looked at me and said, "We need video helmets and power gloves. Because this isn't reality. This is virtual reality. And we don't have the proper equipment" (91-2).

Yet, they do have the proper equipment. The ocular arrangement of the stadium club allows Nick and his colleagues to experience the game comfortably as television — images behind a glass screen with sound piped in on speakers. More important, it allows them to experience a gathering of a critical mass of people, the sign of a city, televisually. Like images on television, the crowd is both alive and dead to its consumers. "Soul moaning like some lost battalion," the crowd, a temporary stand-in for the urban masses, exists only at a remove and thus signifies, like a movie, only through metaphor and metonym. Both dead and alive, "lost" in the unreal space of broadcasting, the modern crowd, refracted through a bombardment of images, can conjure up feelings of the solidarity of the streets or the revolutionary force of urban uprisings of the early part of the century, but it cannot encircle and draw in the modern subject physically. So, in

this sense, what Nick's group is experiencing is, in fact, reality, or better yet, hyperreality in a televisual age.[10]

Although the experience troubles Nick, he does manage to see Glassic's notion as naïve. Instead of joining his friend in a denunciation of ball park "virtual reality," he simply orders another drink and resigns himself to the subject position of television viewer. In fact, when Glassic suggests that, when the Giants and Dodgers moved west, they took Nick's "heart and soul with them," the protagonist again corrects him. "There was nothing left to take. I was already a nonfan by that time" (93).

His words here are extremely important. Having a "heart and soul," being a "fan," would require that he lose himself in the moment, that he remain capable of experiencing a team's loss as his own. However, even before his team pulled up stakes and abandoned his hometown, he had become accustomed to the cool reserve of a television viewer or radio consumer. Listening to the famous Giants/Dodgers game from his rooftop, being a part of the "city of the instant" connected by Hodges' home run call, changed him forever. At that moment,

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[10] At this point it should be made clear that the object of Baudrillard's strongest scorn is the American Bourgeoisie. To the French theorist, Americans, or the collection of people with the greatest access to mediating technology, are most responsible for making the world seem increasingly hyperreal. When, for example, he argues that the "gulf war did not exist," he of course means for its spectatorship, watching it at home on television in the Unitied States. For those Iraqis (and American soldiers) who died during the conflict and in its horrible aftermath — when "surgical" bombings stopped, yet still left millions without clean water for years — the conflict was very real. Of course, as he suggests, even for many American soldiers who engaged in this rout, the war existed at somewhat of a remove from reality. To argue this, he points out that, statistically, more American servicemen would have died in car crashes during normal peacetime operations than died in combat during the months of the war. See *The Gulf War Did Not Happen.*

Nick became aware of his distance from the referent. Nick's dismissal of Glassic then mirrors Baudrillard's cynicism when discussing the video dimension of contemporary perception. "We don't need digital gloves or a digital suit," he writes. "As we are, we are moving around in a world as in a synthesized image" (Baudrillard, *The Virtual Illusion* qtd. in Redhead 62-63). Nick's melancholia at the end of the novel is wrapped up in an awareness that we can never shed these gloves or suits. In short, broadcasts of sports had forever changed his relationship to them.

Nick's low expectations for the game at Dodger Stadium show him to be savvy to the ways in which the mediation (or perhaps more pointedly, the 'media-tization') of sports has informed the structure of the modern stadium event. For one thing, from an economic perspective, fans in the stadium are now largely irrelevant. Profitability in professional sports no longer hinges on the number of fans in seats, but rather on the magnitude of television contracts. Despite George Steinbrenner's disingenuous threats to New Yorkers that his Yankees would need to attract three million fans per season to remain profitable and thus stay in their venerable Bronx ballpark, the ball club could play in an empty stadium night after night and remain in the black.[11] To drive this point home, one need only examine the action of international media mogul Rupert Murdoch who, in 1998, went way outside the lines established by the market by offering one billion dollars for

[11] For a discussion both of how Steinbrenner is threatening New Yorkers in order to get them to finance a new downtown ballpark and how the Yankees, in reality, could easily afford to build one themselves, see Rosentraub, "Why Baseball."

England's famous Manchester United soccer team and another half billion for the Dodgers.[12] What Murdoch seeks to acquire is essentially inexpensive "content" for his network of cable channels. Never in his wildest dreams could he expect to recoup that kind of money through a lifetime of ticket and hot dog sales. Instead, because sports keep down production costs by providing ready made programming and because advertisers recognize the sports market as providing them their most knowable and lucrative demographic base, Murdoch can be seen to have invested not in 'sports franchises,' but rather in 'high-yield' programming 'content' to 'deliver' to advertisers. The irrelevant nature of the product he purchased is underlined by the fact that, as an Australian who did not grow up with the game, he still has to have people sit in his owner's box in order to explain to him what is going on on the field. Soccer, baseball, football, whatever, it is all the same to Murdoch.[13]

Given this economic reality, it does not seem possible for a modern fan to attend a game without feeling at least some of Nick's alienation. Because the new ocular arrangement sets up the viewer at home as primary spectator, the fans in the ball park become themselves part of the "content." A half full stadium, like the one at the Polo Grounds that day, is only important insofar as it diminishes somewhat from the capacity of the televised event to signify "important" or

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[12] After a prolonged battle which stirred up anti-corporate passions among the working-class followers of Manchester United, Murdoch's bid to buy the team was denied in court in April, 1999 because of the monopolistic intentions of the Australian businessman.

[13] For more on how Murdoch's purchase of the Dodgers signals a new era of corporate ownership, particularly by media conglomerates, see Bruck.

"intense." Delillo's continual reflection about the empty seats at the Polo Grounds points to his understanding of that pennant clinching game as a milepost signaling the inception of a "post-fandom" era. A "post-fandom" spectator in the ballpark finds himself to be a commodity, simply a part of the 'big picture' beamed live to viewers at home.[14]

Yet, further complicating the sense of alienation is the fact that, in modern parks, the experience is configured in such a way to give spectators relevance not just as content (or products) but as consumers as well. At Jacobs Field in Cleveland, for example, most patrons view the game simultaneously as live event and televised spectacle via the 660 television monitors located around the park. In bathrooms, underneath balconies, next to concession stands, in private luxury boxes, these televisions help mediate the experience for the customer. They allow the Indian's "imagineers" to instantly repackage the game, to provide bird's eye views of action, multiple perspectives, instant replay, and most importantly, advertisement to a captive audience. In the words of Madison Avenue, they "deliver content" in the form of the produced game to the audience and "deliver an audience" to the advertisers. These advertisers, in turn, function as a integral part of the "big picture," by making the endeavor excessively profitable to the Indians. As a perfect synthesis of consumer and product, the Jacobs Field spectator thus inhabits an ideal subjectivity in the age of television.

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[14] See Chapter One for a discussion of the meaning of Indians' V.P. Bob Dibiasio's use of the term.

Interestingly, management of Jacobs Field and other "simulations" of old-time urban ballparks do seem to recognize the inherent problems they face when they too-readily package their audience for television viewers and advertisers. They thus provide a bleacher section which suggests as one of its primary appeals a symbolic rejection of commodification. In Cleveland, bleacher patrons, like concerned liberal parents who attempt to insulate their children against a constant barrage of advertisement and inane entertainment by unplugging their T.V.s, literally turn their backs to the mother of all televisions, the giant Jumbotron on the world's largest freestanding scoreboard rising from the back of the section. This 150 foot behemoth forms the familiar backdrop to the typical scene broadcast from Jacobs Field. Anyone who watched the 1997 All-Star game or World Series is familiar with the shots of players being interviewed post game in the foreground of the bleacher section and scoreboard while the rotating signs for beer companies and investment firms illuminate the background. Television viewers thus consume an undifferentiated mass of "content" and advertising. Similarly, anyone watching the game from any other position than the bleachers becomes part of the "captive audience" anytime she or he glances toward the field of play or looks up to see what the pitch count is. He or she sees a hologrammatic advertisement miraculously changing sponsors behind the left fielder; he or she sees the ten colorful advertisements dominating the area around the Jumbotron; and, he or she witnesses moving picture advertisements on the giant television

screen itself.[15] A viewer watching at home or from the stands, like a client in a barber's chair who looks in the mirror at the mirror behind and sees an infinite reflection of a reflection, subjects him or herself to similar maddening layers of advertisements. She or he can watch a player catching a ball in front of the Pepsi sign on the scoreboard, while the Jumbotron in the background televises an infinite repetition of the same sign. The bleacher patron, on the other hand, turns his or her back to the visual onslaught. A bleacher seat affords the spectator, quite literally, the only existing perspective from which the infinite display of the same advertisement is impossible. This patron's transgression, thus, is a refusal to be "delivered" to advertisers.

Yet, of course, this refusal does not save even the bleacher fan from his or her own large scale commodification. The new bleacher dweller is never, for one moment, invisible. The advertisements on the outfield wall and those on the scoreboard merely frame the bleacher dweller within the "big picture." They themselves are part of the "content." If the fan at large is both product and consumer, the bleacher dweller must be seen simply as pure product even as he or she takes pride in escaping an attempt to make him or her merely a member of a

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[15] The montage of advertisements on the Jumbotron is interesting in and of itself. A sign for McDonald and Co. Investment Firm is flanked by one for Budweiser Beer and one for Pepsi Cola. In other words, even the tableau of advertisements balances images specifically intended for the economically elite and ones that offer a kind of reverse class status. Budweiser beer, an icon of an era of consumer democracy, before retro ballparks and micro beers, helps patrons connect with a time of perceptions of greater 'authenticity.' See Chapter Two for a discussion of consumer democracy in multi-purpose stadiums. See Chapter Three for a discussion of class cross dressing in the bleachers.

"captive audience."[16] Not bombarded by the scoreboard media images, the fans feel a more one to one relationship with the game: out of sight of the Jumbotron's official calls to "MAKE SOME NOISE" or "STOMP YOUR FEET," they have been given the space to more actively create their response to the game. Yet, ultimately, their relevance to the game is simple. They are there to replicate, or simulate, the ball park anarchy of previous stadiums and bleacher sections, to upgrade the quality of the televised event for viewers at home and in the rest of the stadium. Judging by the rapidity with which bleacher seats are sold out at new stadiums, this form of audience participation or replication is not without its charge.

In this way, and in many others, spectators are drawn to fashionable retro parks by their promise of "virtual world" entry into the now demolished Polo Grounds of Thomson, Branca and Hodges and other ball parks of its era. Throughout this project, I have made it clear that a great many of the most highly-promoted architectural facets of these new-old stadiums gesture directly to a piece of our demolished or fading past. In my introduction, I described how the short,

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[16] The term 'captive audience' has become one of the most important ones on Madison Avenue. Technological advances from mute buttons to VCRs that automatically delete commercials in addition to the simple fact that people have learned to tune out advertisements have changed the nature of advertisement 'delivery.' Now, advertisers look to find captive audiences wherever possible. For example, they post the same advertisement on each ski lift pole guaranteeing a captive audience for the duration of a skier's ride to the top of a trail. Similarly, in baseball parks and during televised broadcasts, advertising which forms the backdrop to the 'action' delivers a captive audience. In terms of pure audacity, owners of a minor league franchise took the cake a few years ago. In minor league parks they sanctioned an experiment in which advertisers pitched their products through special, flavorless and non-toxic dyes right on hot dogs. If successful, they planned to then begin testing it in major league parks. As of yet, this method has not taken hold,

tall right field wall at Baltimore's Camden Yards was constructed to remind patrons of the wall at Brooklyn's Ebbets' Field, erected out of necessity when Charles Ebbets was unable to acquire the parcel of land beyond its eventual confines. In Chapter Two I discussed the significance of the stand-alone bleacher section in Cleveland and how it gestures back to Chicago's turn of the century Lake Front Park and Wrigley Field. In that section I also suggested that the expressed steel construction and club hall of fame of the Ballpark at Arlington, the most contextually-challenged of all the new parks in that its urban design exists in such risible contradistinction to its "edge-city" location, is meant to remind patrons of Yankee Stadium.

In this chapter, I have shown how a ticket to a game at one of these venues also comes with the attendant promise of fellowship with Nick Shay's "ghosts." It nourishes the fantasy of contemporary fans who wish to take their place beside the storied Ebbets Field rowdies and the "Bleacher Bums" of Chicago.[17] It promises to make them all 'Wild Bill Hagy,' the Baltimore cab driver who would twist and contort his pudgy body in order to lead the cheap seat patrons in a cheer for the Orioles.

But, even more important, a ticket to a retro-park promises Bobby Thomson's home run every time to an audience used to the immediate gratification of television. Through replication on video scoreboards, the

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though owners during meetings in the Spring of 1999 did agree in principle to change the by-laws of the league, allowing for advertisements right on uniform sleeves.

[17] For an oral history of the Brooklyn fans, see Golenbock.

coordinators of the game edit and replay baseball's most thrilling moments throughout the game. So, for example, a fan attending a game in Cleveland will catch the ending of the Red Sox game in Boston, or the Mets game in Queens as well as seeing the most exciting replays of last year's Indians team, or even "historical" footage like that of Thomson circling the bases. Furthermore, stadium management provides a myriad of distractions (batting cages, putt-putt golf, video games, etc.) guaranteeing consumers all the vicissitudes of sport; they give spectators the vicarious thrills of winning and losing an infinite number of times throughout the game, regardless of what happens (or doesn't happen) on the field.

English football fan Paul Morley, when describing why he feels Americans have never really understood the appeal of soccer and consequently why the English are so threatened by an increase in participation by American firms in the production and marketing of their national sport, seems to be pointing directly to this kind of dangerous desire for immediate gratification. According to Morley, fandom in England requires a "miraculous stupidity," or the ability, in fact the desire, to "suffer the 66 nil-nil draws, the pain, the horror, the misery, to get to that one moment when it all goes right and it's 4-1" (qtd. in Redhead 35-6). Conversely, in America, sporting executives simply manufacture highs and lows for an audience that expects absolutely to get them as a part of the price of admission.

Perhaps these very expectations of highs and lows (be they manufactured or 'real') and the inability on the part of a more purely consumer culture to incorporate anything like a "miraculous stupidity" are the unifying elements describing the appeal of retro-ballparks. Through creation of a consumers' utopia, the parks promise the impossible — Bobby Thomson's home run every time and an opportunity to experience the world of the now-demolished Polo Grounds at its most thrilling moment. To this end, they come adorned with anachronistic and highly frivolous objects — expressed steel beams and asymmetrical walls without a structural purpose, analogue clocks in an age of digitization — objects with obsolete exchange value. Designers of the parks can thus be seen as seeking to authenticate the past while, simultaneously, discrediting the present. By doing so, they make their creations ostensibly about loss, tying up their energy in the chasm "between the present and an imagined, prelapsarian experience" (Stewart, 142). Therefore, the promise of retro-ballparks exists on the level of pure aesthetics. They attempt to "erase the actual past in order to create an imagined past which is available for consumption" (142).

The irony of these endeavors is all too clear. The imagined, authentic past, is partly one divorced from the vulgarities of consumerism — baseball before the era of multi-million dollar contracts and franchise relocation along with "reality" in an age before the referent was so thoroughly debased by the capitalist logic of exchange. However, the process of recovery, the "will to nostalgia" of these parks requires the ultimate commodification — that of history. Contemporary

baseball fans are all thus a bit like Nick Shay in his more naïve and acquisitive moments, investing dreams of access to a vanquished past in an object reminiscent of the original experience. They all thus rely on metonymy, the substitution of a part for the whole, in order to collapse the temporal space separating them from an idealized world. Any attempt to buy into the past — the attendance at a retro-park or the collection of a souvenir — necessitates recognition of one's position in contemporary consumer society. In short, one cannot become lost in the referent no matter how much he or she spends. In fact, this type of nostalgic consumerism actually pushes one farther from the referent by certifying the distance from it.

In addition to these psychological limitations, this brand of consumer-based nostalgia has severe sociological implications. A companion to the search for authenticating objects through attendance at retro stadiums is the objectification and displacement of the erstwhile residents of urban America. A 'Disneyfied' urban space like the Gateway surrounding Jacobs Field subsumes the city in its own aestheticization, making urban life quaint, a consumable relic of a purer, yet somehow improved upon past.[18] It allows modern visitors to the city to seek a way out of hyperreality through the appropriation of the fading voices of the dispossessed or vanished. It gives them a chance to try on costumes and accents and behaviors of people from other classes, other races, other time periods. Meanwhile, actual people — the "ghosts" of Nick Shay's dystopia, the

folks who Delillo's protagonist experiences only as "some lost battalion" ... "soul moaning" ... "at an eerie distance" from his highly symbolic position in the Dodgers' club restaurant — fade into oblivion.[19]

The Gateway is a "post-urban" space, a televisual city reproduced. Through technology, crowd control and themed architecture, its designers allow visitors to experience the "urban" without the sharpest edges. Connecting various "classes" of patrons (from those in the upper decks to those in the luxury boxes) through a refraction of the event via televisual reproduction of the game on the scoreboard and in the bathrooms, etc., and then beaming the whole picture live to the sprawling suburbs surrounding downtown, the managers of the Gateway attempt to create an urbanism of time and space. As such, they both replicate the atomized structure of the suburbs and enable it.[20]

The stadiums articulate a longing for contact with a whole series of lost referents organized around a commodified notion of the American city. Like Nick Shay, ballpark patrons long for a host of disappearing signifiers — city life, real streets, racial mixing, sensuality, etc. They come hoping to find a plethora of truth, of secondary objectivity, and authenticity. But, as theorists from Benjamin

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[18] For more on the impulse to collect experience through oral tradition, see Stewart 142.
[19] For more on simulated versions of class and race based animus, see Chapters Three and Four.
[20] Redhead would describe retro parks in terms that step back from a critique of the political economy of stadium development and instead favor ones which foreground an idealist notion of millennialist determinism. He would consider these parks to be simple reactions to the 'millennial blues,' a "late twentieth-century cultural condition where the media is more and more 'real'(istic) — hyperreal or post-real — and yet there seems to be less and less a 'real' referent to which it (the image) refers" (103).

to Baudrillard have pointed out, by bringing mummies into view, we destroy them.[21]

Ultimately, one has to wonder about the half-life of these stadiums. Will they still have that sense of tantalizing incompleteness in say 40 years when no one alive has ever been to the older stadiums that they replicate? Or, will they just seem *old*, and even suggest that the past they strive to replicate is that of the 1990s? It might just be possible that modern baseball stadiums will simply have to be replaced with alarming frequency, like buildings in Las Vegas, a city of the eternal present, which every few years completely obliterates the past, razing decade-old themed palaces in favor of something completely new.[22] In this sense, we can see how retro stadiums just might be destined to fall into the enormous waste pile of Cold War relics upon which Delillo crafts his tome of memory and loss in an age of hyperreality.

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[21] In *Simulacra and Simulation*, Baudrillard discusses a particular 'back to the future' gesture which, he feels, makes inauthentic both the present and the past. On page 11 he asks us to "witness the cloister of Saint-Michel de Cuxa, which one will repatriate at great cost from the Cloisters in New York to reinstall it in 'its original site.' And everyone is supposed to applaud this restitution (as they did "the experimental campaign to take back the sidewalks" on the Champs Elysees!). Well, if the exportation of the cornices was in effect an arbitrary act, if the Cloisters in New York are an artificial mosaic of all cultures (following a logic of the capitalist centralization of value), their re-importation to the original site is even more artificial: it is a total simulacrum that links up with "reality" through a complete circumvolution. The cloister should have stayed in New York in its simulated environment, which at least fooled no one. Repatriating it is nothing but a supplementary subterfuge, acting as if nothing had happened and indulging in retrospective hallucination." Clearly, Baudrillard would feel that, once baseball abandoned the city, it should have stayed in the suburbs where at least it would not be perceived as trying to fool its patrons. Also, see Benjamin 220 for a description of how mechanical reproduction diminishes 'aura.'

[22] For a discussion of the necessity in late capitalism for advertisers to always promote their products as "new and improved," see Vattimo 74.

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