

TIME AND SPACE IN THE BASEBALL NARRATIVE

by

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Time and Space in the Baseball Narrative

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ABSTRACT

Texts written about baseball are permeated with narrative devices that create a sense of temporal and spatial ambiguity. I argue that these narrative devices, which I discern with the help of concepts from Eco, Bakhtin, Genette, and Barthes, are used in the baseball report and the baseball novel for different purposes. In the baseball report, this temporal and spatial ambiguity is exploited in an attempt to create an aura of myth around the game and its players. I argue that this other sense of time and space in the baseball report mimics what happens on the field, and that in fact, this temporal and spatial ambiguity is subversive because it is anti-corporate.

I argue that the mass of writing about baseball adopts one of these two stances: myth-supporting, or myth-questioning. I believe that the accurate critical position on baseball writing incorporates both of these positions; baseball is both enchanting and entertaining. To assume that baseball, and consequently, writing about baseball, is either enchanting or entertaining is to limit the possibility of interpretation: to say the game has no mythic possibilities is wrong, as is to say the game is not an industry.

In the novel, the same devices I explore in the baseball report are used to illuminate the myth of a timeless and "spaceless" game in the hopes of contextualizing, substantiating, and historicizing the myth. I conclude that because the myth is pervasive and so well-

rooted in forms such as the baseball report, the novel must submit to the use of extraordinary narrative devices - magic, fantasy, etc. - in order to expose the poverty of truth behind the myth. I further conclude that the myth of the temporally and spatially ambiguous game is going to come under continued attack from other histories of the game which fall outside of the dominant white male history of baseball.

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INTRODUCTION

I like baseball, but that isn't the reason I decided to write such a large piece of work about it. Rather, a number of purely practical reasons influenced my decision to write about writing about baseball. Baseball is the oldest organized team sport in North America. Because baseball is the oldest professional team sport in North America, a certain tradition of writing has grown up around the game. People have been writing about baseball since 1844. I wrote about baseball because baseball makes itself available to the written word.

Baseball as a sport is approachable from a wide variety of theoretical stances, in part because the form of the game is like a gigantic continuous experiment: it generates reams of data which can be analyzed and broken down in the pursuit of some truth or advantage. Critical positions on baseball include the romanticism of Roger Angell and Michael Novak, whose writings hint at the possibility of baseball as the perfect physical embodiment of the Wordsworthian vision of "spots of time." There are the closely related mythic and spiritual analyses of the game, developed by baseball writers such as Hans Lenck and Robert Cochran: they see the game as a new secular religion for a confounded society. And there is the social radicalism of Richard Crepeau and Christopher Lasch. These two writers see baseball as the perfect vehicle for distracting an alienated consumer society. There have even been a couple of books, The Physics of Baseball and Keep Your Eye on the Ball, which explain such phenomena as how a pitched ball curves and how a fielder

knows just when to reach a spot to catch a descending ball: he unwittingly solves a problem in trigonometry. The mathematical purity of the game - each match results in a perfectly complete box score, the interplay of circles, squares, and triangles - has attracted the interest of scientists and mathematicians as well.

The study of writing about baseball represents an opportunity to combine an interest in mass media and popular culture with an interest in the novel. As I hope to show, the baseball novel and newspaper baseball report work toward the same goal of the recreation of the game, in the sense of Angell's *Interior Stadium*, where games are recreated in the mind in moments of tranquility, preferably during the off-season. However, the two media try to recreate the game for different reasons. The report is designed to perpetuate the mythic/romantic view of the game, while the contemporary baseball novel tries to bring this view to its knee.

I note that I have used the word "myth" several times without bothering to define it. When I use the word myth, I mean those stories which allow for the interpenetration of the past and the present, create human bonds and thus communities, and which allow for the integration of outsiders into those communities. I borrow heavily from Caldwell's "Of Hobby Horses, Baseball, and Narrative: Coover's *Universal Baseball Association*" in formulating this definition (Caldwell, 1987, 165). To finish the definition, I will also add Barthes' idea of myth's ability to empty human stories of history and infuse them with the natural world (Barthes, 1959, 175). By this, Barthes

means that the stories of man are infused with elements of the natural world to make them seem more "natural", as well as to explain the unexplainable. The importance of this becomes immediately apparent at the mention of Malamud's novel, The Natural.

Although all the texts I am working with are concerned with baseball, they do not all belong to what I would call the genre of baseball writing. I believe that while baseball reports are generic, baseball novels are not. In Carolyn Miller's "Genre as Social Action," she lays out a theory of genre which suggests that for a text to be classified as generic, it must satisfy three conditions, and not all types of writing meet these qualifications:

First, there may fail to be significant substantive or formal similarities ...

Second, there may be inadequate consideration of all the elements in recurrent rhetorical situations. A genre claim may be based on similarities only in exigence or only in audience etc ... The third way a genre claim may fail is if there is no pragmatic component, no way to understand the genre as social action (Miller, 1984, 164-165).

In other words, the generic text has obvious similarities in form and substance, arises out of a complex recurrent rhetorical situation, and

exists to do something. Along this line, baseball reports have obvious similarities in form and substance. They arise out of a recurring rhetorical situation - the baseball game - and meet the exigence, or social need, to recreate the game. The cultural forms in which the reports are embedded provide coherent interpretive contexts, and at another level, the substance and form of the reports fuse to become meta-information: texts in the newspaper are granted a credibility they may or may not deserve. In addition to this, the changes in the baseball report over time have been largely based on the development of the technology of information gathering. This is meaningful in a discussion of genre because it shows the baseball report as responsive to changes in a post-industrial way of knowing about the world.

The baseball report has an identifiable audience - the readers of the sports pages - and the writers are motivated to write the reports through their recognition of a recurrent situation: a baseball game. The genre of the baseball report arises out of the recognition of recurrence. In reporting the game, the report writers provide information about the game, and as I will argue, a method for the reader to re-experience the game and sustain the myths that the discourse community of baseball fans have helped to generate. The report's presence in the newspaper, its form, also provides substance at a higher level of generic classification in that newspaper articles are granted a certain degree of authority: this is meta-information for the reader. The writers use devices such as repetition, metonymy, disordering, etc. in order to re-create the game and create a timeless,

decontextualized construction of the game they, and some of their readers, have just seen.

Baseball novels, on the other hand, do not qualify as generic because the social need for their creation and use varies from novel to novel. As well, the audience for baseball novels will not be uniform and identifiable. Baseball novels share formal characteristics - the characteristics of novels - and they share a social action: they use the metaphor of baseball. But the need for the use of the baseball metaphor varies for each novel: there is a recurring action, without a recurring purpose.¹ For instance, baseball is used in Robert Coover's The Universal Baseball Association as a way of asking the reader to re-examine the way she looks at the myths that North Americans experience in their everyday lives. In Kinsella's The Iowa Baseball Confederacy, baseball is used as a means of suggesting that history is filled with gaps and that these gaps need to be understood before any historical record can be considered accurate. Although all baseball novels work to demythify the game by exposing its myths to the broad light of day, to stop at that level of analysis and conclude that all baseball novels are about baseball and thus generic

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I will add here that metaphor may be seen as a parallel of genre in terms of its relation to the concept of social action. In a Burkian sense, if you share metaphors, you share attitudes. Metaphor is a way of seeing, a way of knowing that is more specific than genre. Metaphors exist in the text and can be pointed to for empirical evidence of a shared paradigm of language. People share metaphors as a way of discoursing. However, metaphor, unlike the concept of genre, allows for both hierarchical and factional approaches to the study of discourse communities: discourse communities do not have to be simply composed of people who do all of the same things. People can use the metaphors, share the metaphors, but use them less or more frequently. This allows for the possibility that members of a discourse community might not have to speak all of the specific discourse in order to be fluent enough to understand the paradigmatic discourse of the community. Metaphors speak of a dominant paradigm, and in so doing, they influence action.

would be misleading. Instead, I shall say that of the baseball novels I analyze in Chapter 2, two belong to the genre of the mythic novel, two to the fantasy genre, and two to the genre of the realistic novel. From this generic classification, the novels are free to explore the issues they grapple with, without having to worry about being shunted off to a library shelf marked "Baseball."

I decided to use literary theorists whose work was flexible enough to support an analysis of both the baseball report and the baseball novel. Bakhtin and Eco, whose work in "Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel" and "The Myth of Superman," respectively, address in different but compatible manners many of the issues of myth, time, space, and culture which presented themselves like harpies at every turn. To a lesser degree, Barthes' Mythologies proved useful in formulating a definition of myth which worked with the nature of both the newspaper report and the novel. To finish building my theoretical paradigm, I used Genette's study of narrative technique in Narrative Discourse. Coupled with Bakhtin and Eco's abstract thoughts and concepts, Genette provides a way of actually getting my hands dirty and showing what Bakhtin and Eco describe as happening.

Bakhtin and Eco ponder the fields of myth from radical views of society. This is convenient, as the construction and attempted deconstruction of myth are the predominant critical positions in debate about writing about baseball. One part of the bulk of writing about baseball, including the baseball report, concerns itself with

maintaining the myth of baseball. The other part of the bulk, composed mostly of critical short stories and novels, concerns itself with revealing the poverty behind the myth. There is little lying between these two masses of writing about baseball: these two masses or poles correspond to the two positions from which Bakhtin and Eco work in "Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel" and "The Myth of Superman," respectively.

I believe that both of the analyses mentioned above - myth-supporting and myth-deflating - are naive and insufficient when taken alone to form a criticism of writing about baseball. I think that the only way to understand the existence of the two poles of writing about baseball is to bring the two poles of criticism together. In Richard Lipsky's analysis of sports, "The Political and Social Dimensions of Sport," he writes:

Any analysis of Sports World must proceed sympathetically, yet critically, inside the boundaries of the world itself. Such an analysis must move beyond the naive theories which depict sports as a mirror of American life. This analysis must also move against arguments that see sports as purely an escape without seeing how sport acts as a heart in a heartless world
(Lipsky, 1984, 74).

Just as the game cannot be fairly judged by either of the perspectives alone, neither can the writing about the game. Baseball in some ways does mirror life: this is a direct result of the game's development in the urban factory towns of mid-19th century America. Roland Garrett, in "The Metaphysics of Baseball," writes "the division of roles, action, time and space in baseball parallels the division of labour in the factory and in the new bureaucracies" (Garrett, 1976, 653). This is, to some extent, true, but it is also true that no factory is manned by individuals of superior speed, strength, and athletic skill performing very difficult and varied tasks before large audiences. But like the factories that existed in baseball's infancy, criticism that sees baseball and writing about baseball as comment on modern North American capitalism are blind to contemporary economic realities.

George Grella, in "Baseball and the American Dream," examines the popularity of the sport, and reaches the conclusion that "it requires no great leap of logic or intuition to recognize that the magical qualities of primitive religions also exist in baseball. The sport is the nearest thing to a National Rite of Spring ... (Grella, 1975, 268). But as Neil Postman points out in *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, there is a very big difference between enchantment and entertainment, and in writing about baseball, there seems to be some confusion between that which is sublime and that which is bought and sold. Baseball players are not priests and the game is secular - big business, in fact - although Cordelia Candelaria argues for its religious origins among the Mayans. However, the difference may

have been rendered irrelevant in this age of spectacle. Postman writes "it is not necessary to conceal anything from a public insensible to contradictions and narcotized by technological diversion" (Postman, 1985, 111). How baseball and writing about baseball can absorb the two positions, enchantment and entertainment, needs to be understood, and this is what I am going to try to explain.

Postman's discussion of television is more relevant to an analysis of writing about baseball than might be thought at first. Television has had an enormous impact on the way that the baseball report is produced and written. Baseball reporters have had to mimic the way television covers the game, and that has had an interesting effect on the presentation of the chronotope - "the intrinsic interconnectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature" (Bakhtin, 1981, 84). - in the baseball report. Postman writes, "what we watch is a medium which presents information in a form that renders it simplistic, non-substantial, non-historical, and non-contextual. That is to say, information packaged as entertainment" (Postman, 141). This environment is exactly the kind needed for the cultivation of myth. Joan Chandler amplifies Postman's thought in her essay "American Televised Sport: Business as Usual":

An event on television is not the same as the event in the stadium. The viewer sees plays over and over again, and is

overwhelmed by commentary. It's a technological translation of the game itself into another two-dimensional language, and another cultural setting, the living room (Chandler, 1985, 85).

Television has changed the way the baseball report is written: in order to compete with television, it has to recreate the baseball that the reader has already recreated from the television screen. For example, multiple narration in baseball stories didn't appear until the 1970's, and the only reason for this change was the introduction of videotape and the increasing sophistication of television. The need to cover the game as event, rather than just a game, forced the newspaper report to change (Ungerleider and Kreiger, 1985, 43). In an informal analysis of a week's coverage of the New York Times sports section from each of the years 1924, 1934, 1951, 1941, 1955, 1965, and 1976, the game's and the baseball report's ability to absorb and appropriate technology has been notable. The addition of players and coaches talking about the game in the text is the most noticeable development in the baseball report since the photograph was introduced to the report in the 1920's. I think television and videotape, which allowed the chronological progression of the game to be disordered and commented upon both during and after its actual playing, fundamentally changed the way people knew about baseball, and thus forced a reflective change in the baseball report.

The newspaper report which results from this kind of appropriated coverage has been willingly grasped by the writers of the baseball report because it can accommodate the mythic/romantic "spots of time" which the discourse community needs to sustain the myths of baseball. (I note here that the people who know about baseball do comprise a discourse community of people. In Baseball the Beautiful, Marvin Cohen wrote:

... baseball fans, though they live apart in time and space, and most of whom are destined never to meet, constitute a definite community of minds. They inhabit the same baseball sphere, whose circumference is at each fan's center. Its roving round universals are a penetration of mystery by a conducted language. Those outside the pale don't know (Cohen, 1976, 43).

Although this writing is more poetic than the writing of some literary theorists, I think that it carries the gist of what a discourse community is and does. The members of that community share a language, signs, and a way of knowing about something.)

The non-contextual, non-historical, non-substantial world of information engendered by television is exactly what encourages myth to grow. Baseball report writers have picked up on this because they need to be able to use what Michael Novak calls "sacred time" in his essay, "Sacred Space, Sacred Time." He defines sacred time as the

time in which individuals under stress perform acts of perfection, mythic acts (Novak, 1976, 729). These acts of perfection are timeless, and the individuals themselves become god-like. This is the stuff of which myths are made, and the writers of their reports have developed devices which aid them in the replication of the nature of the timeless moment and the god-like act. It is interesting to note that in the baseball report, the "sacred space" goes largely unnoticed: sacred space is the space in which these god-like acts are performed. This space largely disappears in the wake of the non-contextual, non-substantial, non-historical treatment it receives from both television and the baseball report.

In contradiction of this treatment stands the baseball novel, which tries to contextualize, substantiate, and historicize the game it uses as a model. The novel can do this because, as Postman notes, "a book is all history ... from the way it is produced to the linear mode of its exposition to the fact the past tense is its most comfortable mode of address" (Postman, 136). As well, the modern baseball novel has proven to be the most successful device for exploring the myth of the sacred baseball world because the novel, perhaps even the act of narration, is a socially legitimated device for upsetting the coherence and continuity that are necessary for myth: fiction can play with the stories it takes to fuel itself. Although early novels about baseball tended to support the myth, the identification of the mythic aspects of the sport by writers like Bernard Malamud in has forced the creation of a new way of knowing about baseball. This new way of knowing has as its target the clarification and re-

interpretation of the history of the sport, as well as the use of the sport as a model for talking about subjects like death, economics, morality, and racism. The three kinds of baseball novels I have identified-- the mythic, the fantastic, and the realistic-- (Bjarkman, 1990, xv) all use various devices to recreate the sacred time/space chronotope, to use Bakhtin's word, but they want to force the reader to think about the game and its relation to modern society.

In short, I will analyze the conventions of the baseball report in Chapter 1. I will try to show how these reports are constructed to create an air of timelessness that is the key to the cultivation of the baseball myth. I will suggest an explanation for this method of writing. In Chapter 2, I will analyze six different baseball novels taken from three different genres, and I will offer an explanation for their use of baseball as a model and method for conveying messages about both the game, and by extension, the people who watch it and live in the world outside of baseball. In conclusion, I hope I can clarify the ideas I have formulated in the previous two chapters, and offer some ideas for future study.

CHAPTER ONE

It's no earth-shattering revelation to be told that the mass media serve to maintain the status quo. Government interests and corporate interests have been intertwined for such a long time now that it is often difficult to tell them apart. And because the media

continue to apply archaic ideas about freedom of speech and public vs. private rights to twentieth-century phenomena, news "confirms the legitimacy of the state by hiding the state's involvement with, and support of, corporate capitalism" (Tuchman, 1978, 210).

However, I think a twist on this theme may lie within the sports pages. As the sociologist Gaye Tuchman writes:

Every day the editors reproduce ... the hierarchy among editors. They also reproduce the supremacy of the territorial chain of command, which incorporates political beats and bureaus but excludes such topical specialties as women's news and sports. These sorts of news are thus rendered institutionally uninteresting.

(Tuchman, 211)

Because sports have always been considered "institutionally uninteresting" as news, sports writing has been able to evolve in a manner not consistent with institutionally important news. Where news of the government, world affairs, and business work to support corporate capitalism, sports writing has not had that responsibility. And because baseball is the longest established of all North American team sports, baseball will serve as a model to help me explain how the sports pages have unwittingly contained within them the smack of subversion since 1866, when the first professional baseball player took the field.

Consider the following:

Jays, who played as if they were trying to make last ride at Disneyland, managed but 4 singles on the night and, with the Red Sox bowing 5-2 to Kansas, missed a shot at reclaiming sole possession of first place.

Toronto Star, July 14, 1990

All of these elements combined to stick the Blue Jays with a third straight loss out near Disneyland yesterday as California Angels prevailed 3-2 on Johnny Ray's 9th inning, run scoring single off Tom Henke.

Toronto Star, July 16, 1990

First, it would seem that major league baseball and Disneyland make a handsome couple. Both are corporate-governed forms of entertainment - escapism, perhaps - and both come with their own sets of popular mythology and iconography. But Disneyland makes a shallow groom. Baseball, which has its own discourse community, is profoundly anti-corporate in its relationship with its discourse community. Where Mickey Mouse pats the visitor on the head and sends her home after a hot day under the California sun, baseball's manner of seduction is less obvious, less cynical, and doesn't work on children alone.

Baseball is a game not governed by the time clock of the paternal industrial or corporate complex which measures out the work time of most citizens. Theoretically, a game could go on forever. To watch a baseball game, then, is to participate in a sense of time which is separate and different from work time. As well, to appreciate a baseball game is to understand the variety and complexity of decisions which the baseball player must make on every play. Experiencing this anti-corporate time and seeing "workers" make decisions directly affecting production is the subtle lure of the game. In addition to this, there is also the lure of the speed, strength, and skill of the players. I note that I owe much of this level of analysis to Eco's examination of Superman in "The Myth of Superman" (Eco, 1962, 107-124). In this essay, Eco provides for me a way of explaining how sports figures are both immortalized and given a way to retain their mortality in the baseball report.

The experience of time finds its correlative in the physical setting of the game. The "space" in which the game is played is important to my reading of the game because it contains within it an appeal to the ideal of the pastoral vision. From the distance of the grandstand, the field, verdant green, immaculate and peopled with graceful bodies moving fluidly, looks a peaceful place of innocence. The fan's regret at the passing of this vision disappears when she is presented with it. The pastoral, in turn, carries with it the palimpsest of the agrarian world, an element of which, Bakhtin points out, was undifferentiated production (Bakhtin, 206). Everyone worked in an organic community for the common good, performing communally

the tasks which needed to be done. One woman's contribution was as important as one man's. This ability to contribute has been lost to most in the industrial and subsequent corporate age.

When the fan leaves the security of the stadium, where the discourse community of which she is a member is close-packed in full view, the sense of the fan's time must revert to "the time until work time." Something is needed to sustain the community member until the next exposure to the game's values of decision-making, timelessness, speed, strength, and skill. Sustenance is found in the newspaper's baseball report. This medium successfully recreates, through various devices, the anti-corporate time the reader experiences watching a game. This portrayal of the players and the game grows out of the intersection of strings of time-space, myth and culture. These outcroppings of men act as beacons to members of the discourse community, guiding the reader to the successful recreation of the experience of time found only in the baseball game.

The relationship between time and space expressed in the text, or chronotope as Bakhtin names it (Bakhtin, 84), is key to the successful recreation of baseball time. I'll start my analysis by talking about the first half of the pair: time. There are three devices I have identified which guide the reader's understanding of the baseball report: repetition, multiple narration, and the disordering of the events of the story. I want to explain how these three devices are used by the writers to create a sense of timelessness which closely mimics the time experienced during a baseball game.

Repetition is one of the most obvious conventions of writing about baseball. When a sports writer attempts to capture the essence of a game for her newspaper, she realizes that it would be futile and foolish to write down everything that happened in the match, explaining and commenting on all the complexities. Newspapers simply do not have the space for a Ulysses-style report on every game. Alternately, she cannot submit only the objectified details of the game: this is known as the box score, and although it records what happened, it's nothing more than a fragment of the whole experience. As a compromise, she settles on relaying the critical event of the match with the box score details attached. This critical event is examined from every angle; other participants are brought forward by the writer to narrate and verify the writer's perception of the critical event.

Within the sample of 17 stories I took from the Toronto Star's July 1-July 21, 1990 coverage of the Blue Jays, I found 13 stories containing repeated critical events. By critical event, I mean those occurrences which were selected as having been directly responsible for the win or the loss by the Blue Jays. As the name of some subject or idea is substituted for another to which it has some relation, as a cause for its effect, a writer for his work, so can the critical event of the game stand for the game itself (Beckson and Ganz, 1977, 65). Here's an example of what I mean by a repeated critical event:

Todd Stottlemire went the distance (he has four of

the club's five complete games this year) but dropped to 9-9 on a single pitch.

That was the one he served to Lance Parrish with a man aboard in the second. Parrish knocked it about 400 feet and Jays were 1-1 for the early going of this 10-day roadtrip.

Parrish, by the way, also happens to wear number 13 and probably swung at ball 4.

The pitch was probably high, Stottlemyre agreed, "but he evidently liked it."

"I think there I was trying to be too fine," Stottlemyre added. "I was pitching like it was 0-0 in the ninth and there was no point in doing that. I think everyone in the park knew a fastball was coming. I challenged him and he did everything he had to do."

"Todd threw great and I just got lucky," Parrish said. "He'd thrown me four straight sliders and I figured he had to come in with a fastball. That's what I was sitting on and, at 3-1, it was the right time to look for it."

Toronto Star, July 14, 1990

The impression here is that the Blue Jays' pitcher made a mistake: the story could have been called, "The Pitch that Ruined the Game." In the above example of the repeated critical event - the critical moment of the game which is repeated through the text and which, in the reporter's judgement, takes precedence as the most important moment in the game - there are three things to consider. First, the writer must economize: she does not have the space to treat every play in the baseball game in this manner. More important are the next two points. Simply letting the critical event - told only once - stand all by itself would not have the conventional metonymic force that this repetition of the event would have. Whereas most of the game is treated in a very abstract, compacting way, some moments deserve to be slowed down deliciously and savored. These moments are the critical events. Stretching this event out gives the moment its metonymic significance, and tells the reader, through an agreed-upon convention, that this is where the game was won and lost. Third, a single telling of the critical event would reveal the poverty of narration which exists in these baseball reports. This is a point I will amplify once I begin talking about multiple narration, but basically, I might say that repetition adds flesh to the skeleton of the various perspectives of the critical event. This makes the moment seem three-dimensional and more like experience than just a single telling of the event.

But when an event is repeated over and over again in the text of the baseball report, reading about it takes up more time than the

actual event ever did. This is desirable from the point of view of the discourse community, however, because the event begins to take on, in repetition, the timeless feel of the baseball game. The event becomes timeless by going outside of the bounds of clock time. Take, for example, our luckless pitcher for the Blue Jays. Normally, it takes about 2/10th of a second for a pitch to leave the pitcher's outstretched hand and travel the 55-odd feet to the catcher's glove. Even including the time between pitches, the time it takes to read the Star's account of the infamous pitch does not reflect the one or two seconds it took to perform the action described in the narrative.

The above passage is composed of twelve sentences, and every one of them either directly or indirectly refers to the pitch. The reader is told in sentence one that the pitch cost Stottlemyre the game. In sentence 2, the reader is told who hit the pitch and when. In sentence 3, the reader is told that the batter hit a home run, and in sentence 4 the reader is told the pitch was probably a ball. In sentence 5, a transition is made from having the writer act as narrator to having the pitcher act as narrator. In sentences 6 and 7, the pitcher tells the reader what he was doing and thinking about, and in sentence 8, he describes what he actually threw. Sentence 9 reverts back to the pitcher's own analysis of his actions, and in sentence 10, the narrative perspective is switched again - this time, to the batter, and he reports the pitcher's actions from his own perspective. Sentence 11 and 12 offers the reader the batter's reasoning for swinging at the pitch.

If the narrators used to describe the event offered background information beyond the act of describing the pitch, this could be considered elaboration. But the actual event - one pitch in a game with over 200 pitches - is repeated twelve times in twelve sentences through no less than three narrators! This has the effect of making the pitch seem monumental and timeless not only through stretching out the "delivery" of the pitch, but also through amplifying the importance of the pitch. It's a very complex ritual of rendering all past events ambiguous or forgettable. These reports may also be a way of providing an unalterable memory of a game which the reader may never have experienced. Repetition is one device that allows recreation of the game as closely as the written word will allow.

In many baseball reports, repetition is deployed through the narrative structure of the text. The technique of using multiple narrators is one tool that sports writers of baseball reports use to repeat a certain event over and over without seeming to be redundant. The use of multiple narrators creates a certain fullness of the event similar to the effect created by multiple camera angles: even though the viewer doesn't actually see the object in three dimensions at once, the effect of multiple narrators or perspective is to produce a cumulative three-dimensional effect. This 3-D effect makes the game seem more real to the engaged imagination of the reader.

There are two types of narrators in sports writing, and a possibility of an infinite number of actual narrators. Rimmon- Kenan,

using the model suggested by Genette in Narrative Discourse, explains the structure of narration in this way:

Narration is always at a higher level than the story it narrates. Thus the diegetic level is narrated by an extradiegetic narrator, the hypodiegetic level by a diegetic (intradiegetic) one. (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983, 92)

By this Rimmon-Kenan means that any narrator is always looking down at the events contained in the story which they tell, whether the narrator is the writer, or a narrator the writer has placed in the narrative. This seems much like Chinese boxes, in which one box always contains within it another box, until the "reader" gets down to the last box, which is actually a solid block: the events of the story. In terms of the role of the narrator, the writer-as-narrator - the extradiegetic narrator - decides the sequencing of events, what the metonymic event is, as well as who gets to help narrate the story she is fashioning. The elements of the story, the fabula, lie before the writer for selection.

Here's an example of an extradiegetic narrator, the writer, using intradiegetic narrators, players and coaches, to tell the story:

That gave gritty Willy Blair his chance. The Jays' rookie reliever threw a grand total of 12 pitches to collect his first major league win when the

Jays took the lead in their half of the eighth inning.

"I know I've pitched well enough to have a win or two," said Blair, 0-5 before yesterday, "and I think my teammates and coaches know I have."

Gaston was asked about handing the ball to a raw rookie with the game on the line.

"I think he's got a lot of guts", Gaston said. "I just felt like he could handle it."

Toronto Star, July 2, 1990

The writer narrates the first paragraph, and then gets hypodiegetic narration from a player who took the decisive role in the game. The writer then goes on to select another intradiegetic narrator, a coach, who did not actually play on the field during the game. I chose not to create a separate class of narration for coaches - intradiegetic narrators - and players - intra-intradiegetic narrators - because coaches and managers take a highly active role in the game and to imply that they aren't as involved in the game as players or are somehow in different proximity to the writers doesn't seem fair or accurate. This use of multiple narrators adds substance to the sports writer's observations, essentially confirms those observations, and creates the impression of the existence of a discourse community among players and writers, and by extension, readers.

What I want to show is that all of the people involved in the writing and reading of the story share an ability to communicate in a common language of RBI's, Homers, Innings, "guts", "sole possession of first place" and "raw rookies". The people who write and read these stories have to share these paradigms in order to understand what is being said, much the way that an electrician must understand the circuit symbols on a schematic diagram. If she can't "read" those symbols, she can't understand the dynamics of the circuit. Expressions such as, "I think he's got a lot of guts", and "handing the ball to a raw rookie with the game on the line", suggest hack journalism at its worst, but they are acceptable because those phrases convey enough of the paradigm to be meaningful. When the story features subjects actually using meaningless cliches, it appears to validate the way in which the story is told. These cliches are metonymic. It could be said that all of this is the special form of repetition which the genre of sports writing cultivates.

The disordering of the chronological progression of the game is another convention of the baseball story that's left up to the extradiegetic narrator to orchestrate. The extradiegetic narrator re-orders the events of the fabula in order to create a convincing, though not necessarily accurate, portrait of the game. The story, as Genette describes it in Narrative Discourse, is the accumulation of events which make up a text (Genette, 1980, 156). Certainly, baseball narrative, like all narrative, doesn't present the series of events that make up the story in chronological order. I have already shown this

in my discussion of repetition. But what is surprising about the disordering of the fabula in the baseball story is the speed with which the narrator jumps from one event within the game to another three innings further on to another five innings back. In a baseball report, the chronological order of the events of the fabula can be obscured nearly completely.

In an analysis of three articles, one of which I will use here to demonstrate the disordering I have identified, it seems that any expected linear progression through the fabula is unlikely. The sequencing is predictably unpredictable. In the article I will use to illustrate this point (Toronto Star, July 3, 1990), the writer begins in the post-game present tense, refers to the recent past in the next sentence, to "yesterday," the abstract past, "last year," "yesterday," the abstract past: "repeating as winners of the American League East," yesterday afternoon, the abstract future: "We'll get into another of those runs where we go nine and one ... ," yesterday, the first six innings of the game under discussion, the sixth through ninth innings, the first two innings, the first, the second, the second, the first seven innings, yesterday, the abstract past: "after returning from the disabled list," yesterday, the abstract future: "Now I've got to get guys to hit the ball where my people are playing ... ," some time during the game, the eighth inning, the present: "Right now, the balls aren't falling in for us ... ," the seventh inning, the seventh inning, and the abstract past: "He has managed only two hits in his last thirty at bats."

The above example helps to explain the narrative operation of metonymy. From this model, I can see clearly the focus of the article: the critical event, the pitcher giving up several hits, happens in the second inning. And the point about the Jays not being able to score is repeated throughout the report. But the path leading to what the writer identified as the critical event is winding indeed. There seem to be two cooperative ideas at work behind this deliberate distortion of the chronological order. First, without the vicarious experience provided by the baseball report, all that any person who had not been to the game would know would be the box score. This is just a statistical skeleton, recording in objective detail what happened. And kind of narrative could flesh out the box score, but the baseball report provides the necessary kind of narrative to fulfill the goal of timelessness. This becomes a substitute for experience. Second, for all the readers, both those who did and who did not see the game, the disordered fabula creates a sense of timelessness. It's hard to follow the flow of the narrative until the reader hits what has been identified as the critical event: the path is too unpredictable and twisty for that. What I am trying to say is that while clock time measures history, innings do not measure time: they are a-historical. A contradiction between the two kinds of time ensues: I know at what point the critical event happened during the game, but because of the disordering of the narrative, I do not know from reading the report at what time on my wrist watch the critical moment came and went. The event has, in a manner, become timeless.

Emphasizing through temporal distortion seems to me to be like providing a conversational recounting of the game just passed. The critical event that is emphasized through the muddling of the threads of the fabula is usually the central event, and reflects a common way of remembering; the most important thing is remembered centrally, and all other events or non-events are recounted in relation to the central event. This mass of threads of time and the free-floating past becomes the consensual history of the game, its public memory. If I keep pulling on this thread, it would seem to follow that the reporter is bardic, in that she stores and maintains the public memory. This comes full circle with what I said earlier about repetition being a way to preserve and conserve the game.

The idea of memory is important to my discussion, because so much of the reconstruction of the game through these texts depends upon the experience of baseball. In order to clarify what I want to say about memory, I'm going to extend J. Hillis Miller's work in Fiction and Repetition, in which he combined Walter Benjamin's concept of memory - voluntary and involuntary - and two kinds of repetition he calls "Platonic" and "Nitzschean" (Miller, 1982, 6). As Miller writes, Platonic repetition exists when "the validity of the mimetic copy is established by its truth of correspondence to what it copies" (4). Nitzschean repetition, he says, exists when there "are underground doublings which arise from differential relations among elements which are all on the same plane" (4). Miller takes an example of this from Proust: "It was a sock, but it was my mother

too." One is a direct repetition, one is abstract, involving the "ghosts" associated with an object or event. And as Miller demonstrates, voluntary memory corresponds with Platonic, or mimetic, repetition, and involuntary memory corresponds with the second kind of repetition.

I go through this digression because I think that it may explain how the baseball report invokes a feeling of timelessness and spacelessness in the reader. The baseball report is a mimetic copy of the game, and of all other baseball reports. As such, it will remind the reader of a game. But the conventions of the report, the conventions which the writers use to create that feeling of temporal and spatial ambiguity and distortion, will raise in the reader's memory all of the associations she has with baseball. The conventions will serve to remind the reader of the way she knows about the game. Although I wouldn't say that the baseball report's mimetic repetition of a game is the objective recounting of facts that Miller sees in Proust - after all, the writer of the report engages in the selection of a central event and in the disordering of the events of the fabula - the second "ghostly" level of repetition - connecting the report with the mythic construction and floating a-history of baseball - seems designed to connect with the personal experience and subjectivity of the reader. It's behind the report's conventions that the ghosts, the wisp-like sense of the mythic construction of baseball, lurk in wait for a reader.

What all of this discussion of repetition, multiple narration, and the disordering of the fabula has come to is a contradiction between clock time and the abstract, clock defying time of the baseball report. The effect is similar to what Eco plays with in his essay "The Myth of Superman."

In this essay, Eco explains why Superman never gets old, and why the reader never questions Superman's at once god-like defiance of time and his comfortable existence in the world of everyday joes punching clocks. Eco writes:

In an industrial society ... where man has become a number in a realm of the organization which has usurped his decision role, he has no means of production and is thus deprived of his ability to decide. Individual strength, if not exerted in sports activities, is left abased when confronted with the strength of machines which determine man's very movements. In such a society the positive hero must embody to an unthinkable degree the power demands that the average citizen nurtures but cannot satisfy. (Eco, 107)

The alienation and disempowering of a large segment of the population is going to result in exactly the kind of myth that surrounds baseball. The structure of myth draws people in, gives them an experience of time and vicarious power and community that

they cannot get in their workaday worlds, and allows them to get some satisfaction through identification with "workers" who are strong, graceful, and responsible for making decisions. Marvin Cohen, in Baseball the Beautiful, writes:

The fan may feel shut out, alienated, with a dim job, no prospects, and a lousy family life or none. Fame and Fortune's worldly favours have gone to others, never to him. But there is consolation: the nonluminary workaday player, picked for identification, lends a special glamorous objectification to the fan's dismal lot ... He's transported, and transcended - redeemed: his other self is playing there (Cohen, 1976, 19).

Where Cohen leaves his analysis of the socially cathartic role of the sports hero, Eco takes his analysis of such public figures a step further. Eco goes on to explain how these "positive heroes", with their tremendous loads of Walter Mittys, can be both immortalized and continue to live in a world in which everything decays.

As Eco points out, statues of Greek gods show their subjects utterly consumed by their activities, but never consumed or used up by the passage of time (Eco, 114). All of their energy and concentration flow into the noble poses they have struck in the sculptor's mind, but alas, they remain frozen in those poses. Time

cannot consume them because they have been caught and frozen in their glory like one of those stuffed marlins adorning the walls of bars and dens all over North America, like the figures on Keat's Grecian urn. The gods act: they are consumed. They are caught in their consuming action: they are made unconsumable. They can't exist "in time" anymore.

Despite the similar capture of movement and moment in the baseball story and the accompanying pictures, the same effect does not hold for the baseball player. Baseball players are consumed utterly at the moment of having their picture taken or being frozen in prose. Although baseball appears to be an exceedingly slow game, the peace is repeatedly punctured by great spurts of activity: things happen fast in baseball. When baseball players act, they are "acting" as hard as they can. Compare a classical statue and a picture of the mythic Bo Jackson, whose career has been reborn after a suitable period in the underworld of rehabilitation and the minor leagues. On the one hand, we have Cellini's Perseus and Medusa (Hillyer and Huey, 1966, 121). Perseus holds up the head which he has just severed. He doesn't look at it because that would turn him into stone. The blood still flows from the head of the Medusa. This is the climactic moment of the story of the Perseus and the Medusa. He is acting, therefore he is being consumed. But we remember Perseus as young, strong and beautiful, and not old and feeble.

On the other hand, we have Bo Jackson getting his first base hit since returning to baseball from his hip injury. He swings his bat

mightily and is consumed. He is frozen in action, forever Bo Jackson getting his first base hit. But it cannot end there. Like Eco's Superman, Jackson and all baseball players have a little problem with time; they are, in a sense, novelistic characters. We know the story of Perseus; we do not know Jackson's whole story, for he continues to develop as both an athlete and as a person. How does Jackson continue to live among the pantheon of baseball players while continuing to remain accessible as a human?

Eco says that Superman can continue to live in everyday time because the writers of Superman comics don't refer to the future or the past episodes in Superman's life (Eco, 114). This is how the writers of Superman episodes solve the problem of contradictory time spheres. The reader knows that Superman came to Earth as a youth from Krypton, and now lives as Clark Kent, mild-mannered reporter. The reader also knows that Superman exists or has existed in various other forms throughout his career as a comic strip hero: Superboy, Superbaby, etc. There is even Superman's cousin, Supergirl. But all of these other histories of Superman are not important. As Postman might say, they would serve to contextualize historicize, and substantiate the story of the man of steel. The reader must be made to forget that Superman has the logical weight of history following him around, and this history should make the readers wonder about Superman's seeming immortality, both as Superman and the apparently mortal Clarke Kent. But, As Eco points out, readers don't worry about it. The readers believe that the fact that Superman came to Earth is all that matters; when he

arrived is irrelevant and is forgotten.² Baseball writers use a technique similar to this to maintain the myth of Bo Jackson, and by extension, all baseball players.

Consider this:

A's, beaten 1-0 by Stieb's 3- hitter
in Oakland in late May ...

Toronto Star, July 1, 1990

Although the game in late May was probably treated in a manner such as I have described earlier, the rapid progression of games through a 162-game schedule makes it necessary to concentrate on

² It must be said that Eco does mention the presence of Superboy. He writes:

It occurs, then, that along with Superman stories, Superboy stories are told, that is, stories of Superman when he was a boy, or a tiny child under the name of Superbaby....One imagines, using the solution of travel through time, that...Superboy, having broken the time barrier by sheer accident, can encounter Superman, his own self of many years later.

But since such a fact could comprise the character in a series of developments capable of influencing his future actions, the story ends here and insinuates that Superboy has dreamed, and one's approval of what has been said is deferred. (Eco, p114)

Bowering is right when he complains that I have not presented Eco's argument fully. I have forgotten to include the emphasize the fact that although Superman was indeed Superboy, the connection between the two characters is almost nothing more than a technical connection. The characters are presented as two different characters, with the boy dreaming the man and vice versa. The characters, through the efforts of the authors, are made to forget, and this is supposed to lull the readers in acceptance of the disjointed nature of the lives of these characters.

the game at hand. The above reference to the past is in fact no reference at all. It is a reminder to the reader that the mechanism of this timeless coverage of baseball was working at that time. The game, marked by an identifiable central event, belongs to the past, and is now part of the statistical mountain that forms a huge part of the fuzzy lore of baseball. The reader is reminded that she "experienced" this game; once this formality is performed, the coverage of the present game is allowed to begin. The point is that the reference to past games is very different from the report of the contemporary game, but that it is vital: it provides that ambiguous continuity which says, in effect, this game is both like and not like the one which was played yesterday or twenty years ago. The above example merely shows a conventionalized way of providing background information. The information is nothing more than part of a box score summary, and because it is essentially non-specific, does not threaten the maintenance of the abstract time/space construction needed to produce mythic figures out of men.

In my sample of 17 articles, I was able to find only two references to the future. Not surprisingly, these two references are quite similar, and I would suspect that they form a conventionalized way of responding to questions from the baseball discourse community about the future.

"I don't know that we feel lucky," Key said,
"but we are. Still, there's enough guys here
who aren't going to get worried about being

a half game up or down in July or August. We just need to win some games and stay close until September"

July 17, 1990, Toronto Star

Jays finished the month 15-13 and, remember, that included that 9 -1 road trip when things were rosy. They've got eight more games before the (All-Star) break and, of course, we all know what a great second-half team this is right?

"To hell with the break, " Cisco said.

"It'll get here. We've got to take advantage of the games we have now."

July 1, 1990, Toronto Star

What both of these responses have in common is a recognition of the future, but an emphasis on the need to win games in the present: the future is in the future and has no influence on the present. And notice that the writer of the second passage used the rhetorical question, "... we all know what a great second-half team this is, right?" This seems to invite some speculation on the part of the reader, a member of the community, and in the very next sentence any speculation about the future is put to rest with the coach, surely a key member in the generation of the discourse, relating his attitude

about the future: it isn't important now, because we have to deal with the here and now.

Explaining the desire of baseball's discourse community to bury the past under a pile of statistical minutiae and to dismiss the future with a few words offers a large theoretical problem. While Eco offers a solution to the contradiction inherent in the everyday existence of mythical figures, and he does speak of the empowerment of the reader of Superman comics through identification with the Clark Kent/Superman figure, he doesn't offer a model to help explain why baseball's discourse community needs to maintain the connection with the idealized-but-hazy Golden Age of baseball while ignoring the future of the sport. For evidence of this, one need only look at the proliferation of books and films about the game's past, the return to turn-of-the-century style uniforms by professional baseball teams, and the return to playing on grass outdoors in places like Buffalo's new stadium, an exercise in retro-thinking if there ever was one. All of these things form a kind of baseball archive, which continually feeds the development of the myth-making machinery. Each new occurrence in the world of baseball becomes a part of this archive, a part of the lore. Eco does not address the apparent need of communities to preserve a Golden Age. Bakhtin, however, does give the issue his attention (Bakhtin, 148).

Bakhtin's concept of historical inversion can be seen as the phenomenon of investing the past with the values and meaning which a community collectively wants the future to have (Bakhtin,

147). The future is unknowable and threatening, so why invest any hopes and dreams in an uncertain future when a community can make believe those values existed in the past? Marvin Cohen, in Baseball the Beautiful, wrote:

Baseball is built into a lifetime. Whereas the kid has a current hero to "look up to," the old-timer venerates the past "great ones" in the Golden Age. Each man's "Golden Age" is the era his nostalgia is most loyal to - when his sensibilities were being intensely formed, and the world was new, radical, significant (Cohen, 14).

It seems to me a very complex form of denial or regret, just the thing an alienated, powerless community might think up. As a result of this, the past gets fleshed out and the future gets emptied. Instead of a national No More Wars day, we have Remembrance Day. Our society gives the past more weight than the airy future, the future being yet to happen and seeming as malleable as a speeding train.

Baseball's past is filled with millions of games and thousands of players. Once games are over, they are forgotten or recalled in the same loosely floating fragments of the past which are described in Eco's analysis of Superman. Because the community wants the game to be filled with mythic heroes like those of the past, and because in

that pile of millions of discarded games one box score is much like another, achronicity is generated.

Genette defines achronicity as the impossibility of establishing a precise chronology due to the criss-crossing of several strands of time (Genette, 40). These strands of time criss-cross and float loose because the writers of the reports use devices like repetition, multiple narration, and the disordering of the fabula to make sure the strings cannot weave themselves into a tapestry with recognizable figures. Instead of a tapestry, picture a matted lump consisting of strands of space looped through knots of myth, chunks of time, and long filaments of culture, like one of those tar - and - sea weed balls one finds on the beach after an oil spill. This mat does not produce a coherent history of the game. If this coherent history were produced, the discourse community would see that the game has changed, that comparing players of yesterday with the players of today is pointless, and that the men who play today are men who get old, feeble, and eventually unable to keep up. And this is what I shall be discussing in the next chapter. As a result of the incoherence of time, temporal differences between players of yesterday and today are suspended. Not only are Walter Johnson, Satchel Paige, Sandy Koufax, and Roger Clemens all pitching in the same game, they are pitching at the same time. The community of baseball speakers and knowers need this to happen, because, if it didn't, the myth machinery wouldn't work: there would be no interaction of the past with the present, something which is vital to the production of myth. The filaments are allowed to become tangled because that

produces incoherence and an unintelligible view of history. Sports writers get away with mythologizing human beings by so confusing the strands of time that the reader loses sense of time.

The above begs the question: Why is it so important to maintain the connection with a Golden Age? Again, Bakhtin seems to provide a way of understanding. Where Eco says in "The Myth of Superman" that textual conventions arose in response to cultural appetites generated by socio-economic formations, Bakhtin amplifies and clarifies this by arguing that historical inversion, the attempt to show time's fullness in narrative, arose because differentiated production destroyed communal, agrarian life (Bakhtin, 211-218).

Bakhtin argues that the communal life was governed by a buried time - the time of the seasons - where every person organized her activities around an agrarian calendar. This calendar was displaced by the inorganic time dictated by the needs of the production of goods. Historical inversion, which is found in baseball's obsession with its mythic past, is one of many hangovers from this change from agrarian to industrial time. It is a symptom of a desire to return to an organic, communal life in which everyone worked for the good of the community and was empowered by that labour.

Before I get to the end of this stage of my discussion, I must reiterate and expand what I said earlier about the space in which the game is played, and how that sense of space is conveyed, or not conveyed in the text of the baseball report. The timeless quality of

baseball and the baseball report needs a special kind of space in which to be expressed. Consider that baseball parks are vast areas of meticulous green, dotted with players on a team, apparently working for a common goal. They do not have to work within the constraint of lines - baseball players, unlike other athletes, can work both offensively and defensively outside of the lines - lines which extend to infinity - and they are not enclosed by the park: there is no rule saying where the outfield fence should be placed. In the stands sit fans, a very evident display of a discourse community. Many values of the Golden Age are present for all to see: community, harmony, pastoral innocence, strength, speed, and skill.

Stadiums are the perfect vessels in which to serve the sport of baseball: they incorporate both the desire of the owners to make money by allowing tens of thousands of people to watch the game, and they separate those participating in the ritual of watching a game from the rest of the world. The stadium walls not only serve as a place to hang seats: they serve as a way of separating the fans from those people outside the walls. There again is the idea that baseball and its discourse community both want to take part in the day to day machinations of society, and at the same time, want to be apart from it. As Edward Hall said in The Hidden Dimension:

... it may be profitable in the long run if man is viewed as an organism that has elaborated and specialized his extensions to such a degree that

they have taken over, and are rapidly replacing nature ... In creating this world he is actually determining what kind of organism he will be. (Hall, 1969, 4)

In the baseball park, it's possible to see how humans build the world of nature - albeit plasticized, distorted nature - into concrete structures. Stadiums fit into the baseball community's attitude of being both within and without society. As I tried to show earlier, the pasture-like space of the field seems an open call to the agrarian world, while at the same time those fields are surrounded by enormous walls. It is interesting to note the etymology of the word "paradise", as Bart Giamatti does in Take Time For Paradise. He writes:

Paradise derives from the Avestan word *paridaeza*, for enclosure, meaning the enclosure or park of the King. In the Old Persian, it meant a noble or special enclosure, as it did in ancient Hebrew, as well as, after Greek and Latin cognates were applied to the garden in Genesis 2:8, meaning the garden in Eden ... it is a dream of ourselves as better than we are, back to what we were (Giamatti, 1990, 43).

Human beings are building this yearning for the past right into the infrastructure of their cities, so that it is at one and the same time inescapable - stadiums are hard to miss - and unapproachable - no one but the intimates - players, coaches, ball boys, umpires, etc. - are actually allowed down onto the field to participate in the pleasure of the greens.

All in all, the baseball stadium is the perfect complement for the timeless quality of the sport: the qualities of the space complement the qualities of the game. References in baseball reports to the places in which the games are played are rare: I would say that baseball report writers don't refer to space because they want the space in which the game is played to be as abstract as the time in which those games are played. Although references to space in the baseball report are very rare, and this I think is conventional, I think the spatial component is invoked whenever a baseball report is written, simply because it calls to mind images of the pastoral, communal environment which are such a large part of the game's mythic past.

There are a few components of the baseball report's handling of space which need to be reckoned with. The first is the presence or absence of deictic markers. These are the words or phrases which tell the reader where and when the writer wrote the story. Because I am writing about space here, my use of the term deictic marker will be confined to spatial deictics -- those terms which indicate where the report writer was. Deictic markers concerning space are uncommon

in the baseball report (Halliday and Hassan, 1976, 42). So uncommon, in fact, that to stumble upon one in a report is to read something which doesn't seem quite right: deictic markers are incongruous because they draw attention to themselves. In the 17 stories in my sample from the Toronto Star, I was able to find only 2 markers. Here they are:

The Goodwill Games started here yesterday and the Blue Jays got right into the spirit of things.

The Jays blew 3-0 and 5-1 leads and gave up four unearned runs last night, bowing 7-5 to Seattle Mariners when Duane Ward had one of those nights.

July 18, 1990 Toronto Star

Runs (sometimes hits) don't come easy for the Blue Jays on Friday nights at the Sky Dome, but sometimes one will do the trick.

Last night, for instance, when - one week after Dave Stewart's no-hitter here - Jays nosed the Seattle Mariners 1-0 on John Olerud's 415-foot homer in the sixth and a career-high eight innings by a nicely tanned David Wells.

July 7, 1990 Toronto Star

The first deictic marker is quite common of the type found in the baseball report: it tells the reader in what city the game happened, but it tells the reader nothing about the space in which the game was played. These are really nothing more than convoluted, sophisticated kinds of datelines. And these markers really do tell you no more than the datelines, which I consider to exist outside of the main body of the text. And they aren't even that specific about where games happen. For instance, the reader doesn't know until the second sentence that the game happened in Seattle. The second lead contains the deictic markers "Sky Dome" and "here." As with all deictic markers, these two markers give the reader an indication of the position of the writer at the time of the writing of the report, and it is the reader who is left to make the connection.

I think that a connection can be made between the conventionalized treatment of the baseball game and what Postman had to say in Amusing Ourselves to Death about the non-contextual, non-historical, non-substantive nature of television. While I wouldn't try to argue that other kinds of reports in the newspaper are contextualized, substantive, and historical, I would argue that the baseball report has been able to use the non-contextual, non-substantive, non-historical approach of television to its own ends. Deictic markers would act as pins to freeze time and space, and this would be disastrous for the baseball report. The report relies on timelessness and spacelessness: deictic markers would serve to show

that there was chronological progression and the variation of space, and this would be the death of the mythic process in the baseball report.

Information in the baseball report about the places in which the games are played is also quite uncommon. If there was knowledge about the stadium or park in which the game happened, the reader would be able to create some sort of context from which to frame the game. And this, again, is anathema to the creation and maintenance of the baseball myth. Consider this:

Roof open? Roof closed?

July 5, 1990, Toronto Star

To know that the game was played in the SkyDome in Toronto, the reader would have to know that the SkyDome has a retractable roof. That's one point. As well, this information about the SkyDome means nothing: it tells the reader nothing about the space in which the game was played. The reader is given no information to create a context, a way of interpreting the game. This is highly important, because the reader must rely on an idealized image of the stadium in order to reconstruct the report. In an attempt to crystalize a vision of the game, to create some ideal, sparkling, perfect game, the field must be held above the reach of the people who could interfere with the process of creating that field: the fans. If baseball keeps the fans off the field, away from the field in both literal and figurative terms, the baseball world can keep itself clean and pristine, a field of dreams.

What the baseball report does is force the reader to rely on what Roger Angell calls "the interior stadium" (Angell, 1971, 147). This is the idealization of the baseball field. When the writer of the baseball report keeps the place and time of the baseball experience fluid and unknowable, the reader is left without enough information to make the idealization an accurate assessment of the stadium.

This brings me back to the twin examples relating the Blue Jays to Disneyland which I used at the beginning of the chapter. This is an excellent example of both the lack of deictic markers and the lack of information about the space in which the game is played forcing the reader to imagine. Except in these examples, the reader is forced to reckon with the added element of Disneyland. As I said earlier, I don't think the inclusion of Disneyland here is too surprising.

Jays, who played as if they were trying to make last ride at Disneyland, managed but four singles on the night and, with the Red Sox bowing 5-2 to Kansas City, missed a shot at reclaiming sole possession of first place.

Toronto Star, July 14, 1990

All of these elements combined to stick the Blue Jays with a third straight loss out near Disneyland yesterday as California Angels prevailed 3-2 on Johnny Ray's ninth-inning, run-scoring single off Tom Henke.

Toronto Star, July 16, 1990

While the first sentence actually seems to assume that the reader knows that the game will take place in a stadium - the writer facetiously implies the Jays will go from somewhere specific (stadium) to Disneyland - the second sentence seems to abstract the placement to an even higher level. I think this is quite bizarre, even for a baseball report. However, it is perfectly bizarre. It tells the reader just enough - the game was played near Disneyland - so that the reader will have to make the connection between Disneyland and the California Angels, who play in Anaheim. And it tells me, the reader, absolutely nothing about the space in which the game was played, preferring instead to hint at the possibilities of joining baseball and Disneyland. Like the other examples above, the vagueness and ambiguity of space in this example is important because it creates the environment necessary for players, places, and even the fans to feel freed from the normal paradigms of measuring space and time.

To say the baseball game happened in Anaheim or "near Disneyland" is all that is necessary. Even the names of the teams tend to distort our conventional ideas of space: ie. the California Angels, the Minnesota Twins. These teams are from a specific place, yet that place doesn't really matter. The writer, reader, and text can continue to create this unknown and unknowable space because no demands are made to locate the space. The reader has the idealized

information already, and resupplying it might be harmful to the timeless, unitary game.

This is a similar effect to the one created by the experiences of Bakhtin's adventure hero of everyday time (Bakhtin, 111), an archetype I will discuss in more detail in Chapter Two. For now, it's enough to say that this hero lets the reader see the world through which he travels, but he doesn't interact with that world. The cities in which he stops matter little; it's what happens on the field that matters. In effect, nothing happens for the baseball players in these cities, hence the hub-bub when something from outside the stadium intrudes on the game: witness the San Francisco earthquake come tumbling into the 1990 World Series.

So the reader can know the world through the experience of a player, but that vicarious experience gained by the reader must necessarily be shallow and perhaps even meaningless. Stories of road trips never actually show the road. In review, these games aren't happening in an identifiable, knowable space; they aren't being played in an understandable, continuous time. They are being played in a chronotope which is, however, identifiable and understandable.

The temporal and spatial qualities of baseball, which the baseball report tries to recreate, serve as a beacon for the members of the discourse community. The experience of baseball and its subsequent recreation through the techniques I have discussed help to show the members of the community an experience which does

not reflect the daily experience of time and space of most people living in the corporate world.

CHAPTER TWO

While the baseball report uses its conventionalized quality of timelessness to implicate and use the larger issues of myth, the baseball novel works in a different direction: it tries to illuminate the space behind the myth. In the baseball novel, myth surrounding the sport announces the presence of the timeless, mythical quality. Because I think that an essential ingredient for the production of myth is timelessness, and because baseball and writing about baseball is saturated with this idea of myth, the presence of baseball is a cue that the element of myth will also be present: in writing about the game, baseball and myth cannot be separated. The six novels about baseball that I have chosen to work with all take a critical stance vis-a-vis the kind of myth that the baseball report helps to produce and maintain. All six novels undermine the myth, with an eye toward setting the history of the sport straight.

Barthes, in *Mythologies*, offers a model for explaining how history might be distorted through myth:

What the world supplies to myth is an historical reality, defined, even if this goes back quite a while, by the way in which men have produced or used it; and what myth gives in return is a natural image of this reality ... A conjuring trick has taken place; it has turned reality inside out, it has emptied it of history and

has filled it with nature...

(Barthes, 1957, 170).

What I think Barthes is saying is that the stories of man are infused with elements of the natural world in order to explain the natural world as well as the unexplainable. Once infused with nature, human stories seem less man-made and more Nature-made. Because the stories have been emptied of history, they become myths, a-historical. This conjuring trick has had a powerful effect on baseball fiction, and nowhere in this subgenre do I see the spell more strongly than in the hold it has on the twin myths of baseball's creation and baseball's heroes. The myth of baseball's creation states that Abner Doubleday invented baseball in 1835 in Cooperstown, New York. But because, as I stated in Chapter 1, the discourse community wants so badly to believe in the rural origins of baseball and the accompanying association with an agrarian, pastoral innocence, they refuse to believe that

... baseball came into existence among young New York city businessmen in the late 1840's and was purely a product of an urban environment. Until after the Civil War, when baseball spread to small villages and towns, the game continued to grow almost exclusively in manufacturing centres (Zoss and Bowman, 1989, 403).

If the myth of baseball's creation were revised to include the truth about its origins, there would be no room for the mythic baseball

hero: he is usually an unsophisticated country boy with "natural" ability. As Barthes says, "myth returns a natural image of reality." In baseball novels, where so many of the heroes are "naturals," this is no small point. The mythical rural origins of baseball and the presence of "naturals" in the game attest to the power that myth has over baseball.

Before going further, I'll reaffirm what I said in Chapter One about myth. I would like to add to Barthes' "conjuring trick" of nature three additional concepts: 1) myths are texts which establish human bonds, which in turn foster a sense of community; 2) myths are texts which function as mechanisms by which outsiders can be integrated into a community; 3) myths are texts which make possible the extension of the past into the present (Schwartz, 1987, 138). These three points are essential to defining the baseball myth because, as I have already shown, community, the mass transmission of the myth, and timelessness are all vital to the maintenance of baseball's myths.

In addition to Barthes, I'll also be using the same theoretical triumvirate of Eco, Bakhtin, and Genette. I don't think it will be necessary to repeat what I said about Eco in Chapter One, because my use of his ideas about Superman is not going to change. But it might be useful to reiterate what I said about Bakhtin and Genette, because I do stress new aspects of their ideas in this chapter.

Genette's study of order, frequency, and duration in Narrative Discourse will be a useful tool in my attempt to understand and illustrate the way the writers of baseball novels use narrative devices to create a subtle or not-so-subtle aura of timelessness around the subject. Unlike the baseball report, the baseball novel does not use multiple narration as a means of confirming the world view of the author, or as a special means of disordering the story time. The narrators of baseball fiction operate in a much more traditional manner than do their close cousins, the sports writers.

As I tried to show in the Introduction, the demands of television have changed the baseball report's narrative structure, but don't seem to have made much of an impact on the baseball novel. It would seem to me that this is due to the novelists' desire to demythify the game, while television coverage, and thus the baseball report, tends to have the opposite effect. Genette's concepts of narrative structure allow me to explore this fact. For example, I think Genette's concept of duration - with its two extreme states of ellipsis and descriptive pause - can be used to form a technical reconciliation between the apparent contradiction of the mortal immortal which Eco spots in Superman comics, and which I have found is exploited in the baseball report and illuminated in the baseball novel. In The Natural, Malamud uses ellipsis to dispose of 15 years in the space between two chapters. Those 15 years are there, and are revealed in flashbacks through the rest of the novel, but the use of ellipsis makes them temporarily "not there". The use of ellipsis adds to the timelessness which permeates texts about baseball, while the

information in the flashbacks about hero Roy Hobbs' missing 15 years counteracts the illusion of myth by substantiating that time. This would not happen in the baseball report.

In addition to the baseball novel's special form of narrative, the chronotope I have identified as characterizing the baseball novel contains elements that Bakhtin identifies in the both the classical Greek adventure novel of everyday life and the adventure novel of ordeal (Bakhtin, 84 - 258). This is important, because the nature of the chronotope defines the nature of the hero. In the adventure novel of everyday life, the life of the hero is sheathed in metamorphoses, and the course of life must correspond to an actual course of travel. These are the type's two defining features, and Bakhtin lists the two examples of this form: The Golden Ass of Apuleius, and the fragments of the Satyricon of Petronius (Bakhtin, 111). Although the baseball novel shows more than just the "exceptional, utterly unusual moments of a man's life", what it shows in particular are the events that "shape the definitive image of the man, his essence, as well as the nature of his entire subsequent life" (Bakhtin, 148).

It's important to note here that the adventure novel of everyday life is similar to the baseball novel in that it shows that the primary initiative for action belongs to the hero himself and his own personality:

... what we have is guilt, moral weakness, error

as initiating forces. The first image of the hero is characterized by this negative initiative - youthful, frivolous, unrestrained: a voluptuary, curious in a careless way. He attracts the power of chance to himself (Bakhtin, 117).

However, this doesn't sketch an entirely accurate picture of our hero. In the adventure novel of ordeal, time does not leave a trace on the young hero. Part of the process of demythologizing the mythic baseball hero involves showing the truth behind the myth of timelessness: baseball players do get old, unless they are characters in the fantasy baseball novels.

As well, the spatial component of the baseball novel's chronotope seems to be more like the spatial component of the chronotope of the adventure novel of ordeal. In this kind of novel, Bakhtin says space is expressed as an abstract. Although the reader can often determine the space in which the novel is played out, the space is still abstract: there's lots of it, and it doesn't seem to matter much exactly where things happen, as long as things do happen. Although this merely technical connection between time and space is more evident in the baseball report, it shows up clearly in the novel.

The baseball novels I'm going to be looking at are all concerned with undermining the myths that have grown up around and choked much of the truth out of the historical fact of baseball. In this way, they are unlike the baseball report. Related to this subversive

tendency is the desire they express to banish historical inversion. Although moving into the future backwards is not an attitude confined to writing about baseball, it is particularly obvious in the mass media's coverage of baseball and in early novels about the sport. As Wiley Lee Umphlett says in "The Black Man as Fictional Athlete: Runner Mack, the Sporting Myth, and the Failure of the American Dream":

... the nature of the modern sports fiction tradition ... was established in the late nineteenth century by writers of popular and juvenile sports fiction. Popular sports fiction dating from the 1890's was produced primarily for an aspiring middle-class, all- white male audience conditioned to the philosophy of success that American capitalism preached (Umphlett, 1987, 74).

The myth of baseball dovetails nicely with the growth of North American capitalism: the two grew up together. The novels I'll be examining question exactly the kind of traditions that were set at the turn of the century and the myths that grew up around baseball - the positive hero, the game's rural origins, the timeless qualities - and the need to believe in those archetypes.

Mark Harris' The Southpaw. By Henry J. Wiggen. punctuation freely inserted and spelling greatly improved by Mark Harris, is the

first novel I will discuss. The novel follows the development of Wiggen from a small town boy to his initial successes in the major leagues. It is what I would call a realistic baseball novel: its chronotope attempts to mirror reality in that the events that happen and the time and space they consume matter to the characters and the development of the plot. Other novels of the same type are works such as Lammar Herrin's 1977 novel, The Rio Loja Ringmaster, and David Carkeet's The Greatest Slump of All Time, written in 1984. The realistic baseball novel charts the details of life in the major leagues: the training camps and the train rides, the waiting in hotel rooms, the meals, the games. In short, it offers what appears to be a realistic look at how baseball players lead their lives. As a boy, Wiggen is disturbed when he discovers the "real lives" of baseball players do not jibe with the portrait of the sporting life Ring Lardner created in *You Know Me, Al*:

... Lardner to me did not seem to amount to much, half his stories containing women in them and the other half less about baseball than what was going on in the hotels and trains. He never seemed to care how the games come out
(Harris, 1953, 30).

Lardner's short stories about baseball produce this reaction in Wiggen because he is just the kind of white, middle-class, male who has been conditioned to believe in the myth of baseball. Lardner's stories were about the failure of baseball players to fill the mythic

role: he shows their decay, intolerance, stupidity, bad habits, ignorance, and humiliation. In short, they are realistic depictions of life both on and off the field. Events in these realistic stories mean no more and no less than the characters take them to mean, and no events, objects, or people are invested with symbolic or mythical power.

This is why Wiggen's reaction to Lardner's stories is so telling: he expects the stories Umphlett describes in "The Black Man as Fictional Athlete". Wiggen has been conditioned to expect:

... "Sid Yule, Kidnapped," and "Sid Yule, No Hit Pitcher" and "Sid Yule in the World Series" and thirteen more ... In the beginning of each book there would be some plot being hatched against Sid, and it seemed pretty tight and you knowed he was in danger ... In the background of your mind you would remember that there was a big game going on this very day, and his club was losing ... he always won out and there was always a moral at the end, like "Friendship Pays" or "Live Clean and Win" (Harris, 34).

Sid Yule is actually the alter ego of Sam Yale, the pitcher for the team Wiggen joins. When Wiggen gets to meet Yale, he finds out that he is a drunken, womanizing gambler who has never even read his own autobiography, *Sam Yale - Mammoth*. In retrospect, a disillusioned

Wiggen muses, "such corny crap as that is all behind me now. I ain't even interested in Sad Sam Yale no more. Sam ain't all he is cracked up to be. But I didn't know that then. I wasn't but a kid" (Harris, 35).

For Wiggen, the demythologizing of Sad Sam Yale, and baseball, is total. Harris uses Wiggen's gradual maturation and disillusionment about the world of mythic baseball players to create the realistic atmosphere, as well as to undermine the myths surrounding baseball. For my analysis, Wiggen's awareness of the contradiction between mythic timelessness and everyday life which Eco identifies in Superman comics comes during Wiggen's argument with Krazy Kress, the sports writer. This argument is particularly illuminating because it shows how aware Harris is of the power of the mass media to construct and maintain the myths which Wiggen now finds himself, as a player, being crushed by.

"It is a fairy tale game," Krazy said. "You are 21 years old, Henry, and you have very few brains in your head except with a baseball cap on. Yet you will draw upwards of 10,000 this year for 40 afternoons of work. Is that not a fairy tale game?"

"40 afternoons," I said. "That is all you seen Krazy. The pain in my back you never seen ... When we sewed up the flag this afternoon, the pain melted in a minute. That is too crazy for

me, and it made me a little wise to myself"
 (Harris, 314).

Wiggen comes to realize that it is writers like Kress who have come to create this unbearable burden which all baseball players must somehow learn to bear. Carrying this burden is literally the cause of the pain in Wiggen's back. He rejects the burden, and through that process, Harris indicts the same process the reader finds happening in any newspaper's coverage of the game, the process which I discussed in the previous chapter.

Despite the novel's predilection for demythifying baseball, the mythic element of timelessness still enshrouds the novel. Although there aren't the same kinds of complex devices - repetition, metonymy, and multiple narration - that sports writers use to create a similar effect in the baseball report, Harris concentrates on the unfolding of the two seasons in the career of a young pitcher. It's the very certainty of the unfolding of these two seasons and the exploration of the pastoral myths of baseball that constitute the timelessness of the novel. As I discussed in Chapter One, repetition breaks the bonds of time which make an event historical, and free it so that it can become active in the myth-making process. Repetition of an event destroys historical perspective and allows for a melding of the past and the present in every recurrence of the event. In Narrative Discourse, Genette discusses the repetition of events in Proust and writes:

The repetition is in fact a mental construction which eliminates from each occurrence every thing belonging to it that is peculiar to itself, in order to preserve only what it shares with all the others of the same class, which is an abstraction: "the sun," "the morning," "to rise" (Genette, 113).

To this I can add "the baseball season." The baseball season becomes an abstraction through repetition - it becomes timeless - and this is one way in which the game becomes mythologized. This is exactly the same process of repetition I outlined in my first chapter. Because a book is written about a game that carries such a weight of mythology around with it, even a book that attempts to demythologize the game will never completely succeed. To completely succeed, the book would have to re-write the history of the sport. No matter how successful The Southpaw is as a novel, the aura of myth still hangs around the portrait of the game due to the technical connection Genette describes.

Much the same can be said for Eric Greenburg's The Celebrant: it attempts to demythologize the sport, but it too carries the weight of timelessness and myth upon which the process of demythification relies. The story follows the success of one of baseball's great pitchers, Christy Mathewson, and his relationship with an immigrant Jew, Jackie Kapp. The weight of the myth of the eternally young baseball hero crushes Mathewson, and in turn, the failure of the

myth crushes Kapp. As Eric Solomon illustrates in his essay, "Counterethnicity and the Jewish-Black Baseball Novel: The Cases of Jerome Charyn and Jerome Neugeboren":

... the value of baseball was clear as an acculturating force, as a way of assimilating particularly for Jewish immigrants who, unlike many other groups, came to stay, broke bonds with shul and shtetl - religion and community - and who found in baseball a centre for an American religion, an American city (Solomon, 1987, 50).

Baseball provided a common set of terministic screens, to borrow a term from Burke, which functioned to extend the baseball community and, at the same time, integrate people of different cultures and languages into a new society (Burke, 1968, 44-62). In his article, "Postmodern Baseball," Solomon goes on to argue that Jewish immigrants made new family traditions to fit the materials, including baseball, which came to hand. Secular baseball, with its seductive myths, was just the malleable material that came naturally to replace those ways of knowing which had been left behind.

In The Celebrant, Kapp honors Mathewson the only way he feels is appropriate: for each of Mathewson's triumphs - perfect game, World Series Championship, etc. - Kapp makes Mathewson a ring. Mathewson, one of the first university educated professional

baseball players, sees the importance of the rings, and explains to Kapp:

You have always been there as my fate has uncoiled. You were there at the first, you knew even then how high I stood above other men, you announced my advent with this ring, you celebrated the glory with another, and you marked my faltering steps with the rest ... (Greenburg, 1986, 263).

Mathewson sees the metaphorical content of the rings: they do not simply celebrate achievement; they also mark the process of a career. Kapp worships Mathewson as an idol, even as a religion, and to find Mathewson as he does at the end of the novel, dying of a war wound in a hotel room, is indigestible to Kapp. As Kapp's brother Andrew says to him, "You think he's a kind of god, and I suspect that he shares your belief" (Greenburg, 178). Gods can't die. Here I find exactly the problem Eco documents in "The Myth of Superman": Mathewson is the god who must live among mortals and bear the weight of all their idolatry and hopes. While he is young and able and a golden-haired wonderboy, he can bear it. But Mathewson needs the cooperation of a society to elevate him to the status of god, and the society can only pick a god from a milieu which has an abstract past and a future no one thinks about. This past is the Golden Age Bakhtin outlines in "Forms of Time and Chronotope in the

Novel", and it is the myth of time which feeds the hopes of each fan of the game.

The novel presents the paradox of mortal immortals, and uses the character of Mathewson to make the reader aware of the contradiction, and the potential results of ignorance of this contradiction. During a dinner conversation, Kapp's father-in-law remarks to Mathewson about the civilized nature of the game: "It is totally artificial, creating its own time, existing within its own space. There is nothing real about it." "Except the men who play it", replies Mathewson (Greenburg, 85).

While Kapp's father-in-law understands the chronotope of the baseball game, he does not see that real living men have to exist in that hermetic atmosphere. Mathewson hits the problem of Superman on the head with his response, and foreshadows how difficult it is going to be for the idolatrous Kapp to come to terms with the sight of the decrepit Mathewson, who lived away and above his fellow citizens.

Despite the novel's confrontation of the contradiction, The Celebrant cannot demythologize the game for the same reason The Southpaw can't: it relies on the myth in order to demythologize the myth. In Mathewson's statement of the life in him, the reader is not only forced to recognize the difficulty of living as a god among men, she is also presented with the timelessness of the unfolding of the seasons between 1889 and 1925. The demythologized truth cannot

be presented without the ghost of the myth crowding in to the picture.

The above discussion between the two men helps to foreshadow the answer to the question, "What happens when Mathewson is no longer able to play baseball?" The elegant use of a story within a story to demystify baseball can be explained using terms derived from Rimmon-Kenan's Narrative Fiction (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983, 92) The story which Mathewson and Kapp's father-in-law narrate is the hypodiegetic level of the narrative, and its function is to explain. The level superior to this is the story which Kapp tells; it is called the diegesis, and Kapp is the extradiegetic narrator. By creating a story - the philosophical debate over the apparent immortality of men like Mathewson - within the main frame of the narrative, the reader is presented with two ways of looking at the game. Mathewson is in the game, and he knows that a human being can perform at a certain level for only so long, and after that the body will fail in the slow decline towards death. Kapp's father-in-law is outside of the game, and is subject to all of the myth-making apparatus of the game: he does not fully realize Mathewson's humanness. From this point of hypodiegetic narration, the reader can predict that there will ultimately be a testing of the myth in the form of a revelation of Mathewson's vulnerability to time. This construction of narrative is setting the reader up for Mathewson's demise, an end which the pitcher knows is inevitable. The novel uses the hypodiegetic narrative to prepare the reader for the subsequent demythification of the character of Mathewson.

The timeless quality of the baseball narrative can also be analyzed using terms and concepts Genette offers. In both The Celebrant and The Southpaw, descriptions of games are narrated in a chronological fashion. Narratives of games in both novels are both compacted and stretched out to distort the time it actually takes to "play" the game in the novel. An example from The Southpaw:

I think this must of upset Fred Nance's idea of what was proper. He walked George. Lucky moved us along with the sacrifice. Vince Carucci popped out, but then they walked Sid to load the bases and have a play at every bag, but Pasquale lined up 1 into right center that was still on the rise when it left the infield (Harris, 208).

and from The Celebrant:

Bridwell advanced to the plate. The back rows of the grandstand emptied; the box seats were inundated with swaying, shouting men. Pfeister set and pitched; Bridwell swung; Pfeister brought up his glove but grabbed only air. Emslie, just inside second base, whirled out of the ball's path, lost his balance, and fell. The ball kicked earth just where the infield dirt bordered the outfield and bounded gaily into the outfield.

From third base McCormick dashed down the line;
 from the coacher's box alongside McGraw raced
 with him. The rookie took two long steps, jumped
 and came down on home plate with both feet
 (Greenburg, 133).

In the example from The Southpaw, time is compacted or accelerated quite radically. Although this is not an example of ellipsis, much of the action in the scene has been elliptically removed. The contrary is true of the example from The Celebrant: the reader is given a narrative that at times verges on becoming a descriptive pause. The deceleration is extreme: in the time it takes to read about the play that is being described, the actual play could have been performed over and over again.

As there is no way of establishing a standard speed of narration - everyone reads at different rates - Genette proposes in Narrative Discourse that there should be some standard measure of time in every novel (87). He suggests, for example, that a page might stand for a year. With a standard speed of narration, I, as an analyst, can determine whether the narrative is being speeded up or slowed down. Genette called the changes in pace illustrated above acceleration and deceleration: ellipsis and descriptive pause being their respective radical states. This measure of narrative speed is significant to baseball fiction in that changes to the narrative distort time, and the creation of an atmosphere in which timelessness can flourish is essential to the creation and maintenance of the myths

that underpin baseball. Just as the reader's sense of time is rendered confused through the disordering of the elements of the story, the same can be said for the effect of acceleration and deceleration and narrative: the reader's sense of time is confused.

Realistic baseball fiction attempts to illuminate the emptiness behind the myth. This subgenre attempts to show what could be seen as a realistic life of a baseball player. The characters are believable, and the events, objects, and people portrayed in the novels are not invested with mythic or symbolic powers. In fact, the heroes seem to spend a lot of energy trying to live down attempts to invest them with those powers. Above all, realistic baseball fiction is about the constraints of the myth. It's about characters trying to liberate themselves from the double-bind of leading an ordinary life when the community to which they belong insists on making them into the likeness of gods. However, realistic baseball fiction is also constrained by baseball's myths. Because realistic baseball fiction works to deflate the myth of baseball, it has to use the myth of baseball as a starting point. In this way, the myth of baseball exists as an absent presence in the realistic baseball novel. Demythifying through "realism" inadvertently sustains the myth.

While I think the realistic baseball novel is about the constraints of the baseball myth and is in turn constrained by it, I think the mythical baseball novel uses myth to illustrate the banality of everyday life. The two mythical baseball novels I will discuss - Malamud's The Natural and Coover's The Universal Baseball

Association - both use myth to illustrate the emptiness behind the concept of a capitalist utopia where any man can be rich if he just works hard enough. Malamud is highly experimental in his juxtaposition and attempts to infuse into various myths the world of baseball, and The Natural seems to find that the life of a baseball hero is too banal to even serve as a myth for a secular society. In The Universal Baseball Association, the mythic possibilities of baseball are also tested and taken far beyond the scope of the contemporary role of baseball in society: Coover pondered the future of the game and the resulting novel sees baseball as a religio-political ritual, devoid of any spirit of play. Another work which I would include in the sub-genre of mythic baseball novels is Philip Roth's 1973 work, The Great American Novel.

In order to understand how Roy Hobbs, the central figure in The Natural, fails as a mythic prototype, it's necessary to see which myths Malamud uses as paradigms for his novel. In Cordelia Candelaria's Seeking the Perfect Game, she elucidates the complex of myths which entwine the story (Candelaria, 1989, 66).

According to Candelaria, Hobbs' career mirrors the natural progression of the seasons. He appears in the springtime of his youth, basks in the summer sun of his career, crumbles in the autumnal World Series, and disappears into his winter of banishment and shame. This is basically the fertility myth combined with the myth of the reborn saviour: Hobbs reappears 15 years after his initial debut in the major leagues to save his team from ignominious and continual

defeat. As well, Hobbs is the heroic underdog, constantly battling giants. He strikes out Whammer Whambold, kills off the evil Bump Bailey, and attempts to vanquish gambler Gus Sands and Judge Goodwill Banner. As a knight errant - his team is the New York Knights - he has his magic weapon, the bat Wonderboy, and constantly battles against the hurdles that are thrown up against him: car crashes, desirous women, Whambold. But it turns out that the grail Hobbs has been pursuing is "not the fame and public success he has single-mindedly been pursuing, but his infamy and memorialization as a Black Sox style fixer" (Candelaria, 67).

Hobbs, who returns at 34 to become a star player, is seemingly immune to the passage of time. He is as good at 34 as he was at 19, when he first tried to make it into the major leagues. This mythical imperviousness to the debilitating effects of time makes Hobbs similar to the adventure hero of ordeal Bakhtin identifies in "Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel". Hobbs is forever young, beautiful, and "natural." During the fifteen years of his absence, he has wandered the country, never stopping too long in one place. This abstract use of space - Hobbs needs space to wander, but it doesn't matter where exactly he wanders - is another element of the hero of the adventure novel of ordeal. However, Hobbs also displays characteristics of the hero of the adventure novel of everyday time. He is responsible for his downfall - he associates with gamblers - and he is bitter at his fate: "I never did learn anything out of my past life, now I have to suffer again" (Malamud, 1952, 236). Yet Hobbs doesn't really change. He simply continues through the world, not making

contact with anybody or anything, out of baseball, and without a flicker of insight into his condition. In this way, Hobbs resembles the baseball adventure hero of everyday ordeal I have identified in other baseball novels.

Hobbs is also a standard kind of baseball hero. He's a farm boy who's been taught the game by his father, gets discovered by a hardworking scout, goes to the city, has a hard time, makes the team, plays wonderfully, declines in skill, and then retires. Hobbs' career resembles this pattern to the point where he is forced out of the game. Consider the following passage, which carries many of the elements of the paradigmatic baseball hero's life:

Sam (a scout) had sneaked out on the squirming, apologetic Mercy, who ... had kept up a leechlike prodding about Roy, asking where he had come from (oh, he's just a home town boy), how it was no major league scout had got at him (they did but he turned them down for me) even with the bonus cash they are tossing around these days (yep) who's his father (like I said, just an old semi-pro who wanted awful bad to be in the major leagues (Malamud, 35).

This kind of baseball hero is not just a literary convention in novels like The Natural and The Southpaw: real players like Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig, Walter Johnson, Joe DiMaggio, Bob Feller, Mickey

Mantle, and Willie Mays all found their way up to the major leagues this way. These are real people living mythical lives, thus demonstrating Barthe's claim about the "naturalizing" of myth. The historical truth is emptied and refilled with repeated "naturals," players who are so good they defy the constraints of time. When real people can lead apparently mythical lives, can there be any doubt about the potency of the myth of baseball? This pantheon of baseball players, some of baseball's greatest, form the distant connection with the truth that lies at the heart of the mythical baseball player: their accomplishments grow and grow over time. Just as Superman's exploits float in the past as buoyant fragments, the repetition of seasons and actions by these "natural" players has reduced the accomplishments of the "immortals" listed above to timeless abstractions and numbers: they are mythic. To paraphrase Genette in *Narrative Discourse*, repetition eliminates the specifics from each occurrence of the repeated "thing", and preserves only what that things share with others of the same class. The inter-textual paradigmatic baseball hero is another class which I can create to help explain how this repetition leads to timelessness, which in turn fosters an environment conducive to the cultivation of myth. This point will become more important when I discuss the parallel lives of Babe Ruth and Roy Hobbs.

Just as *The Natural* examines the role of myth in the lives of baseball players, it examines the role of myth in the knowledge and understanding of historical events. In 1919, eight members of the Chicago White Sox accepted bribes to throw the World Series, and

were subsequently thrown out of baseball for life by Judge Keneshaw Mountain Landis, the new Commissioner of Baseball. The events of the 1919 World Series fix are placed beside the pattern myths of fertility, death and rebirth, the underdog, the questioning hero, and the paradigmatic baseball hero. The Black Sox scandal is particularly important in the development of the baseball myth because it made it obvious to fans that baseball was no Eden, and that baseball players were just as human as the next person.

Schwartz writes in "Postmodernist Baseball": Baseball's status as the national past time makes the corruption of it most important series a particularly useful metaphor for the failure of (capitalism)" (Schwartz, 1987, 143). Malamud isn't oblique in his references to the thrown series. Hobbs throws a game for \$35,000, the same amount of money Shoeless Joe Jackson received for the same favour. Hobbs is a Southern farm boy, also like Jackson. His team, the Knights, is far superior to the Pirates, as were the Chicago White Sox in comparison to the Cincinnati Red Stockings.

In addition to Jackson, Hobbs' character seems to be modelled after the legendary Babe Ruth. For all of Ruth's accomplishments - 59 homeruns in 1921, 2.28 earned run average with a .671 winning percentage as a pitcher, .342 lifetime batting average, 714 total homeruns - the man was a gourmand (Porter, 1987, 494-495). He ate, drank, debauched, gambled and lusted with intense abandon. And so it is with Roy Hobbs. Though an amazing player with prodigious talents, Hobbs suffers for the same propensity to hedonism. He seduces Iris Lemon, but cannot see that she actually

loves him. He remains obsessed with the overtly licentious Harriet and Memo, and as Candelaria writes in *Seeking the Perfect Game*:

These creatures appear as grossly distorted creatures arising from Roy's infantile perceptions of them. He sees them solely in terms of his own selfish physical gratification, and their distorted natures, which he helps to produce, ultimately diminish his potentially heroic stature ... The incapacitating "bellyache" that sends Roy to the hospital after an especially gluttonous binge recalls the "stomach-ache heard around the world" that afflicted Babe during the 1925 season" (Candelaria, 68).

The result of the laying of the Black Sox scandal and the Babe Ruth myth beside the universal myths which Malamud uses is an illustration of the unsuitability of baseball players as cultural or mythic heroes. Even if Malamud wanted people to read the book and think that Hobbs was a tragic hero - Hobbs is thrown out of the game for life despite his talent - it doesn't work. Hobbs isn't a tragic hero. He has too many flaws, and he doesn't learn anything. At the end of the novel, Hobbs says "I never did learn anything in my past life, now I have to suffer again" (Malamud, 236). Some critics, including Candelaria, have claimed that this is insight, but I don't think so. Hobbs is no Oedipus, and does not see the causal relationship between his character and the events that he becomes involved in.

He is doomed to wander the world without an understanding of just why he is wandering.

The Natural explores why figures like Hobbs and Ruth can become so famous, and thus mythic, that the base nature of their characters is ignored by hundreds of thousands of people. Candelaria and other critics have argued that fans ignored the dark side of Ruth's personality because he rose from poverty to superstardom, and in doing so, he embodied the concept that fame and fortune grant a licence for liberty, and that "exceptional individual achievement derived from individual effort is valorized over attainments derived from either community or tradition" (Candelaria, 102). Alternately, one could take apply Stuart Ewen's analysis of celebrity, described in "The Dream of Wholeness", and apply it here:

If great art loses its aura in the marketplace of mass impression, the individual life of the celebrity achieves an aura through mass reproduction. In their ability to magnify, and to create near universal recognition, the mass media are able to invest the everyday lives of formerly everyday people with a magical sense of value, a secularized imprint of the sacred (Ewen, 1988, 50).

This hero worship has nothing to do with the traditionally mythic and noble values of strength, intelligence, leadership, or sacrifice. It

is a hero worship based on the desire to be rich, famous, and self-centred. Hobbs and Ruth do not have the qualities to be mythic heroes, and The Natural reveals the poverty of the culture which North America has built for itself, and the simple ignobility and banality of its nature.

Coover's The Universal Baseball Association, Henry Wugh, Prop., is a novel about a man named J. Henry Waugh who has devised a complex board game of baseball whose every action is determined by the throw of dice. The Universal Baseball Association is substantially different in its treatment of myth than the The Natural. Instead of showing the poverty of one myth by using the poverty of another myth, the novel uses myths totally separate from baseball to show how the game could become weighed under mythological baggage. As Schwartz writes in "Postmodernist Baseball", history gets "interpreted, reinterpreted, revised, reversed, and ultimately elevated from the realm of historical event to myth" (Schwartz, 145). This is exactly how Waugh treats the game he has invented. The novel makes it clear that it wants to show the implications of this by making the central myth of the novel a parable involving two players: Jock Casey (J.C.) and Damon (Demon) Rutherford. In this parable, it is Casey who strikes down the purely good Rutherford.

As a novel, The Universal Baseball Association illustrates "how myth grows and develops its own momentum out of banal experience, a process which eventually destroys the energy and dynamics which

catalyzed its own genesis" (Candelaria, 128) by showing the movement of Waugh's experience of baseball games (boring), to his experience with the board game (exciting), to the all-encompassing myth and history-making of the board game which eventually absorbs Waugh completely.

And so, finally, he'd found his way back to baseball.

Not the actual game so much - to tell the truth, real baseball bored him - but rather the records, the statistics, the peculiar balances between individual and team, offence and defence, strategy and luck, accident and pattern, power and intelligence (Coover, 1968, 45).

Waugh doesn't like real baseball because he has no opportunity to become creatively involved in the game: he cannot be the operating force behind the unfolding of the match. What Waugh seems to enjoy most is the opportunity for narrative that the game creates. I pointed out in Chapter One that in the baseball report, the statistics to which the game can be reduced are derivative. In Waugh's game, the numbers come first, and he must write the history - provide the action - to create the full experience of the game. This is the creative moment that real baseball deprives him of.

Because Waugh generates the statistics of the game through the throw of dice, and because Waugh is the sole recorder of the U.B.A., the responsibility is on him to maintain the mathematical purity which attracted him to the game in the first place. As Caldwell writes in "Of Hobby Horses, Baseball, and Narrative: Coover's Universal Baseball Association":

All the various actions on the diamond must submit to the scrutiny and judgement of the scorer (chronicler): hit or error; earned or unearned run; win or loss. The box score provides a perfect, finished balance sheet: each accomplishment (credit) of the hitter represents a failure (debit) to the pitcher, and vice versa. Each individual match may be read afterwards from the composite of its statistics. From the complex network of real actions on the playing field, an absolute, mathematical figure thus results. The score card and the box score "imitate baseball", translate it into a numerical representation (Caldwell, 1987, 165).

Maintaining this purity becomes difficult for Waugh when, game after game and season after season, the U.B.A. rolls on without anything remarkable happening. Waugh duly records each game in his record books, but the excitement is gone. Just when the game seems to have lost all of its fascination, Waugh creates a player

named Damon Rutherford. Waugh makes him a beautiful, talented pitcher. Rutherford breaks the monotony of the U.B.A.'s repetitious existence by making history: he pitches a perfect game, the most important event in the league's history.

During these dull-minded stretches, even a home run was nothing more than an HR penned into a box score; sure, there was a fence and a ball sailing over it, but Henry didn't see them - oh, he heard the shouting of the faithful, yes, they stayed with it, they had to, but to him it was just a distant echo. But then, contrarily, when someone like Damon Rutherford came along to flip the switch, turn things on; why, even a pop up to the pitcher took on excitement, a certain dimension, color. The magic of excellence (Coover, 14).

This new found state of bliss does not last. The next time Rutherford pitches, he is struck down and killed by a ball hit by Jock Casey. Waugh delivers a rare combination of throws which forces him to consult the chart of extraordinary occurrences. Rutherford, who Waugh saw as the saviour of the U.B.A., has been killed and the league plunged into even greater pointlessness. Waugh decides to change his role from impartial to partial god. He breaks the rules of his own game: he interferes.

Waugh interferes in the playing of games so much that he actually conspires to ruin Jock Casey's team. Then Waugh does the ultimate in interference: he kills Jock Casey by deliberately setting the die so that it will appear Casey is killed by a line drive. As Caldwell says:

God the father has driven Dame Fortune from the pantheon. The narrative machinery has been completely altered ... He has changed his game and become a different kind of player. He no longer plays a simulated game of baseball; he now plays openly the game of literature ... (Caldwell, 167).

By this, Caldwell means that Waugh is engaging in the creative process of making, or writing history. Waugh is not leaving the process of the game to the chance inherent in the throw of dice: he is manipulating, changing, interfering, creating, and "writing" a history that is acceptable to him and congruent with the results he wants to achieve. The result of Waugh's interference in the process of the generation of history is found in the last chapter of the book. There are no more baseball games but rather a "Parable of the Duel", in which both Damon Rutherford and then Jock Casey are struck down in the same game. The game has climbed into the realm of religion, and Waugh is its god. As Schwartz writes:

Because this struggle parallels that between another J.C. and a demon from our own mythology,

Coover compels us to extrapolate this tale into our own situation. Moreover, he does it with a twist because Damon, who shows both Dionysian - drinking, whoring - and Christlike qualities, is the hero, whereas Jock Casey is the Villain (Schwartz, 146).

This collision or distortion of recognizable myths forces the reader to wonder whether the anonymous recorders of Christian mythology could have reversed the roles of Christ and the Devil. This twist implicitly forces the reader to question other myths, notably for my discussion, the validity of the myth of baseball. In this way, the novel undermines the myth of baseball and questions the manner in which the game is recorded: it portrays the possibility of historical revision in the manner in which the game is recorded. As one of the characters, Rags Rooney, notes of the journalists who record the games, "He saw those new guys writing it all down ... a pack of goddamn leeches, inventing time and place, scared shitless by the way things really were. History, My God" (Coover, 82). The story asks the reader to reconsider what she knows of the game's nature, origin, and supposedly mythic qualities. The novel makes it clear that the game is mythologized because that's how the fans want to remember the game's hazy past. In this way, the contribution of the baseball report and its influence on the writing of baseball's inaccurate history is acknowledged. In part, the production of this enormous ritual, by now far bigger than the actual game it was modelled upon, is a result of all of the baseball report's myth-producing machinery

going out of control and working to create the perfect environment for the creation of myth.

It is in this light that the epigraph to The Universal Baseball Association, taken from Kant's Critique of Judgement, becomes relevant: "It is here not at all requisite to prove that such an intellectus archetypus is possible, but only that we are led to the Idea of it ... " (Coover, iii). It doesn't have to be true to be believable, and as the novel shows, the probability of a false history arising out of the way baseball is recorded is not only high, but that high degree of the probability of a false history exists as the residue of all myths.

The truth is something that baseball fantasy novels are not overly concerned with. The novels use the narrative devices of magic and the fantastic to create a world beyond that is tied to the baseball diamond but beyond it, as if every player on the field has an unseen twin playing another game. These novels are often comic (Bjarkman, 1990, xvi), and they seem to satirize the myth of the Golden Age of baseball. These novels exaggerate the myth in order to undermine it, and they attempt to re-write the history of the game. In this sense, the fantasy baseball novels are the most successful at undermining the myth. Their parodying of the myth is designed to make the reader laugh at the myth of baseball. But because the parody admits the truth at the centre of the subject being treated, the myths surrounding baseball manage to remain standing. This is not necessarily a literary failure: it's a reminder of the pervasiveness of

myth and myth's ability to remain just slightly out of the grasp of those who would seek to re-historicize it.

Two authors who work with the small sub-genre of the baseball fantasy novel are W. P. Kinsella and Jerome Charyn. I will be examining Kinsella's The Iowa Baseball Confederacy and Charyn's The Seventh Babe. Charyn seems to have begun to develop this type in the early 1970's, and Kinsella brought it in the 1980's to its current form. Other works in this small sub-genre include short stories such as Kinsella's "Lumpy Drobot" and David Nemeč's "Browning's Lamps".

The Iowa Baseball Confederacy is about Gideon Clarke's search for a lost baseball league, the I.B.C, the memory of which has been erased from everyone's minds. It was his father's undying obsession to prove that the league existed; he "discovered" the league after being hit by lightning and waking up with a head full of baseball statistics. When Gideon's father dies after being hit in the head with a line drive, all of the information about the I.B.C. in his father's brain is transferred into Gideon's head. In this very act of transfer, the structure of the novel invites the reader to have some fun with the knowledge that all baseball games, once played and reduced to a box score, are lost and completely decontextualized: they become abstractions, transmitted involuntarily to successive generations who become recruits in the service of the archive. These floating fragments of decontextualized abstraction are like the past Eco identifies in Superman comic strips, and they are bequeathed to

Gideon. There is no experience to attach to these pieces of the past, and experience is what Clarke must search for in order to make these floating fragments meaningful. The novel displays an awareness of the potency contained in the statistical lore of baseball for cultivating myth, and exploits that potency. Clarke has the statistics: he just doesn't have the myth.

Although Gideon's father never found the league, Gideon does. He slips through time with the help of one of the original participants in the game, and discovers that his father was right; the Chicago Cubs did travel to Onomata, Iowa, in 1908 for a game against the Iowa Baseball Confederacy All- Stars. The game turned into an impossible marathon of 2,614 innings, during which time the town was swept away in a flood. As I tried to make clear in my analysis of Coover's The Universal Baseball Association, the invocation of myth raises the possibility of historical revision. Gideon is returning through time in an effort to revise history and find the myth that goes with the I.B.C.

The remarkable game that the Cubs and the I.B.C. All- Stars play is the place where myth runs up against historical achievement, as Barthes might put it. The historical achievement is so great that it is beyond "natural", and becomes instantly mythical; there is no need for the passage of time to help swell the achievement. Because the achievement is too great, and leaves no room for the cultivation of myth, it must be erased from the memories of everyone who witnessed or participated in the game.

"There is more than a contest of wills going on,"
 I say to Stan as the Confederacy bats in the
 ninetieth inning. "No one can pitch for ninety
 innings, three consecutive days -- there's
 something terribly wrong here. They're both
 pitching like it's the third inning; O'Reilly's
 curve is a joy, Brown's fastball still rocks his
 catcher back on his heels"
 (Kinsella, 1984, 200).

It's as if the folkloric tradition of "When I was a boy ..." has come too true in some way. These players are doing things which are simply impossible; they are parodying the concept of the good old days by playing in a manner that is just too good. Their play does not allow for the growth of myth; that is what Gideon senses as being "terribly wrong." In making the game go so long, and in having his characters perform these prodigious feats of strength and endurance, the novel is dismantling the way that the conditioned reader of baseball discourse has been trained to experience timelessness and mythic implications in the baseball novel. What Genette describes as analepsis in Narrative Discourse is being offered as the bulk of the narrative. Almost the entire novel is an analeptic episode, or flashback (Genette, 40). Because past time in the novel has no natural constraints of its own, it can swell and bloat until it swamps present narrative time, and makes that time seem impossible. As I showed earlier, myth allows for the extension of the past into the present. If the past is as swollen as the narrative of the Iowa Baseball

Confederacy says, myth equals history, and the present is smothered by the past. The novel lets the myth of the league propagate and cultivate itself without the normal checks of time and inevitable decadence, like one of those huge, useless and amazing pumpkins people grow, and enter in contests. The novel is attempting to make the reader question the power of myth and show the power myth has to dominate the present. By disordering the narrative in this way, the story is divorced from the dictates of the clock, just as the game of baseball is not dictated by clock-time.

The other half of the chronotope, space is also made strange and perhaps unknowable in The Iowa Baseball Confederacy. Gideon's uncle recognizes the potential of the infinite in the practical structure of baseball, and he tells Gideon:

"And the field runs to infinity," he would shout, gesturing wildly. "You ever think of that, Gid? There's no limit to how far a man might possibly hit a ball, and there's no limit to how far a fleet outfielder might run to retrieve it. The foul lines run on forever, forever diverging. There's no place in America that's not part of a major league field ... Hell, there's no place in the world that's not part of a baseball field (Kinsella, 1984, 44).

This is an expression of the spatial component of the chronotope of the baseball novel: in The Iowa Baseball Confederacy, it takes on a special importance. In the match between the Cubs and I.B.C. All-Stars, the previously theoretical possibilities about infinity become practical reality. The mythic qualities of timelessness and "spacelessness" become true: here again, myth equals truth. In this manner, the Iowa Baseball Confederacy manages to show the limits of space are now as flexible as those of time.

The ball, past its zenith, descends beyond the horizon an instant before the dark speck that is William Stiff appears to leap into infinity and disappear.

"Home run," says Bill Klem. "Next Batter. Play Ball!"

We never see William Stiff again. A few days later, though, the Chicago Tribune reports that a dazed man in a rotting baseball uniform, his shoes worn through to his bleeding feet, was found sprinting across the red sand of New Mexico, dodging yucca and cactus, straining toward some imaginary ball (Kinsella, 263).

An infinitely hit ball can be caught by an infinitely fast man. Time is needed to de-historicize and mythify history-time operates on the

past, to make myth. The bloated truth the Gideon finds has started to perform this action on itself, like bread rising from the yeast inside and the warmth outside.

The presence of the mass media in the passage makes in noteworthy for this discussion. The novel recognizes that newspapers and television are responsible to a large extent for perpetuating the myth of the baseball hero. When the mythic baseball hero is placed in front of the eyes of the mass media, it doesn't recognize the archetype that Stiff is. This could be significant because it would show that the myth-making machinery of the mass media might be incapable of processing information which does not jibe with its perception of what the world is like. If the status quo is violated and the machinery is jammed by being fed information which resembles the information which should be the machinery's finished product, there would necessarily be a short circuit, a rejection of this discordant datum.

The baseball players perform these fantastic actions in the hope that the myth can be debunked, that they can venture forth into history. Through the actions of the time travelling Gideon, the history of baseball is enriched by the addition of a lost chapter. The decontextualized information that forces Gideon to go in search of the myth and the historical achievement is found, and the construction of the plot raises questions in the reader's head about the relationship between historical event and the myths that they generate.

Charyn's The Seventh Babe does not succeed as fully in deconstructing the myth of baseball because the narrative is complicated with plot elements. Solomon, in "Counterethnicity and the Jewish-Black Baseball Novel," describes The Seventh Babe as representative of the "form of the baseball novel at the end of its tether" (Solomon, 1987, 55). Basically, the fantasy baseball novel incorporates the world of magic into the world of baseball. And there's no doubt The Seventh Babe is fantasy. With

... wealthy women who seek the player's bodies (coupling with them in the Fenway - Fens, get it?), a mysterious past (the hero, Babe Ragland, is really the son of a Southwestern oilman and has even had a year at Amherst) and the baseball tourney (replete with magic as the brutish bat boys compete to steal signs ...

Solomon's description seems apt (Solomon, 55). Nevertheless, The Seventh Babe also offers some additional twists and turns on the baseball myth.

One of these twists is an exploration of the marginalization of the black man from the major league game of baseball. Until Jack Robinson came into the major leagues in 1947, blacks were not allowed to play with the white stars. Charyn works with the standard white baseball myth in the first half of the novel, and then like the sudden break in the color line Jackie Robinson made, switches over

to concentrate on the travelling black baseball teams which criss-crossed America until shortly after blacks began to play in the major leagues. It's in the second half of the novel that a new kind of history of baseball is being written, while the first half is a fairly typical depiction of the baseball hero: i.e. rural origins, "natural" ability, great effort to make it on the team, etc.

The novel begins in 1923 with Babe Ragland trying out for the Boston Red Sox. The team has just lost Babe Ruth to the New York Yankees, and the only object of worth they have is a hunchback bat boy, whom they consider a good luck charm. Ragland works hard, makes the team, and becomes a star player. He even temporarily supercedes Babe Ruth as the game's great hero: "Babe starts to make crowds forget the original Babe, and fans begin to mock Ruth himself. Because of his new status, Rags defeats Ruth, robs him of a double" (Solomon, 55). Babe is following in the footsteps of innumerable other fictional baseball heroes, e.g. Roy Hobbs, Henry Wiggen, Christy Mathewson, etc., making the most of the opportunity they have been given to play.

Ruth is not the only historical character in the novel to play with or be vanquished in some way by Ragland; in addition, Ty Cobb, Harry Heilmann, Larry Woodell, Wally Schang and Hank Severid appear during the course of the tale. In combining these real characters with invented characters, the novel displays a form of historical revision. Games that never happened are threaded together using real players like Ruth and Cobb alongside obscure players like

Wally Schang and invented players like Ragland. By including the names of the familiar players with names of obscure and downright non-existent players, a certain credibility is lent to the names and actions of the obscure and make-believe players, and a certain "incredibility" is given to the real players. As I showed in Chapter One, the interpenetration of the past and the present, the confusion of strands of time, and the repetition of actions links together players of baseball throughout time. Players who never had brilliant careers take their place in the field alongside those players who really did and those who only performed in the imaginations of the writers of novels like The Seventh Babe.

Even though Ragland's early career in the major leagues - "rags" to riches - can be predicted using my model of the archetypal baseball hero - rural origins, great talent, makes the team after great effort - the model cannot predict what happens in the second half of the novel. At the end of the first half, Ragland is tricked by a gambler into appearing to throw baseball games, and he is thrown out of baseball. This is basically the Shoeless Joe Jackson story, which appears in The Natural, Shoeless Joe, The Celebrant, The Great Gatsby, and Eight Men Out. The Shoeless Joe Jackson story is important because it's about baseball's fall from grace and its descent into corruption. The repetition of the story would also seem to have quite a moral weight behind it, as Joe Jackson functions as the bogieman to all those who would consider mixing baseball and gambling. In Joe Jackson, writer after writer has found a sort-of-tragic hero, a talented player exiled and forced to wander away from

the game because of his own ignorance, pure and Christ-like in his devotion to the sport. Here, the story of Shoeless Joe gets repeated as the mythic figure dressed in Babe Ragland's clothes, a bitter but redeemed wandering hero.

Now that The Seventh Babe has its mythic hero separated from baseball, what does it do with him? The solution, to join Babe with the Cincinnati Giants, a travelling black baseball team, raises questions about alternate histories of the sport and culturally marginalized ways of playing the game itself.

The members of the Cincinnati Giants are both within and without the game: they play baseball, but they are not allowed to play baseball in the socially-accepted world of "professional baseball." Babe Ruth doesn't play on their team. Rogers Hornsby doesn't play on their team. But the black teams that Ragland ends up playing with and against "got a man who plays like Hornsby, a man who plays like Heilman ... " (Charyn, 1979, 101). And on Ragland's own team, the Giants, "there's a nigger that you'd swear was Babe Ruth"(Charyn, 101). As far as my discussion is concerned, two different things are happening here. First, Genette's explanation of the consequences of repetition can be used to show how the player who "you'd swear was Babe Ruth" is, in essence, Babe Ruth. Here again is the intertextual repetition of figures that I mentioned earlier. If the figures play the same way, the repetition of the player's actions removes the player's individuality: they simply belong to the same class. This interchangeability exposes baseball's

colour bar as an attempt to maintain the dominant social group's myth of the game; keeping blacks out of baseball had nothing to do with their lack of ability. In not allowing other cultural groups a chance to add their perspective to the accepted myth of the game, the dominant myth is maintained. In turn, this recalls my point about the confirmation of perspectives in the baseball report through the use of intradiegetic narrators. Because only direct members of the discourse community are asked to comment on the event at hand, they will comment in a way that will be recognizable or understandable only to those who share the "terministic screens" which familiarity with the community will have provided. Those who are not allowed to comment will simply disappear from the text, and will be forced to lurk at the edges, seeing and understanding, but speaking only through their silence.

When Ragland plays with Cincinnati, the story is more free to explore the potential of the baseball novel's chronotope. The chronotope's components - time and space - are distorted in an attempt to show how different the black man's experience of baseball was from the white major league player's experience. Although called the Cincinnati Giants, the team does not have a home. They travel around the country in seven old Buicks. They travel from town to town, playing local white teams for local white audiences, without ever staying more than a week in one place. This use of time and space helps to define Ragland as the essential Bakhtinian-style baseball hero I have identified in other novels. Like the adventure hero of everyday life, he is bitter from being expelled from major

league ball, responsible for his predicament, and wanders the country without making real contact with it. But like the adventure hero of ordeal, he is continuously young and able, and the space he wanders through is anonymous and irrelevant. It doesn't matter where he plays baseball, as long as he plays baseball. The reader knows what towns he goes through, but those names don't mean a thing. "He was leather, air, and horsehide on a ball ... he couldn't live apart from a baseball diamond" (Charyn, 219). The team he travels with carries its own carpenters and groundskeeper. These men transform any rocky pasture into a baseball park in the space of an afternoon; again, it doesn't matter where the Cincinnati Giants play, just as long as they get a chance to play. I should add that the other members of the Cincinnati Giants are not typically Bakhtinian baseball heroes, for while they are bitter they cannot play in the major leagues, they are not responsible for that fate.

Where the traditional myth of baseball works to keep players eternally young by decontextualizing the past and ignoring the future, as Eco illuminated in "The Myth of Superman", the black players, marginalized and possessors of their own mythology, stay eternally young through the use of magic. In The Seventh Babe, magic forms a central part of the experience of the black baseball player. Where Bakhtin's adventure hero of ordeal is kept young through a narrative technique that doesn't show him or his lover aging, the baseball players on the Cincinnati Giants are kept young through the narrative device of a magic root. The manager of the Giants uses the root to keep his players going:

The spasms were getting worse. His carpenters had to build a stretcher to carry Pharaoh off the field. Yarbull wouldn't budge until the fans had gone home.

Carl snapped at his magician. "Go to your root, Sam'l. You're not shakin' it as much as you could."

The magician was hurt. "You see how skinny I am, Mr. Carl. I'm working that root night and day for the Pharaoh. He runs during the game, don't he? When's the last time Yarbull missed a ball? My root can't fix him after innings is over. His knees are shot ... " (Charyn, 237).

This is a new way to solve the problem Eco postulates: how does Superman continue to live in a world of mortals? Instead of ignoring the past and future episodes of Yarbull, the device of magic is used to replace the narrative strategy of decontextualization. Magic acknowledges that time and space are an issue in the discussion of baseball. The use of magic in a novel about baseball tells me, as an analyst, that the myths of the timeless and spaceless elements of the game are so pervasive that they cannot be removed. Nothing will remove them or change the fact these strange mythic elements are built right into the game: for all intents and purposes, infinity and

eternity exist in some form in baseball, despite the game's nature of grass, infield dirt, and wooden fences. The story thus resolves the issues of time and space allows the players to continue playing, even though some of them are geriatric. Samuel the magician is able to deflect the damage that time does to the baseball player; he is able to beat time. Yarbull and Raglan can continue to play well past the age they should retire because Samuel can make time flow around them and not erode them: they can continue to live the life of the immortal mortal.

The all-black (except for Ragland) Giants' use of magic is different from the all-white Red Sox use of the brutish hunchback, Scarborough. Scarborough is a talisman, and only ever does battle with the hunchbacks from the other teams. Samuel's root actually changes the way the game is played and reflects a different way of knowing the game. Everyone on the Cincinnati Giants believes in Samuel and his root: the Red Sox merely tolerate Scarborough the "brute" as a means of allaying their superstition.

The root's magic power is not revealed to Samuel alone. Ragland has some understanding of the root as well. After Samuel and Carl leave the team, Ragland takes over and uses the root himself to keep the team running. He uses to root for all manner of things: raising his mother-in-law from the dead, fixing the stadium lights, and allowing himself to continue to play.

Elbows and Claws.

He was an old wizard in knee pants, defying nature with a root. By every conceivable law the Giants should have vanished, and their magician corralled somewhere with grandpas. Only madmen and children would have persisted with all the barnstorming in the mud. Who cared about the Cincinnati Giants? You couldn't get more than 50 people at a game. Fuck the receipts ... "

(Charyn, 328).

The root and its magic enable Ragland and his team to continue to wander across the country, defying all preconceived ideas of when a man should retire from work. Until the root can no longer work, the 72 year-old Babe Ragland will continue to play.

In The Seventh Babe, magic takes the place of the narrative devices which the creators of Superman comics use to create a sense of timelessness and thus myth. The alternate sense of timelessness presented in Charyn's novel raises issues of alternate mythologies. The Seventh Babe also raises the idea of an alternate history of the game which has never been "written" by having invented players playing with identifiable historical figures, as well as creating an alternate history of the game as developed by black players. The alternate ways of creating timelessness and a new mythology of the game give the reader pause to consider what she really knows about the game. So it is with Kinsella's novel as well. The exaggeration of

the myth and the use of the mythic timeless and spaceless qualities of baseball in order to point out the hollow or inaccurate myth are the defining features of the baseball fantasy novel.

CONCLUSION

As I have shown, the baseball narrative in both the baseball novel and the baseball report is used to communicate a sense of decontextualized time and space. This use of decontextualized time and space invokes a powerful myth-making machine that creates Superman-type characters out of mortal men. Of course, immortal mortal is a contradiction, but the baseball narrative employs devices I have discussed to resolve those contradictions. However, while the baseball report exploits the myth-making machinery of the baseball narrative, the baseball narrative of the contemporary baseball novel explores how that machinery came to be in place, why, and who benefits from it. However, the baseball myth is pervasive, and cannot simply be subverted by criticizing the myth, as writers like Malamud and Harris have done. To subvert the myth of baseball and jam the machinery that creates the self-perpetuating stories and images of the Golden Age of the sport, the continuity of narration which is necessary for the cultivation of myth must be interrupted. This could be accomplished by juxtaposing alternate histories of the game against the accepted history of the sport, much as The Seventh Babe attempts to do. Other histories of baseball would contextualize, historicize, and substantiate the myths of baseball by taking them out of their timeless and spatially ambiguous realm of existence. The life of the sport can be charted by studying the texts about baseball, but the things that don't happen in the ballpark, that can't be seen inside the stadium of the dominant mythology of the sport, remain unseen. There are other histories of the game out there in the world,

other ways of knowing, and these ways of knowing are beginning to emerge. With these other ways of knowing, there will be other mythologies, and these mythologies will collide with the dominant mythology of white, male baseball. Even books such as Adair's The Physics of Baseball (1991) are going to work against the dominant mythology in a similar way: because it is scientific study of the physics of the game, it will work to demystify the motion of the players and the action of the game. The result of all of this new information may be the absorption of the new mythologies and structures of knowledge into a revamped pantheon of baseball icons.

For instance, four mythologies of baseball which will almost certainly gain heightened status and acceptability are those which concern baseball in the Negro Leagues of the early-to-mid twentieth century, Latin and Central America, Japan and Asia, and the role of women in baseball. A heightened awareness of these four stadiums adjacent to the well-used stadium that I have been occupying for this work will result from all of the books and films that have been and will be made about them. These new histories will prove that the dominant history that is captured in the novels and the baseball reports did not happen in a vacuum, removed from the rest of the world somehow. A quotation from Howard Zenzel's Baseball and the Cold War will suffice to explain:

The Sugar Kings would go on to finish 1958 in last place, 25 games behind. I knew that there was nothing much to be learned from this season, but

something drove me on to read through the entire summer. On the same day, July 1, 1958: Alaska entered the Union as the 49th state, Nelson Rockefeller announced that he would seek the Republican Nomination for the governor of New York, two more Americans were kidnapped by Castro's forces in Cuba, the Buffalo Bisons beat the Havana Sugar Kings 5-2, and Communist China announced that it had successfully exploded its first nuclear bomb (Zenzel, 1977, 43).

The quotation, from a book about an incident that happened between a Cuban baseball team and an American baseball team, integrates the history of the baseball with the history of the rest of the world. This is not something that the traditional baseball narrative accomplishes, or even tries to accomplish. Another more recent book, John Krich's El Beisbol, comments on Latin and Central American countries' preoccupation with baseball, and the political and social ramifications of the game's association with America. For example:

"Baseball is very problematic," admits Carlos Cuadra, the Sandinistas' man in charge, "because it did not come to us in a very sporting manner." With anything this crucial, there are differing theories concerning origin. Call them imperialist creation myths ... Did a platoon of coaches in combat boots barnstorm the land, distributing ground rules along with Wrigley's gum? ... Come

back next year, I'm told, and the archives will be in order. We are creating a Nicaraguan Hall of Fame. But in Nicaragua, order has been synonymous with repression and next year is only a hypothesis (Krich, 1991, 190).

Along with an introduction of a new order of mythic figures, this treatment of the game's history in the Pan-American region comments on the political and social circumstances of the game: to meet American soldiers is to meet baseball, and this stands in stark contrast to the kind of history of the sport presented in novels such as Lester Chadwick's Baseball Joe in the World Series (1911). In this novel, the reader is given a hint of how the dominant mythology of baseball has suppressed other histories of the game.

"A no-hit game! A triple play!" gasped McRae, as he almost wrenched Joe's arm from his socket.
"Joe, you're a wonder. And now for that tour around the world. You've got to go with me, Joe. I won't take No for an answer. You'll be our greatest drawing card."

How Joe accepted the invitation and the startling events that followed will be told in the next volume of the series, to be entitled: "Baseball Joe around the World; Or, Pitching on a Grand Tour (Chadwick, 1911, 280).

In this passage, it's clear that the dominant mythology will again tell the tale of baseball in other lands. Books such as Krich's El Beisbol (1989), Ruck's The Tropic of Baseball (1991), Joyce's The Only Ticket Off the Island (1991), and Zenzel's Baseball and the Cold War (1973) tell the other side of the story: the reflections of the baseball players of those lands.

There has also been a spate of books recently about life in America's Negro Leagues of the early-to-mid 20th century. Books such as Rogosin's Invisible Men (1987) and Bankes' The Pittsburgh Crawfords (1991) seek to explain, largely through the collection of oral histories of these leagues, how those black players could be acknowledged by white baseball players as being at least their equals and yet still remain outside the consciousness of white America. To a lesser degree, the same can be said of books such as Oh's 1984 autobiography, Sadaharu Oh, and Witing's 1989 study, You Gotta Have Wa, which explores the world of baseball in Japan. But works detailing the world of baseball in the rest of Asia, where the sport is immensely popular - there are reasons that Taiwan wins the Little League World Series nearly every year - are extremely uncommon.

Finally, the role of women in baseball has not been examined. The All-American Girls Baseball League of the early half of the 20th Century has largely been forgotten, revived from time to time by magazines like Sports Illustrated in short articles. But this may

change, because Hollywood is making a film about women in baseball, apparently to be called A League of their Own. It may be easy to dismiss a film with such a dubious title, but the idea of a major film, with major stars (Madonna, Geena Davis) could well challenge the stereotypes that films such as Pride of the Yankees and The Babe Ruth Story helped to create and perpetuate. There will be a lot of talk about women in baseball. As well, Cheering for the Home Team contains a fairly extensive discussion of the All-American Girls Baseball League.

As I mentioned in Chapter One, the notion of spectacle being contemporary Western culture's dominant form of expression seems too important to dismiss. Spectacle: movies, baseball games, wrestling, etc. speak to huge numbers of people at one time. If these numbers can be convinced of the validity and worth of alternate histories of the game, the dominant history of the game will have to change to accommodate them.

All of these other histories are important because they will show that there were other people playing the game of baseball besides the people that members of the discourse community are already aware. These other histories may cripple the ability of dominant baseball myth-machine to function properly: it will have to accept these other stories.

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