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**Frozen moments in the interior stadium: Style in contemporary
“proseball”**

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Style in Contemporary "Proseball"**

Crosby Hunt

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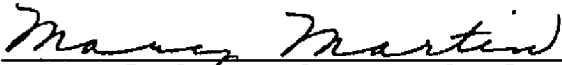
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Abstract

Frozen Moments in the Interior Stadium: Style in Contemporary "Proseball"

Crosby Hunt

Writing about baseball has never been so popular as it is presently, causing one scholar to refer to "the current boom" in publishing. Most of the analysis of this body of work has centered on novels, but it is apparent that other forms of baseball writing are rhetorically as interesting as fiction. After summarizing some of the major critical works on baseball fiction, this study seeks to rectify certain omissions in the field of what Donald Hall calls "proseball." Included in this dissertation are studies of three player-autobiographies: Ted Williams' My Turn at Bat, Jim Brosnan's The Long Season, and Jim Bouton's Ball Four, in chapter two. Also covered, in chapter three, are essays by Roger Angell, John Updike, and Jonathan Schwartz, focusing on what Schwartz calls "frozen moments" in what Angell calls "the interior stadium." Chapter four provides an analysis of Don DeLillo's recent postmodern novella, Pafko at the Wall. Throughout, A. Bartlett Giamatti's connection of baseball with Romance Epics in his essay "Baseball as Narrative" is used to trace baseball's relationship with the rhetorical process.

Acknowledgment

To DKA--More Than Baseball

Crosby Hunt

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Chapter 1
Introduction

"Baseball is greatly literate, of course," says Charles Einstein in his preface to The Third Fireside Book of Baseball (xix), and one only need read the table of contents to this book to see he is right. Each item is listed by author and classification, then titled; for instance, one might be interested in the very first offering by Franklin P. Adams, catalogued as poetry, described and titled: "Baseball's Sad Lexicon: Tinkers-to-Evers-to-Chance" (vii). There is a wide assortment of rhetorical types, from poetry to fiction to spot reporting to history to the curiously-named "General" to the intriguingly postmodernist "Fact-Fiction." Einstein clearly means that the sport of baseball engenders much literature, most of which is, according to Einstein, very good writing indeed: "If you find a great deal of sheer good writing in this collection, it is because baseball and good writing go together" (xix). But what if there is another element to this equation? What if baseball does not simply inspire good writers to write well but is somehow involved in the rhetorical process? Reviewing a book for Aethlon, Peter C. Bjarkman seems to be suggesting that this is so when he comments that "baseball is so relentlessly intellectual and so innately literary" (142). What could be "so innately

literary" about grounders, doubles, and pop-ups? Is this simply the fancy of demented fanatics? Marianne Moore does not think so:

Fanaticism? No. Writing is exciting
and baseball is like writing.
You can never tell with either
how it will go
or what you will do.

Later in the poem, as it becomes clear she is watching real baseball from a seat in Yankee Stadium, she adds the necessary specificity and even a bit of myth:

And "yes,
it's work; I want you to bear down,
but enjoy it
while you're doing it."
Mr. Houk and Mr. Sain,
if you have a rummage sale,
don't sell Roland Sheldon or Tom Tresh.
 Studded with stars in belt and crown,
the stadium is an adastrum.
 O flashing Orion,
 your stars are muscled like the lion.

What could make a great American poet write lines like this, reacting to a simple game of ball in a metaphoric, mythic manner? Former president of Yale University and the National League, as well as Commissioner of Baseball A. Bartlett Giamatti, devotes an entire essay to this theme, titled "Baseball as Narrative." Others see baseball not simply as writing or a form of writing but as a book. In an article for Lingua Franca, Warren Goldstein refers to the sport as a "rich, dense, 150-year-old text" (27). Luke Salisbury, in his interesting blend of trivia and mysticism called The Answer is Baseball, sounds like he is describing the Bible as he sees baseball as "a body of knowledge. It has lore,

history, numbers, apocryphal stories, myths, and revelations" (8). It is clear that a good number of intellectuals see more in a baseball game than just an exciting subject to write about.

Baseball as inspiration and also as some sort of innately literary or rhetorical entity has helped spur what Bjarkman in his review calls, "the current baseball boom" (342) in the publishing world. Each year of the past decade has seen countless new baseball titles cram the shelves, fiction, non-fiction, and numerous sub-genres. Poet, essayist, and baseball fancier Donald Hall calls this phenomenon "proseball" and supplies a concise glimpse of the range:

Baseball...provides background to fiction...and fiction forms only a portion of proseball's lineup. Proseball is Roger Kahn, Roger Angell, and John Updike (once, at least), whose metaphors and images glorify the game. At the other extreme, it is the as-told-to (att) autobiography, often with a splendid disregard for history in the service of myth (111).

Hall goes on in his essay, called "Proseball: Sports, Stories, and Style," to mention a few more types of writing, including journalism both lofty and mundane, and a version of the att where a player talks his book into a tape recorder. As is naturally true of any literary phenomenon, the outpouring of primary texts is likely to engender a significant number of secondary texts as well, examinations, analyses, classifications of the movement. This has been true of the current baseball boom, especially concerning fiction. There are a number of excellent and comprehensive

classifications of baseball novels, and we will consider them in this chapter.

But it is my purpose in this overall text to examine certain aspects of "proseball" which have not been scrutinized as thoroughly as the more familiar works of fiction. Since the range of baseball rhetoric is wide, as we have seen simply by perusing Einstein's table of contents, let us take advantage of this richness, ignoring nothing. We will examine several of the texts that Donald Hall dismisses as having little importance. I believe that, not only are certain player-autobiographies interesting rhetorical phenomena, but, in at least two cases, they may have had some significant but largely ignored influence on the current boom. Furthermore, the essayists mentioned by Hall as purveyors of fine metaphors have always been more mentioned than analyzed. Some of their work is as stunning and dramatic as good works of fiction. Finally, the intriguing category "fact-fiction" in Einstein's table of contents justifies analysis of a new novella by Don DeLillo about one of baseball's most dramatic moments: Bobby Thomson's homer against the Dodgers in the third game of the 1951 National League playoff series to give the Giants the sudden pennant. Woven into the fabric of the discussion will be those theorists who see that baseball, rather than being merely a catalyst for writing, is inseparable from the rhetorical situation. But first, let us survey what several critics

have to say about the world of baseball fiction, in order to better set our context and background.

First, let us discuss one theory of why baseball is so popular with writers: that it represents a return home to childhood and thus serves the nostalgic inclination. This is Warren Goldstein's primary thesis in his essay "It Happens Every Spring," as he suggests that "the national pastime is for many intellectuals a psychoanalytic couch, an arena for self-discovery" (28). Goldstein, an historian who has written a book on early baseball in America, feels that although some lyrical writers value baseball's purity and classic aesthetic elegance, "for most of us, the emotion's the thing; that's what keeps us going back. It takes us back to the home of place, to Brooklyn or Detroit of the kitchen table, to the place where we were young" (29). More specifically, since most baseball prose is created by men, this home they move backwards towards has fathers and grandfathers as integral parts of the memory. Baseball becomes a way of seeking lost relationships and old familiar knowledge.

In his essay "Father's Playing Catch With Sons," Donald Hall traces this unique American genealogy:

...and my father and my son, and my mother's father when the married men played the single men in Wilmot, New Hampshire, and my father's father's father who hit a ball with a stick while he was camped outside Vicksburg in June of 1863, and maybe my son's son's son for baseball is continuous, like nothing else among American things, an endless game of repeated summers, joining the long generations of all the fathers and all the sons (46).

This thesis can be seen at work in, among other places, the fiction of W. P. Kinsella and the baseball poetry of Don Johnson. We will see it again here in chapters three and four, as essayist Roger Angell includes it in his "Interior Stadium" theory, and a character in DeLillo's Pafko at the Wall gives a speech sounding much like Hall on baseball generations cited above. This sense of homecoming is absent from our chapter on player biographies, but this absence is significant as well. As these players take up pens and tape recorders to examine their relationship to baseball, they are not far removed from their childhoods to actively seek recovery in symbolic activity. Furthermore, baseball was not a symbolic activity for these players but a palpable economic reality. It is perhaps ironic that those who never played the game past pick-up ball at family picnics seem to cherish it more, seeing in its recollection the path back to the older men of their youth and homes. In the hands of these writers, this back-home thesis has real applicability. Finally, we will see the homecoming theme come to full maturation later in this chapter in the hands of Bart Giamatti.

Another common motif in baseball writing, especially fiction, is its use or re-use of myth. We have seen this theme already in Marianne Moore's poem; it will surface consistently in systems of analysis of fictive proseball. In the introduction to his edition of a collection of contemporary baseball stories called Baseball & the Game of

Life, Peter C. Bjarkman credits Bernard Malamud's mythic The Natural with having "single-handedly launched the adult sports novel" (xi). He also finds that Philip Roth's effort, The Great American Novel, has broken even newer ground:

baseball was freed from its sports-action narrative and released into its unbounded mythic and fantasy dimensions. ...Baseball novels were now more symbolic and sophisticated, treating the broader scope of our collective national lives and our individualized private fantasies (xii-xiii).

This is a crucial phrase, especially as it concerns essays by John Updike and Jonathan Schwartz and the novella by Don DeLillo which we will be considering in subsequent chapters; the merging of the American cultural history with the personal histories of individual citizens interests all these writers.

In his introduction, Bjarkman enumerates five "identifiable types" of modern baseball novels, the first of which is the realistic novel. The baseball here is recognizable, and the players are familiar to fans as they work through a set of problems both on and off the field. The main themes "always involve ballplayers struggling for elusive baseball immortality or perhaps merely battling for daily professional survival" (xv). Bjarkman places the Henry Wiggen novels of Mark Harris here, most notably The Southpaw and its successor, Bang the Drum Slowly. These works are interesting because they take the form of the att; the player/author, however, is a fictional character named Henry Wiggen, who relates his life both on and off the field. The

problems of daily life seem real, recognizable, as Henry struggles with sex, love, failure, and the death of a friend. Harris has written perhaps the first realistic att, ironically, in fiction. Bjarkman also includes certain historical novels like Eric Rolfe Greenberg's The Celebrant and Harry Stein's Hoopla, works which weave actual baseball figures like Christy Mathewson and Ty Cobb with fictional characters to cast a contemporary look at historical incidents and events from baseball's past. It would be possible to have a separate category for this burgeoning genre, and we will examine one of these in our last chapter.

The remainder of Bjarkman's categories cover some well-known baseball books. In his second category, he places the aforementioned Malamud and Roth as well as Robert Coover's The Universal Baseball Association, J. Henry Waugh, Prop. in a group of "mythical baseball novels...[which] provide a stark departure from the more realistic mode, with their highly stylized and symbolic actions and the religious and archetypal importance in which ballplaying is cloaked" (xvi). Bjarkman's calls his third type "personal nostalgia novels" and includes works by David Ritz and Robert Mayer, books which focus more on the fans than the players of the game. We will see such conflicts at work in a non-fictive manner when we consider the baseball essay. The novels of Jerome Charyn and W. P. Kinsella are examples of the fourth category: the "fantasy baseball novel," although Bjarkman also gives Roth some credit for helping to create this

classification. Kinsella's Shoeless Joe, in which the author, prompted by a mysterious voice from the cornfields, builds a ball field which draws legendary Black Soxer Joe Jackson and other long dead members of that team, is also a part of the father/son tradition, as is Kinsella's second novel, The Iowa Baseball Confederacy. Since actual baseball personages are also used, Kinsella is also part of the historical genre, although his work demands long jumps of the imagination. Bjarkman's final category involves baseball detective novels and does not concern us much here; what is significant is that his system is concise and useful, introducing a number of characteristics we will observe in other considerations of different kinds of baseball writing.

Far more ambitious and comprehensive is Christian K. Messenger's treatment of baseball fiction in his Sport and the Spirit of Play in Contemporary American Fiction, a study that relies on aspects of play philosophy, semantics, and aesthetic theory not usually brought to bear in discussions of baseball rhetoric. Messenger's initial chapters are laced with Heidegger, Kant, Gadamer, and Derrida, although his basic assumption is direct enough: that significant American writers from Hemingway to DeLillo have been using sport to confront "the question of play as an individual human necessity, a drive toward a complex freedom for the individual beyond teams, codified rules, organized competition, and defined arenas" (2). What Messenger sets out to examine is, essentially, the tension between the

freedom of pure play and the rigid constraints of organized athletics in this country. This is an important theme which we will see explored in great detail by Brosnan and especially Jim Bouton.

Messenger considers numerous sports in depth; when he gets to baseball and its fictions, he elaborates on a number of recognizable themes. One of his main categories concerns baseball as "available for textualization as passage" (315). The particulars of this "passage" can consist of movement from country to city, and can be used, claims Messenger, to explore or fortify the "myth...that baseball is America's link with its rural past" (315). Messenger also notes the familiar passage from father to son, as well as the possibility that, since baseball begins in the spring and ends in the fall, it can represent the seasonal cycles of each. The sport's wondrous and unique relationship with time and space is also covered here, with Messenger sounding a bit like Roger Angell, especially with the sentence " (T)he game's pauses offer more opportunities for reflection on what the eye has seen" (316). This observation clearly derives from Angell's "The Interior Stadium," an essay we will take up in depth later, and stands as further proof of Angell's profound influence on all levels of baseball writing. Later, on the ubiquitousness of baseball's essential quest, Messenger writes: "Just such as restless pattern provides baseball fiction with its dominant aesthetic: the quest for 'home' and origin, matched by a ceaseless wandering, a state

of exile in which there is longing for nurture and rest" (317). This sounds remarkably like Renaissance scholar and baseball rhetor A. Bartlett Giamatti, whose "Baseball as Narrative" we will consider later in this chapter. It is interesting to note that Messenger has obviously been influenced by essayists as he formulated his ideas about the nature of baseball fiction.

Messenger's second major category of baseball fictions he calls "Baseball Historicized," which he is careful to separate from the more magical concerns of the mythic. This is Messenger's most original chapter and breaks new ground. As metaphor, baseball may direct our attention to certain quests, inner, mythic, societal, but the sport also has its own rich and mysterious historical past, including what Stephen Jay Gould calls "The Creation Myths of Cooperstown" (Klinkowitz 23). Cordelia Candelaria has more to say about this in her book, using the mythologizing of baseball's origins as a key element in her text. But Messenger here is talking about the whole range of the baseball experience in this country and its significant influence: "For if baseball passages have the capacity to be quite a-historical, they nonetheless have very detailed and important historical records that are part of American cultural history itself" (346). He includes a wide range of novels in this category, from Chicago Black Sox explorations to books which chronicle the Negro Leagues. As Messenger sums up in his consideration of The Great American Novel: "Roth shows us how baseball

narrative, which possesses time, possesses history itself and speaks to every facet of our experience" (358). We will see this formula at work later in DeLillo's Pafko at the Wall.

Michael Oriard makes a significant contribution to this ongoing analysis of baseball fiction in his ambitious Dreaming of Heroes: American Sports Fiction, 1869-1980. Although Oriard includes the sports of boxing, football, and basketball in his considerations, he believes that "Baseball has contributed more good novels than the other three sports; because of its pastoral origins, its mathematical symmetry, and its obvious mythic quality, it has attracted more fine writers" (17). We can see here one side of the question as to whether baseball "attracts" writers or is somehow involved in the writing process. Those critics and scholars who spend time considering baseball fiction usually hold with the first equation. Oriard feels that all sports novels, no matter what their underlying motifs or mysteries, have heroes at their core, and "the fiction that describes sports must focus on this essential fact" (25). Concerning the baseball heroes, he sees most as "young, innocent, and talented," and he points out that nostalgic appeals to "the glow of memory" is a central theme in baseball writing. Oriard also mentions that Roger Angell is a part of this tradition, thus perceiving the link between proseball's fiction and non-fiction--a theme explored in chapter four, noting that Angell's essays make baseball "a game of yesterdays stored in the mind of the devoted fan" (61).

The chapters in Oriard's book reflect themes concerning heroes from all four sports. One key area is "Country and City in American Sports Fiction:" here the author feels that such essential American themes as the vanishing frontier, the loss of the agrarian ideal, and the rise of the large cities at the end of the Civil War gave rise to a new self concept for Americans, away from the "Adamic children of nature." After noting that historical evidence shows a tremendous rise in sports participation with the growth of cities, the expansion of the working class, and the influx of immigrants, Oriard concludes that "sport is clearly one attempt to compensate for urban America's loss of contact with those roots" (76). As Oriard notes, sports fiction often features a young and talented but inexperienced country rube who, because he wants to play professionally, must come to the unfamiliar environs of the city. Part of the conflict then becomes not simply the usual drama on the playing fields but struggles with ignorance and immaturity as well. This theme can be used comically, as Ring Lardner does in You Know Me, Al. Other themes include Youth and Age, Sexual Roles, and the familiar History and Myth which he feels is the latest in the sequence and thus "represent(s) the artistic pinnacle of sports fiction to date" (22). Oriard covers most of the same works examined by other critics, but he provides a further service by working chronologically, finding movement towards a keener, more complex form of sports fiction. This is just

the avenue taken by our final fiction critic, Cordelia Candelaria.

Candelaria has written the finest and most comprehensive study of baseball fiction, Seeking the Perfect Game, published in 1989. The book consists of what its author calls a "twofold investigation," first to conduct a thorough sweep of baseball as it is used as metaphor and imagery in American literature, and, "second, to explain how this figurative treatment of the sport creates its own framework of the imagination, its own fictive universe" (2). The movement detected by Oriard towards a more sophisticated level of sports fiction becomes Candelaria's thesis, as she focuses solely on baseball fiction, which she feels "has continually progressed to increasingly complex levels of literary abstraction" (2). She also reflects on the volume of baseball writing and its apparently special place in American society. In a theory similar to one propounded by Jerry Klinkowitz, which we will examine later in this chapter, Candelaria makes the connection between baseball as a made-up game and the act of writing about, or making up stories about it, and feels that these acts of "recreation and re-creation" work together to fulfill "society's need and desire for the ludic and agonistic exaltation identified by philosophers...who...see play as separate from 'real life'" (1-2). Candelaria then cites later philosophers who disagree with this hypothesis, perceiving in play great "purposiveness;" these she calls "basic and contradictory

impulses within the primal center of baseball" (2). While at baseball's center, she is in Roger Angell's domain, feeling with him that this sport has spirituality and mystery at its center. She also finds another contradiction inherent in the contemporary baseball scene: the freedom participation in the sport affords versus the constrictive tyranny of the organized sport, with its rules, regulations, and necessary image-making. We have seen this theme in *Messenger*; we will see it manifested in the non-fiction area in the work of Jim Bouton. What is effective about Cordelia Candelaria's work is that her themes rarely stray too far from aspects of the game itself: its own history, myths, lores, and special needs. In fact, she identifies nine facets of the game of baseball which she feels can "serve as a taxonomy of the literary motifs recurrent in baseball fiction" (3). Let us examine these characteristics, noting first the significance of the number nine to the object of inquiry.

Candelaria uses the term "antecedent folk form" to refer to early forms of baseball, a subject which she pays far more attention to than previously cited scholars. Her first four characteristics are tied to this concept and are concerned with the sport as it evolved to suit basic human necessities: baseball began in primitive ritual which lends it a "depth of cultural substance;" it is a dynamic force, since it developed over a long period of time with the culture itself; its position as folk form means it supplies humans with both leisure and relaxation; it also supplies the more rigid need

to compete, to have rivalries. Candelaria finds that once baseball emerged in American society, it was originally a diversion for the gentleman class, thus providing writers with a good background with which to investigate this country's "original overt classism" (14). Her sixth characteristic deals with baseball's mythologized origin, the "false genesis legend which...plants a kernel of fiction into the very history and cultural essence of the sport" (14). Her seventh and eighth aspects involve business and politics. Since baseball is clearly and mainly a business with profit motivation, the sport's most famous and revealing moment, the 1919 "fall from grace" scandal that brought both shame and a more realistic image seems inevitable. Furthermore, baseball is so political that Presidents need to be seen beginning each new season with the first ball toss. And finally, Candelaria finds in baseball's "essential and fundamental form...an array of inherently symbolic elements...that have quite naturally conduced extensive literary treatment" (14). These literary elements include the game's symmetrical layout, its harmonious angles and numbers, its obsession with record keeping and statistics, the myth of its origins, and more. These characteristics provide a good basis for our discussion of some other scholars of the game, those interested in baseball as it relates to the phenomenon of rhetoric.

Clearly, the focus of most of the analysis of the "baseball boom" in writing has been on fiction; a number of

interesting formulas may be created. In fact, this fact has also had a great impact on current baseball novels. Jerry Klinkowitz, writing in the introduction to a volume he edited called Writing Baseball, believes this strongly:

But because baseball is itself a human invention, and because it flaunts such obvious conventionality in every action, other writers have seen fit to either parody that mythmaking...or to move directly to the game itself for an appreciation of its self-apparent factors of reaction (4).

Klinkowitz here mentions essayists like Roger Angel and Thomas Boswell along with some baseball novelists like Jerome Charyn to cite what he calls "{t}his attraction to the unadorned game" (5). His connection of fiction to non-fiction writers and his belief that baseball does not need myth proper to flourish as a subject for good writing form one element of the frame of my text here. As Klinkowitz says about the current baseball writing: "Both the journalists and fictionists have shared an appreciation for baseball as a thing in itself. It provides structure for their work at a time when structures and not content are considered the only palpable substance" (7). Thus, if we wish to examine the sport of baseball and its relationship to the rhetoric it has engendered, it is essential to look beyond the fictional.

In his book Take Time for Paradise: Americans and Their Games, A. Bartlett Giamatti, former Renaissance scholar as well as the Commissioner of Baseball, devotes an entire essay to the relationship between baseball and writing, or more specifically, baseball and narrative. As Giamatti puts the

question:

If baseball is a Narrative, it is like others--a work of imagination whose deeper structures and patterns of repetition force a tale, oft-told, to fresh and hitherto-unforseen meaning. But what is the nature of the tale oft-told that recommences with every pitch, with every game, with every season? (90)

Giamatti supplies the answer to this question from his scholarly background, finding parallels between baseball's stated purpose and Romance Epics in the literary mode. When Giamatti looks at Odysseus rounding rockets, fighting Cyclops, avoiding Sirens, he sees a batter running out a long hit, who starts at home, "negotiates the twists and turns at first, and often founders far out at the edges of the ordered world at rocky second--the farthest point from home" (93).

Thus the essential baseball action, trying to come home, forms a tale, which needs to be told and told again by a number of involved sources, including both players and fans:

If baseball is a narrative, an epic of exile and return, a vast communal poem about separation, loss, and the hope of reunion--if baseball is a Romance Epic--it is finally told by the audience. It is the Romance Epic of homecoming America sings to herself (95).

And as this song has been dissected during the previous "boom" in baseball writing, there have been a number of glaring gaps. Both Giamatti and Donald Hall have dismissed the acts as less significant, but I believe that the player's song, the tale as told by the enacters, is not without its interesting rhetorical elements. There have also been in recent years two such efforts which have had a considerable but largely ignored influence on other aspects of baseball

writing. When Giamatti's audience does get involved in telling the tale, very often it is by skilled and artistic writers like Roger Angell and others, essayists whose works are lauded consistently but rarely given the specific attention they deserve. These essayists write non-fiction, often profiles of interesting players or chronicles of important moments; writers in the postmodern era like Don DeLillo have discovered that they can use the facts of one of these historic moments as backgrounds to their novels. DeLillo's Pafko at the Wall is a typical postmodern multi-colored creation: part att, part essay, part novel. It is just one way that baseball can be used to produce complex and multi-faceted rhetorical offerings.

Chapter 2

Player Autobiographies

Let us return for a moment to A. Bartlett Giamatti's ideas on baseball as a kind of narrative, reciting the key passage for our use here:

Repetition within immutable lines and rules; baseball is...--an oft-told tale, repeated in every game in every season. If this is the tale told, who tells it? Clearly the players who enact it thereby also tell it. But the other true tellers of the narrative are those for whom it is played. If baseball is a narrative...--it is finally told by the audience (95).

This metaphor has at least two meanings as far as the players are concerned. If the game is narrative in this figurative sense, then by pitching and hitting and fielding the ballplayers are "telling" this tale as characters in the dramatic recitation. But Giamatti also means "telling" quite literally, as he makes clear in a subsequent passage. The setting is the lobby of the Marriott Pavillion Hotel in St. Louis during the National League Championship series between the San Francisco Giants and the St. Louis Cardinals. The author is there, where he observes the different groups, all engaged in "crosscutting, overlapping, salty, blunt, nostalgic, sweet conversation about only one subject--Baseball. Here the oft-told tale that is the game is told again" (99).

Giamatti supplies numerous examples of overheard portions of this conversation, all with the kind of specificity composition teachers would love from their students. "Baseball people have the keenest eyes for telling detail I have ever known," says the former commissioner, who then begins to sum up his experiences in this vein:

This is the talk in lobbies across some two thousand games a season, as it has been season after season, since the 1970s...so Ned Hanlon must have talked, and M^cGraw, and Speaker and Miller Huggins and even Connie Mack;...and so talk Yogi and Ernie and Whitey and Lasorda and Cashen and Sparky and Willie Mays and all the thousands they entail; the players and coaches and scouts and managers and umpires, somewhere they all talk.

We can see from this that, in Giamatti's scheme, the players also play on the rhetorical fields that he calls "the park of talk" (100).

As participants in this area, these "enactors of the tale" have, besides adding to the conversations, written countless books, the significance and effect of which have been largely ignored by those who address the proseball issue. I believe this is a mistake and that several offerings by players and ex-players are not only an integral element of the rhetorical baseball formula but have even had a hand in preparing the audience for the coming golden age of baseball writing. Therefore, in this chapter we will consider two distinct kinds of player autobiographies: those written by star players with tarnished images for the purpose of countering or replacing the original image, and those written by lesser players who have painted a more realistic

image of players in their relationships to mundane daily life and to the mundane business side of baseball.

Go to any library and you will see them, row after row: Yogi Berra by Yogie Berra, with Tom Horton; The Mick by Mickey Mantle, with Herb Gluck; Whitey and Mikey by Joseph Durso; Willie Mays: My Life In and Out of Baseball by Willie Mays, as told to Charles Einstein; Stan Musial: The Man's Own Story, as told to Bob Broeg. These are the "atts" that Donald Hall speaks of in "Proseball;" ironically Musial's long-awaited "own story" received a bit of brushing up by a man named Broeg. No one claims these books as representatives of great literature; they are mostly autobiographies (actually -- biographies -- depending on the extent of participation by the name at the end of the att formula) which chronicle a star player's rise to fame and glory. They are, technically, a part of Giamatti's theory, since they are definitely narrative, as evidenced by the "My Story" and "My Life" phrases which appear in most att titles.

However, we do not expect the kind of references we find later in the writing of Roger Angell, nor would we be anything but astonished if these player/authors suddenly found Homeric parallels as they rounded second after whacking their doubles off the farthest green walls. It is likely that their intended audiences would not follow this train of thought anyway, choosing the books so as to re-live an exciting moment with the star, not contemplate the essential mystery at the center of baseball. There is, even so, a

place for these books in the canon of rhetorical ball, and a willing audience. As Thomas Boswell writes in How Life Imitates the World Series, "Conversation is the blood of baseball" (3). And so too our atts go coursing through, are part of "the talk," however uncomplicated, and we should make room for them.

It is not my purpose here to fully examine the genre of baseball biography, which we might name "The Hero Finally Speaks." There is, however, an assumption which underlies some of these efforts which will be instructive to investigate. Distinct from the deeper imports of Giamatti's learned speculations of baseball as narrative, this sport has always had an intricate and heavily involved relationship with writing. As former Braves pitcher Tom House says: "You cannot separate baseball from the media or the media from baseball. They have a symbolic relationship" (The Jock's Itch 82). Almost since the founding of the professional leagues, games have been reported, players profiled, team fortunes predicted, dissected, recorded. Most fans learn most of what they know about baseball from what they read. Roger Kahn writes about the relationship that ensues from so much rhetorical attention in an essay entitled "Intellectuals and Ballplayers:"

The ballplayer's first postschool contact with the printed word ordinarily comes through the sports column of a newspaper. All is well when the player is successful, but as soon as he makes an important error or strikes out at a critical time, there is a headline, an article, a box score and possibly a feature story documenting and publicizing his

failure. Even assuming a thoroughly happy school experience with books, something rather rare among athletes...sports page reading in itself can be traumatic. Baseball writers and baseball players have a relationship which resembles that of teacher and pupil, or surgeon and patient, or Ben Gurion and Nasser (343).

Another accurate way to picture this relationship is as author-critic, for the players, far from feeling that journalistic criticism of their play is a good learning experience, often lash back at writers when they have been pilloried in the press. Sometimes the attacks are physical. Detroit Free Press scribe Dave laPoint reports being threatened by an enraged Kirk Gibson, who grabbed him by the shirt collar (Personal interview 1985). Kahn tells of a New York writer who was chased down the aisle of a train by a bat-wielding Yankee first baseman about whom he had written when the player signed a contract for \$18,500 that "the \$500 is for his fielding" (344). In these situations, if the writer's charges are perceived as fair and accurate appraisals of the player's abilities, he has little recourse but the private locker room threat.

If the player attains star status, he may also have an attendant image or character, thanks in part to years of stories and profiles written about him by those whom Ted Williams called "the knights of the keyboards up there" (Updike 66). Williams was on the field looking up at the press box when he made the comment, but it is the defining image players have of writers, sitting somewhere above the action, not involved nor risking anything yet, like gods,

casting down judgment. And if the star players hang on long enough, they may choose, either after retirement or in the gloaming of their playing days, to attempt to counter this image or character with a rhetorical response of their own. Such efforts contribute an interesting element to the canon of proseball as well as create a new angle in rhetorical theory.

According to Erika Lindeman, a rhetorical act can be drawn as a triangle, with each angle representing one vital element of this equation: writer as connected to subject as connected to audience, and all have corresponding lines back to each other, underlining the overall connectedness of the situation (12). Thus, when a sportswriter writes a profile of a player, his subject is the player and his audience is those fans interested enough to read his work, probably those who have an opinion of the player already or an emotional stake in the team he plays for. The rhetorical message--the area of the triangle--becomes whatever image or character the writer creates for the player. When the player decides to counter this image with one of his own making, the subject of the original rhetorical triangle now becomes the writer, the audience and subject remain the same, and the message becomes The Truth, as opposed to the initial message, which was, according to the new writer, "The Distortion."

Listen to Ty Cobb in the first chapter of his autobiography (with Al Stump) significantly titled My Life in Baseball: The True Record:

In dealing with the heartache first, perhaps some glaring misconceptions about me will be cleared up. This book came very close to never being written...I have not wanted to unburden myself of a great many facts directly opposed to what Americans have been led to believe is the truth...But my time is running short and I find little comfort in the popular picture of Cobb as a spike-slashing demon of the diamond with a wide streak of cruelty in his nature...There comes the moment when a man must speak --not in rebuttal, and certainly not in anger, but as a simple duty to himself and those who carry his name. My critics have had their innings. I will have mine now (20).

This is the first type of player autobiographies--the enactors telling the tale--that we will consider in this chapter; its distinguishing feature is the motivation described above, to re-invent the character of the ballplayer in question through a rhetorical counterattack, switching writer with the original subject so as to uncover the "true record."

One of the best examples of this type of narrative is Ted Williams' My Turn at Bat: The Story of My Life. It's a definite att, coming to life as told to John Underwood. There is a nice oral tradition suggested by this maneuver as if all these players did was to go Giamatti's lobby, those "parks of talk," and tell their stories into a microphone. Most members of this subgenre of "the hero speaks," which we should call "the hero re-invents himself," are detectable through the titles. There is hint of previous distortion in Stan Musial's My Own Story. Another popular phrase is "in his own words," which often finds its way into the right side of the title's colon. Cobb's offering is a prime example,

using the more forceful The True Record. Note the similarity in Cobb's reason for writing his book--"My critics have had their innings. I will have mine now."--with Williams' very title--My Turn at Bat. These players have wandered into admittedly foreign territory here; this is the home turf for the dreaded rivals -- the writers. So they try to fashion the metaphors from the more familiar phenomena, a place they feel much safer. Since Williams will appear again in our text as the subject of John Updike's splendid essay "Hub Fans Bid Kid Adieu," let us listen to parts of his own story first, noting some of the interesting features.

I'm glad it's over" snarls the Splendid Williams in the opening line of his book. "Before anything else, understand that I am glad it's over" (3). This is not a typical first line from star players; according to Tom House, all professional athletes wish to keep playing: "I have never heard an athlete, a released athlete or a retired athlete or a traded athlete, who has not expressed the thought, 'Just give me the opportunity, and I will do exactly what I did five years ago'" (116-17).

This does not appear to be a problem for Williams, who never doubted his ability to keep pumping baseballs over fences; after all, as we shall see in Updike's piece, he did that very thing with his last major league swing. But this particular athlete, a different breed almost from the first, is not talking about the game itself but the corresponding trappings of the sport as entertainment business. As he

writes later in the first chapter in trying to explain his refusal to tip his cap after hitting that last homer: "I did it my first year, but never afterward. I couldn't, not if I played another twenty years. I just couldn't. I was fed up for good with that part of the act" (4-5). This is a bit curious; since Williams played for over twenty years, it seems odd that he could be "fed up" with something he admits he hadn't performed since his initial year.

This is a characteristic of these kinds of narratives; they were not written for the type of audience who might pick and criticize apparent contradictions. The star is speaking, the star is piqued, and he must be allowed his verbal shots. In fact, all atts have a built-in audience, since the player/author already has a following. In the initial pages, it is clear that Ted is disgusted with the show biz atmosphere of baseball and, significantly for our purpose here, with the type of "image" players were supposed to maintain for their adoring fans. He never really had that type of image, and often battled fans and management as well as the press. He writes that the people in Boston are "the greatest fans in baseball" (4), admits that it might not seem as if he always felt that way, since he spit at them, tossed bats into the stands, and crooked his finger in obscene gesture on more than one occasion. But he insists he does believe this, and he will "get into that later" (4).

It is a strange first chapter; the tone is both defiant and conciliatory, containing no new information but simply

working to establish an authorial voice. Williams seems bent on letting his readers know he has not weakened, that what they are about to hear is authentic Teddy Ballgame stuff, angry, straightforward, unapologetic. In a passage which suggests Williams had a larger hand in this att than most other players, he writes, somewhat repetitively: "I wouldn't want to go back. I've got problems now. I've always been a problem guy. I'll always have problems" (3). And so, the initial impression readers get from the first page or so is the establishment of an authentic voice, recognizable as Williams' through his failure to sweeten anything, to soften his stance, to finally tip his cap, or to expunge unnecessary repetition from his text. He will explain himself in terms of the baseball. As he admits in the second paragraph: "I wanted to be the greatest hitter who ever lived...to have people say, 'There goes Ted Williams, the greatest hitter who ever lived'" (3). This is, of course, a line from Malamud's The Natural, which was published eight years before My Turn at Bat, another example of how, in rhetorical baseball, fact and fiction blend. But if there were two aspects of Williams' character that readers already knew, it was the refusal to be gracious and his absolute devotion to the art of hitting baseballs. These have been simply reinforced in chapter one.

There was one other aspect of Williams well known by most ball fans--his dislike of the writers. Ted Williams' relationship with the Boston press was probably one of the

stormiest in baseball history, and, as in Cobb's case, creates the ostensible reason a great hitter took up the pen, or at least in Ted's case, a microphone. He makes no attempts at apology:

Oh, I hated that Boston press. I've outlived the ones who were really vicious, who wrote some of the meanest, most slanderous things you can imagine. I can still remember the things they wrote, and they still make me mad: How I was always trying to get somebody's job...or how I didn't hit in the clutch, and yet drove in more runs per time at bat than anybody who ever played this game except Babe Ruth...I was a draft dodger. I wasn't a 'team' man. I was jealous. I 'alienated' the players from the press. I didn't hit to left field. I took too many bases on balls. I did this, I did that. And so on. And so unfair (5).

Here Williams writes a passage similar to Cobb's, claiming unfair criticism from an oddly biased and mean-spirited press. He does admit that "things got started and grew worse partly because of my temperament, because of my emotional, explosive nature" (96). But mostly he blames the press and their unethical obsession with selling newspapers at any cost, "all trying to get a headline, all digging into places where they had no business being" (8). Williams then tells the story of a time when Jim Thorpe was sent over to try to talk Ted into mellowing out a bit with the press but who wound up relating an incident when Thorpe punched a writer himself. We can hear Williams chuckling as he tells this story, which he feels exonerates him somewhat since the highly respected Thorpe shares his opinion of what writers often deserve for their work.

This specific, anecdotal technique is typical of baseball narratives; let us not forget Giamatti's estimation of baseball people as possessing "the keenest eyes for telling detail" he had ever known. There are no baseball books without baseball stories, and it is the nature of all baseball writers, both professional and player/authors to give the anecdotes free reign, sometimes at the expense of other rhetorical elements like unity and coherence. Giamatti analyzes the methods of the tale, deciding that the baseball story "is always told in the present tense, in a paratactic style that reflects the game's seamless, cumulative character, each event linked to the last and creating context for the next" (99). True, there is "context" for the next story, but we may wind up further and further from what had been the main point.

In one such instance Williams, while discussing the threat of injury, wanders into newer territory: "I will never forget the day I hit Lou Brissie with a line drive. It was 1946, and he had come out of the service a great war hero with part of his leg blown off. He had to wear an aluminum plate." Williams goes on to describe the day and Brissie's particular pitching strengths and habits. Then, "I hit a ball back to the box, a real shot, whack, like a rifle clap off that aluminum leg." Williams joins the crowd of players who rush out to see if Brissie is hurt badly. As the stricken pitcher looks up, he sees Williams' face and shouts "For Crissakes, Williams, pull the damn ball." The next time

the two oppose each other, Williams recounts: "I hit one out of the park. As I was trotting around he yelled, 'You don't have to pull it that far, Williams.' Brissie was a great guy" (12). And so from fear of injury, Williams moves smoothly to an anecdote which begins in potential tragedy but ends in comedy and good will. From there, he takes us to Southern California and his early childhood. The threat is gone as we bask in the warm San Diego sun, watching the youthful Teddy Ballgame getting his first haircut. It may not be coherent, but most of these readers do not really care.

Williams is at his most eloquent and reflective best when discussing his second great love, fishing, but the units of writing are still loosely tied together, jumping from story to story with only Ted as the connecting thread. He explores the apparent contradiction in his love of the solitary fishing: "Old no-patience Teddy Ballgame willing to wait half the day in an open boat for one nibbly strike, and no guarantee he'll get it" (143). We are also offered some intriguing looks into the mental habits of one of the game's greatest hitters, and we can see that his discipline carries over into other areas:

I never felt I had to shoot a lot of game or catch a lot of fish to enjoy it. Being there is enough. I just like to be there. But I want to be in a nice boat, I want it to be rigged right, I want nice tackle. If my tackle isn't good I don't want to fish. If the gun doesn't suit me, I don't want to shoot. I have at least \$5,000 worth of guns, and maybe some of them I don't shoot twice a year. But I like them. I know they're good guns. I'm happy just

picking them up, a thing of beauty, of workmanship. Pride of ownership. It's a stab in my heart when I see a spot of rust on one of them (143-44).

The next paragraph leaps right to Chicago for the 1950 All-Star game, in which Williams broke his elbow running into the fence making a game-saving catch. This incident leads him into a number of complaints: that he wasn't appreciated as a defensive outfielder, that he played in great pain and was later pilloried for not hitting in the clutch, that he had much bad luck.

We are far from the fishing holes with the mint condition rods and reels, but this is baseball's version of coherence, reflecting, in Giamatti's words, "the game's seamless, cumulative character" (99). And as Williams wanders somewhat loosely through his life, defending his actions, accounting for others, allowing glimpses of the personal, solitary, peaceful side of himself, he hopes that his own "cumulative character" will begin to emerge.

As the book ends, Williams is rather direct in his attempt to explain himself, to alter his old image, to allow others to see different and undistorted sides of his personality. At this point, he seems to take partial blame for his tempestuous character while still placing most of the blame on the writing press:

I know this. I was and am too complex a personality, too much a confusion of boyish enthusiasm and bitter experience to be completely understood by everybody, so forget that...I think, however, that The Kid who made the sports page jump was never the same person to himself as he was to the reader, and maybe not the

same even to the people who knew him. I think it is natural that I regret that deception (215).

Note the separation from the previous and public persona, the use of the harsh word "deception," which implies a deceiver, the insistence that there is another Williams character out there somewhere, however complex and ultimately unknowable, and the bitterness that the deception was "natural." This is a baseball book, and so must end with an anecdote. Williams recounts how he used to use the name Luther when he signed in to fishing tournaments to avoid unwanted and distracting publicity. Once in Fort Meyers, Florida, a hotel manager, noting the name, remarks about Luther's resemblance to the famous Williams. Williams assures the man he's Luther, and so they chat about fishing. At the conclusion of their conversation, Williams recalls the man saying: "I have to admit, I had my doubts when you signed in, Mr. Luther. I thought you really were Ted Williams. But I can see you're not. You've got a much nicer disposition." Teddy, clearly delighted with the irony of this story and its implicit damnation of the older, distracted character, writes, "Put it in capital letters and run it on page one" (215).

My Turn at Bat is an adequate example of this particular subgenre of rhetorical baseball -- a former star who writes to right previous wrongs, to alter his own character after it has been distorted by years of slanted press reports by biased and ignorant sports writers. Like most player autobiographies, its main subject is its player/author, how

he learned his craft, how he was high spirited, how he was misrepresented by the press, the true story behind some of the famous incidents. The book is significant rhetorically because it underscores baseball's intricate relationship with writing, since it exists only because of other writing, and attempts to replace the former pieces' erroneous message. Stylistically, it fits Giamatti's formula; for the most part, it consists of paratactic sentences and a combination of past and present tense to narrate events residing exclusively in the past. There are no attempts at figurative language other than clichèd similes. Williams has little use for standard concepts of paragraph unity, choosing instead to let the rich anecdotes alter the originally stated topics, often either moving off into the direction suggested by something at the end of a story or simply dropping the topic altogether and moving almost arbitrarily to a different area. In this way, the work gives the impression of being spoken, sometimes shouted into a tape recorder and edited only slightly. Words like "Gee" and "Gosh" pepper the prose, although Williams was known to have the typical ballplayer's penchant for swearing. The book was published in 1969, only one year before Jim Bouton's salty *Ball Four*, but we must remember that Williams' intended audience would not have approved of realistic locker room dialogue, as did Bouton's younger, less traditional readers.

We will now turn our attention to a distinctly different kind of player autobiography, one written with a more liberal

and expanded concept of what the audience for proseball would enjoy or even tolerate. Since these works were written by middle relief pitchers with mixed records of success in the major leagues, there were no individual images to be rectified. In fact, both authors seek to re-invent not a single character but the collective image of professional baseball players. Both of these writers, Jim Brosnan and Jim Bouton, are, like Williams, working from what they consider an erroneous earlier image. Unlike Williams they are not merely interested in changing the perception of their own personal characters but something altogether wider in scope.

Brosnan, believing that typical fans have wildly inaccurate pictures of this character and daily life of a ballplayer, seeks to update the portrait through his journal, more realistic, lyrical, impassionate than atts. Bouton is at immediate and consistent war with the image corporate baseball demands of its employees. As Tom House says about baseball's self-promoting impulse,

There is no other sport that operates such a tireless PR machine, cranking out statistics and stories and image builders all over the place. This is the National Pastime, after all -- gotta look the part (73).

Remembering Williams' reference to "that part of the act," we can see that he too was annoyed by this phenomenon but had other purposes for his own rhetorical offering. Bouton's diary attacks this image with a witty, profane and, for baseball, sacriligious look at a season.

Both Brosnan and Bouton are in direct violation with a strong by unspoken code, again articulated by Tom House: "But there is one thing that baseball, like all public image professions, must keep quiet about -- family business. Words to live by: if it happened behind the scenes, let it stay behind the scenes" (73). The more traditional atts do not violate this code; Ted Williams does not violate this code, stating his own version of incidents without lifting the veil from the clubhouse or revealing anything compromising to anyone but the filthy writers who were his stated target to begin with, and whose lives are outside this edict. Bouton and Brosnan violate the code severely and have thus created wholly original elements in the canon of proseball. These efforts have been given far too little credit for helping to create this golden age of baseball writing. Both books are interesting rhetorically because they come as responses to rules meant to control rhetorical approaches to baseball. Since his is first chronologically, let us now consider Jim Brosnan's 1960 publication of his diary of the 1959 major league experience, The Long Season.

It is clear from the first two paragraphs of the introduction that Brosnan intends to write a far different book than previous efforts by players. Sounding like a postmodernist critic along the lines of Richard Schwartz, whose world is "full of contradictions and dependent upon individual observers for its definition" (136), Brosnan writes regarding this kind of potential contradiction:

Some readers will remember the players, scenes, and action just as I did. In some cases I may have seen things differently. But then no two people can truly say that they see the same thing exactly the same way. Occasionally my viewpoint will prove to be unique; no one else could have seen things just that way (xi).

Note the difference in tone here from the Williams introduction; instead of a defiant, unapologetic "I'm glad it's over," Brosnan seems arguing for tolerance, requesting a more open receptivity to what he knows will be a different piece of baseball biography. That his viewpoint will most decidedly prove to be "unique" we will cover in his next paragraph, as he establishes, invents a different character than fans are used to reading. There, Brosnan begins to define baseball and its relationship to those who crave knowledge about the sport:

Professional baseball in America is not a game, nor can it be called an ordinary business -- a habit --with millions of people...baseball fans. Anyone fanatically attached to baseball considers himself privileged to enter and enjoy the private world of the baseball players. Identification of the fan with the ballplayer goes beyond the playing field where it traditionally belongs. Many ballplayers (some of whom are not fans) resent an intrusion into their personal lives. The means by which most fans learn what they want to know about the players leaves much to the imagination (xi).

In one sense, Brosnan and Williams actually have much in common. Both feel the intrusiveness that comes from being public figures; both believe the prevailing image of ballplayers suffused with inaccuracies. But Brosnan does not seem resentful, at least not on the intensely personal level that Williams does. Moreover, while Williams blames the

press for writing the stuff, Brosnan traces the situation back to its source -- the fans' odd desire to know more about the players than the box scores can tell them. By taking an interest in the phenomenon itself, and not simply its personal manifestations, Brosnan has established a distance, a voice not objective, but, in the good postmodernist sense, not bothered by contradictions and disagreements. As he writes in the first line, "The following journal is my personal account of the 1959 baseball season...the way I saw it" (xi). And thus his purpose is intricately bound up with his voice in this work. Like Cobb and Williams, he feels that the previous record is less than straight and true, but he is not after absolute truth and factual reporting but rather an impression of this sport which he, as possessor of a new and perhaps unique voice, would like to share.

One important aspect of Brosnan's voice is its erudition, its involvement in the culture outside of baseball. Williams chronicles numerous hunting and fishing trips, but we expect that of ballplayers, true naturals trekking through wintry woods hitting deer instead of baseballs with shiny metallic rifles instead of the wooden bats of their summers. As readers of numerous stories about and by players, we have not come to expect a great deal of literary acumen from them. Roger Kahn quotes Charlie Dressen, long time manager for a number of teams, as admitting without shame that he had never read a single book in his life: "I've got by pretty good up to now without

books. I ain't gonna start making changes" ("Intellectuals and Ballplayers" 345). But in The Long Season, we see Brosnan reading and thoroughly enjoying a book called Sub-Treasury of American Humor, in particular a famous essay by Mark Twain on the literary crimes of James Fenimore Cooper. Brosnan quotes extensively from the essay, making sure his readers see that he understands and enjoys such pursuits: "I'd been laughing to myself in mind-tickled pleasure." When he reads the passage to a passing stewardess, he thinks he's found someone who will appreciate its humor, but "she stared back at me, politely, but without the least hint of a smile. She must get her kicks some other way. Or maybe I told it wrong" (77). Notice that Brosnan makes no effort to share this bit of intellectual comedy with any of his fellow ballplayers. The image Brosnan presents is one of isolation for the intellectual player surrounded by teammates and other elements of baseball life like the stewardess, who all show no interest in the literary life. For such stimulus, he must look elsewhere, as he does in a correspondence with well-known semanticist and former president of San Francisco State University S. I. Hayakawa. Brosnan states modestly that "My acquaintance with Don Hayadawa has been my only brush with the erudition that the more literate members of the bullpen ascribe to me" (270). He invites Hayakawa to see him pitch when he is scheduled to start a game in San Francisco. Hayakawa is busy that day but, in a subtle touch which serves to illustrate that Brosnan has friends who know nothing of

baseball, the scholar sends a note in which he says, "I could come tomorrow. Could you pitch then" (270). This is an interesting moment; Brosnan's intellectual capacities separate him from his teammates; his status as an athlete does the same thing with his intellectual acquaintances. Still, he seems intent somehow on using both to impress the opposite party. He tells the "more literate members of the bullpen" of his friendship with Hayakawa, while attempting to arrange for Hayakawa to observe his baseball abilities. Brosnan is here widening the potential audience for his baseball writing while attempting to hold on to the older, more traditional group. He can be interested in books as well as pitching, as can his intended audience.

An important element of this new erudite voice is, of course, writing style. The Long Season is not at all; there is no other hand in the work but Brosnan's, and the style reflects one who reads Mark Twain on airplanes. The sentence structure is anything but paratactic, often complexly descriptive and metaphoric. Note two pictures of baseball clubhouses, one at the beginning of spring training and the other as the season draws to a close:

A spring training clubhouse can look like a prison scene --lockers so small they seem like cells, racks of bats stacked like so many wooden gun barrels, lines of sweaty, stinking uniforms and sweatshirts hanging everywhere. It is a barracks into which the manager and his coaches march, barking discipline: 'Run around the park, run to the clubhouse, run to the john, sweat till you bleed' (15).

Here is the military metaphor of drill sergeants and physical

exhaustion -- all work and no play, with the attending smells of adult males who have been sweating in the hot sun.

At the end of the season, the mood is decidedly different:

On the last day of the season baseball is a game that professionals do play; it no longer seems like work to them...On the last day of the season baseball, truly, is in his blood. I stuffed my glove into a duffel bag and picked up the last shirt from my locker. The empty locker symbolizes the cold, blue sadness of the last day of the season. There is something poignant and depressing about clearing out, for good; abandoning your own place in the clubhouse...No matter how successful his season, he must feel sad at the sight of his locker, finally swept bare of tangible remembrances of the long season. No more sweaty, dirty uniforms to hang there; no more fan letters, newspaper clippings, baseballs and other souvenirs to clutter the locker with his own personality (266-67).

Besides the impressive writing, descriptive of both place and emotion, reflective, full of specific images, we can observe Brosnan giving an unadorned, realistic picture of the life of a big league ballplayer. The players seem more human as they are shown simply enjoying the moment, realizing that they will miss the simple physical presence that baseball gives them. This is good Brosnian re-invention: ballplayers as humans with bursts of nostalgia and a sense of perspective.

Another way the author accomplishes both a sense of style and an original glimpse into the ballplayer's world is his inclusion of much baseball conversation, this "life blood" of the sport. If Brosnan has illustrated a good eye for description, he also has a good ear for dialogue. We suspect he has made no effort simply to capture the

vernacular but has, more often than not, re-structured heard conversations to bring out their inherent rhythms as well as to create a sense of unity and coherence. This is something that Williams and other att authors were not interested in accomplishing. In this example, the players are discussing the craft of pitching--oddly enough since Brosnan had reported earlier that "{B}ullpen conversations cover the gambit of male bull session. Sex, religion, politics, sex; Full circle. Occasionally, the game--or business of baseball intrudes" (25). Here they are in Milwaukee, far from the prying eyes of their martial manager, Fred Hutchinson, discussing how to pitch successfully to the great Hank Aaron:

'What about Aaron?' asked Powers.
 'Knock him down, first pitch,' said Pete.
 'Curve him away,' said Williard.
 'Jam him good. He'll swing at the ball a foot inside sometimes,' said Brooks.
 'Change up on him once every trip,' I suggested.
 'Boys, I think Pena just struck him out on a spitter,' said Deal.
 'Good pitch,' we agreed (259).

In this passage you can see the hand of the author as he arranges the dialogue to highlight the confidence of each pitcher in his solution, the complexity of the art of pitching, especially to a talented hitter like Aaron, and the progression toward the ironic ending.

In another instance of dialogue, Brosnan carefully juxtaposes speech with description to make points about the diversity of some players' musical interests and about the relationship between white and black players, who, in 1959,

were still quite tentative with one another:

'I try to make every scene, man,' I said.
'You dig
Brubeck?'

Lawrence nodded. 'How about Thelonius Monk?
And Oscar Petersen?'

'Crazy,' I agreed. 'Mulligan. Chet Baker.
Kai Winding.'

'Yeah,' he said. 'Miles Davis. Charlie
Parker.'

'Hold it, man. We're talking two different
languages, Brooks,' I said. 'Do you only listen
to Negro musicians?' This was the first time I'd
talked seriously to Lawrence. Best to find out
if he was stuffy about being a Negro. Some of
them are. Why they feel they have to be better
than us I don't know. Lawrence studied me
carefully, his lips pursed, his eyes slightly
closed. Then he grinned. 'You can't agitate me,
Brosnan. We're talking jazz, right? You like
Brubeck; I say Monk. But I dig Brubeck, too.' 'I
dig music, myself,' I said. 'Don't make much
difference to me what color the player. You
can't color the music.'

'Now you are trying to give me an argument,' he
said. I tossed my chewed-out cud of tobacco into
the outfield. 'We'll have to make it at the
Blackhawk some night next trip. Diz will be in
town.'

'Good,' he said. 'Let's do that' (179-180).

This long passage illustrates a number of impressive points
about Brosnan's voice and his writing.

We have previously observed Brosnan attempting to get
along in at least two worlds, that of a ballplayer and the
intellectual world peopled by S. I. Hayakawa. Now he seems
to have adopted the speech of a 1950's Beat-style jazz
musician, using lingo like "crazy," "man," "dig," and "make
the scene." We have not heard Brosnan speak this way before
in the book. Two ballplayers discussing the jazz scene in
Beat lingo is not something the baseball world had heard
before. Brosnan wants us to hear it as he re-invents the

character of the ballplayer into a more complex, worldly, multifaceted one. Furthermore, there is irony as he wonders "why they (blacks) feel they have to be better than us" as well as an apparent contradiction in his attitude towards Brooks Lawrence. On one hand, he seems almost to be patronizing his black colleague with the jazz dialect, but he then calls him on a possible reverse racism as he asks Lawrence if he listens "only to Negro musicians." The two potential friends, separated by centuries of racial attitudes, brought together by two common loves, size each other up, Lawrence with "his lips pursed, his eyes slightly closed." Brosnan, who despite his intellectual status chews huge amounts of tobacco just like any illiterate Charlie Dressen, tosses his "cud" out onto the field in a symbol of released tension, and the two make a tentative date to go hear Dizzy Gillespie, a black musician. It is an intricate moment, full of social and human tensions that characterize these very real people as they make an effort to co-exist. And it is well written, carefully structured to achieve its fullest effects.

One more brief example demonstrates the rhetorical unity of Brosnan's work. I have said earlier that, since baseball is so conversational, so anecdotal, rhetorical principles like coherence and especially unity are often neglected. The usual connecting thread consists of the fact that the book is about this player playing this game of baseball, without any worry about where the story may end up. Brosnan does worry,

often creating carefully unified sections. The overall organizational pattern is, of course, the season, and so chapter headings are dates followed by the American city the team happens to be in at the time, for example "July 22 -- Milwaukee" (214). In this section, Brosnan begins with this generalization: "Some days just add to the confusion. They're full of questions that can't be answered" (214). He then begins the narrative action of this section with engaging questions: "Which way is it to county stadium" (Brosnan gets lost on his way); "Did Jim Hearn cry when he heard that he had lost another game yesterday" (a point about the obsessive attention to statistics and won-lost records); "Where are you going to manage next year, Clyde (a human interest question about the peripatetic nature of the sport). Then, the narrative shifts to the game itself, a close affair which hinges on one confrontation between Reds pitcher O'Toole and Brave batter Bobby Avila. We then get another question:

'How do you pitch to him, Clyde?' I asked.
 'Hutch knows him. He was in the other league with him, I think.'
 Hutchinson came out of the dugout to talk to O'Toole, clapped him on the back, and walked back to the bench. O'Toole threw Avila a high fast ball and he hit it over the left field fence.
 How do you pitch Avila? (215).

And here the chapter ends, with another question, one which, at this particular moment can't be answered. Thus the section completes a full circle. Brosnan has created a nicely unified rhetorical moment here; it adds to the overall

character he is building of himself not merely as a ballplayer but as a writer who happens to play baseball for a living and has decided to explore some of its more complicated angles. He sounds most like a writer when penning a letter to his wife the night before the first game of the season, trying to put his thoughts in order and alleviate the pre-game jitters: "It's better to write about it. Let the sight of words console my nerves" (58).

Brosnan's achievement with The Long Season has not been duplicated precisely; those who have spent time honing their literary skills at the expense of their pitching talents don't often make the big leagues any more. Furthermore, there have been few athletes in any sport with the intellectual dedication that Brosnan demonstrates. But he has expanded the horizons of the art considerably, widening both the available subject matter as well as the character and image of ballplayers, who in Brosnan's hands can be as diverse and multi-layered as the rest of the population. Brosnan has made the subject of baseball an experience to be examined as something more than just "my turn at bat." In doing this, he has violated the codes described by Tom House earlier in the chapter, but Brosnan has done so deliberately, with considerable literary skill and sincerity. He created portraits of players as we suspect they often are, often bored, somewhat profane, prejudiced, angry at authority, cantankerous, petty, but also witty, playful, occasionally charming, drunk, boorish, lyrical. And he also re-invented

the persona of the author -- detached, curious, interested in the game as a complicated entity. Moreover, Brosnan did all this in 1960, when the American culture was just beginning to feel the stirrings of upheaval that would ignite the later part of the decade. Into this new age jumped Jim Bouton, less intellectual than Brosnan but, like his decade, more political, more confrontational. His subject was baseball as well, this time as a tyrannical institution not unlike the ones that kids in the streets were shouting against. His stories, spoken into a microphone but solely of his own coinage, created a new character for ballplayers which helped bring the younger crowds back to the ballparks in the early seventies, and these stories represent a wildly distinct element of proseball: profane, realistic, humorous, and highly appealing.

If Brosnan is somewhat of an anomaly, both in terms of his period and his re-arrangement of a standard form, Bouton, although a maverick by baseball standards, has written the perfect book for the year 1970, when Ball Four was first published. It is similar to The Long Season in a number of ways. It re-invents images, both of ballplayers in general and of the author/player. Although a chronicle of one player's specific season--ten years after Brosnan's year--its true subject is baseball itself, a sport which compels its participants in a number of ways. And it violates the baseball code House spoke of, that "family" business will not leave the clubhouse. But Bouton does all of these things in

a far noisier and frantic fashion, especially the code violation, which he even quotes directly while flaunting its principles (219). He's almost too hot to touch. Donald Hall, who grants at least a sentence or two to each writer in his catalogue in "Proseball," says simply "[T]hen there was Jim Bouton..." (111).

According to Aristotle, in a rhetorical situation, "[T]he speakers are made trustworthy by thee things...intelligence, virtue, and good will" (The Rhetoric 150). Considering that both Bouton and Brosnan were asking readers to accept very different approaches to a rhetorical form they had gotten quite used to, it was vital for these writers to establish themselves as trustworthy speakers. We have seen how Brosnan relied on his intelligence, the first element in the formula. He also made points towards establishing good will through his introduction, in which he professes a noble purpose--to describe the daily life of a ballplayer "the way I saw it" for fan edification, and in the process to expunge the unrealistic impression most fans have of the baseball world. If Brosnan is an intellectual whose rhetorical purpose is objective examination, Bouton establishes himself as a liberal thinker sympathetic to the youth movement of his day, wholly out of place in the mostly right-wing, conservative establishment of Corporate Baseball.

One of the most effective elements of Ball Four is the constant tension between Bouton's personality and the image Tom House mentioned that baseball expects its players to

portray. On another level, this conflict can be seen as a struggle between someone who truly loves playing the great game of baseball and the corporate baseball officials who attempt to control players before granting them the opportunity to play. This conflict is evident in the introduction, written in the fall of 1968, as the author tries to justify hanging on as his skills diminish:

Right now, the fact is that I love the game, love to play it, I mean. ...There's a lot to being in the game, a lot to having those dreams. A lot of it is foolishness too, grown men being serious about a boy's game. There's pettiness in baseball, and meanness and stupidity beyond belief, and everything else bad that you'll find outside of baseball. I haven't enjoyed every single minute of it and when I've refused to conform to some of the more Neanderthal aspects of baseball thinking I've been an outcast. Yet there's been a tremendous lot of good in it for me and I wouldn't trade my years in it for anything I can think of (xiii).

Bouton establishes himself as a virtuous speaker here partially through his revelation of this inner conflict-- his true love for the game versus his distaste for the "Neanderthal" mode of thought he must contend with if he hopes to continue.

Another way Bouton makes himself trustworthy is through his sympathy with the youth causes dear to his probable audience. To the youth towards whom he was aiming this rhetoric, these sentiments constituted both intelligence and good will. The best example of this occurs during a road trip to Oakland, where Bouton and his friend Gary Bell go out to the Berkeley campus to watch the radical Sixties show in person. Aware of how he and Bell, both sporting crew cuts,

must look at the demonstration, Bouton says:

So some of these people look odd, but you have to think that anybody who goes through life thinking only of himself with the kinds of things that are going on in this country and Viet Nam, well, he's the odd one. Gary and I are the crazy ones. I mean, we're concerned with getting Oakland Athletics out. ...These kids, though, are genuinely concerned about what's going on around them. ...So they wear long hair and sandals and have dirty feet. I can understand why. ...So I wanted to tell everybody, 'Look, I'm with you, baby. I understand. Underneath my haircut I really understand that you're doing the right thing" (145-56).

In terms of the appeal to a newer, younger audience, this may be the most important passage in the entire book. Bouton was astute enough to realize that what he had to say and the manner in which he said it was surely going to offend a sizable number of older readers more used to Ted Williams and his "Gee whiz, I've always been a problem guy" approach.

On the other hand, there was a brand new audience, ready for the plucking. Columbia University demonstrator and author James Simon Kunen writes in The Strawberry Statement of attending a Red Sox game, which he has trouble enjoying, since he imagines the crown is staring at him. He wishes they would stop, since "I was there for the baseball too" (92). The Viet Nam War was football; Nixon was a Redskins fan who sent the coaches play, but baseball was still there, peaceful, lyric, democratic baseball. You could take your long hair and sandals out to the ballpark, pay one lousy buck to sit in the bleachers, smoke some pot, groove on the high pops, the clean white ball flashing against the deep blue, and all that green, green field. Bouton speaks directly to

this audience, creating a virtuous, caring voice, empathetic, promising to join them as soon as he gets the baseball out of his blood for good. As he says in the introduction: "You can always be a teacher or a social worker when you've reached thirty-five. That gives me five more years and I'm going to use them all" (xiii). And on a personal note, I believe they listened. I have few friends my own age and who are avid baseball fans who can't recite a passage or two from Ball Four.

Besides speaking directly to his younger audience, Bouton's rather blunt criticism of Corporate Baseball naturally appealed to the young and made Bouton somewhat of a rebel hero. In fact, this is an integral part of the persona he creates for himself, almost a David and Goliath image--the wronged little pitcher standing up against the giant, club-wielding owners. The true subject of the book thus becomes the various aspects of baseball which Bouton helps his readers to separate, analyze, criticize, and appreciate. Like The Long Season, we get a nice, detailed, and realistic look at the life of a major league team--not as glamorous as we had been led to believe by more traditional books. And like Ted Williams, Bouton spends much of the book battling opposing forces. Only in Ball Four, the enemy usually resides in the owner's box, not the press box.

The book begins immediately with contract struggles, which seem to have followed the author around wherever he played. That he had to fight the owners and general managers

for every thin dime came as a surprise to him, as he reports:

When I started out in 1959 I was ready to love the baseball establishment. In fact, I thought big business had all the answers to any question I could ask. As far as I was concerned clubowners were benevolent old men who wanted to hang around the locker room and were willing to pay a price for it, so there would never be any problem about getting paid decently, ..That was, of course, a mistake (4).

Bouton chronicles his salary struggles as he goes from making the \$7,000 rookie minimum in 1962 to \$30,000 after a successful year in 1964, back down to \$22,000 with his new team, the expansion Seattle Pilots. The struggles are told in an amusing way, with management forever the villain, especially Yankee General Manager Ralph Houk. As Bouton sums up, "The bastards really fight you" (5).

Later in the book, Bouton discusses the relationship between owners and players, which used to be totally one-sided, resembling more master/slave than employer/employee. Bouton feels that a certain amount of brainwashing can go on in this area, especially during baseball's first organized labor strike in 1969:

And many others [owners] were willing to take a strike and use triple-A players and flush the game right down the drain if necessary. These are the same guys who want us to think they're sportsmen who run the game out of civic pride. They're not in this thing for money. They're not. We know because that's what they tell us. And we believe. Like Clete Boyer once told me that Dan Topping, former Yankee owner, was all for the players and a wonderful man. I asked him how he knew. And he said, 'Ralph Houk told me' (196).

We see this attitude in action again when the commissioner makes a visit to the Pilot's clubhouse. Before he enters the

room, manager Joe Schultz announces forcefully: "Okay you guys, you can listen. But don't ask any questions" (56). The commissioner then speaks about what a wonderful game baseball truly is: "One of the things that none of us should do, he said, is knock the game. ...In other words, don't say anything bad about baseball" (56). Bouton reports this speech without comment, not mentioning its relevance to his rhetorical endeavor.

In fact, after Ball Four's publication, this same commissioner, Bowie Kuhn, called the author in and confronted him with this charge -- that he has damaged the integrity of the game. As Bouton records the conversation in his second book, I'm Glad You Didn't Take It Personally: "The Commissioner's second point was that he was shocked and disappointed and disgusted...he said, thirdly, that this was very bad for baseball and what did I have to say for myself?" (69-70). This becomes one of the book's major questions, whether Bouton is harming the game with his journal or whether, by simply writing the truth and uncovering the real villains, he has done baseball a service. Again, as he says in his second book about Ball Four, "I think it gives an accurate view of what baseball and baseball players are like. As a result, I think people will be more interested in baseball, not less" (70). Bouton does not feel it necessary to use Brosnan's constant disclaimer: "This is the way I saw it." If there is a one-line summation of Bouton's operating principle it is a line he quotes from comedian Lennie Bruce:

"You've got to fight the madness" (178).

If Ball Four paints a villainous picture of those who rule the baseball establishment, something Brosnan only hinted at, Bouton's portraits of daily life and the typical amusements of average ballplayers are often shocking, profane, and usually quite comic. "Drugs, sex, and Rock and Roll" is a phrase used often to describe the lifestyle of the counterculture. In Ball Four we find at least two elements of the formula quite prevalent. Drugs are a common presence in the baseball world, not the mind-expanding kind that blossomed so in this decade, but endurance-enhancing pills called "greenies." Bouton quotes teammate Don Mincher on how many players use this drug: "'Hell, a lot more than half...Just about the whole Baltimore team takes them. Most of the Tigers. Most of the guys on this club. And that's just what I know for sure'" (212). This information is not really meant to shock, and is often handled casually, humorously:

We were kidding in the bullpen about how many greenies the Reds must have been taking during this pennant race and just then there was a ball hit into short right that Pete Rose made a great diving run at and caught on a short hop. 'Five more milligrams and he'd have had it' Tom Griffin said (329).

Besides being drug users, the players are often portrayed as sexually active, and not always with the partners assigned to them by law. As one road trip was about to end, the players were all talking about "how much we'd been getting on the road. And as we were getting ready to leave the plane and

dash into the loving arms of our waiting wives, Pagliaroni said, very loud, 'Okay, all you guys, act horny'" (246). IN another instance, outfielder Jim Gosger hides in a closet while his roommate "made out on the bed with some local talent. ...At the height of the activity on the bed, local talent, moaning, says, 'Oh darling, I've never done it **that** way before.' Whereupon Gosger sticks his head out, drawls 'Yeah, sure,' and retreats into the closet" (190). The social mores of 1959 allowed Jim Brosnan only to report that sex was a popular topic among ballplayers; by 1970 Bouton is able to write on the subject with much more of that "keen eye for telling detail" that so impressed Giamatti.

So in Ball Four, Jim Bouton creates an authorial voice with whom the raging Sixties youth can perhaps identify, and pictures a lifestyle which should sound somewhat familiar to the audience as well. But perhaps the single most appealing aspect of this book is its humor. The players are pictured as sometimes petty, often puerile, frequently profane, but always looking for a good joke to pull or a story to tell. The humor runs the gamut from long, involved tales to quick comebacks and funny lines. After being told that the players had to take batting practice at 10:30 A.M. for the next day's game, catcher Jim Pagliaroni replies, "'Ten-thirty? I'm not even done throwing up at that hour'" (185). On the subject of vomit, opposing players claim that an eccentric pitcher name Moe Drabowski "was sick on the bus the other night and puked up a panty girdle" (179). This is the same Drabowski

who once ordered Chinese dinners from the bullpen phone. Bouton is fond of what he calls "the banter in the back of the bus." There is about this dialogue, according to the author, "a zaniness...and earthiness, and often a quality of non sequitur that I find hilarious. Here an example from our trip to the Washington airport. Greg Goosen: 'Hey, does anyone here have any Aqua Velva?' Fred Talbot: 'No, but I gotta take a shit, if that'll help'" (297). Later Ray Oyler proudly announced: "'Boys, I had all the ingredients for a great piece of ass last night -- plenty of time, and a hardon. All I lacked was a broad" (299). The constant profanity in the book serves it well, adding an element of realism. After all, we suspect from our own experience that this is how athletes talk, and what they really talk about. Ted Williams -- he of the numerous "Gees," and "Oh boys" -- figures in one of Bouton's stories which casts a slightly different light on The Kid's verbal proclivities:

In the bullpen tonight Jim Pagloaroni was telling us how Ted Williams, when he was still playing, would psyche himself up for a game during batting practice, usually early practice before the fans or reporters got there. He'd go into the cage, wave his bat at the pitcher and start screaming at the top of his voice, 'My name is Ted fucking Williams and I'm the greatest hitter in baseball.'
 He'd swing and hit a line drive.
 'Jesus H. Christ Himself couldn't get me out.'
 And he'd hit another.
 Then he'd say, 'Here comes Jim Bunning, Jim fucking Bunning and that little shit slider of his.'
 Wham!
 'He doesn't think he's gonna get me out with that shit.'
 Blam!
 'I'm Ted fucking Williams' (231-32).

The profanity of this passage is essential to the appeal of Bouton's Ball Four. He knew his audience, sensed the changing currents, took advantage of newly allowed freedoms. For people like Bowie Kuhn, it was "bad for baseball" to present things of this nature, players talking dirty, acting dirty, puking up the strange stuff of their road lives. But Kuhn was out of touch; that college-age bleacher crowd much preferred Bouton's ranting TF Williams to The Kid's own, far tamer version. Ball Four tapped a new source and opened the Seventies to a newer audience. As the first realistic baseball diary of its kind, it should receive far more credit than it has for its place in the canon of contemporary baseball rhetoric.

In this chapter, three books by what Giamatti calls "enacters of the tale" have revealed significant if largely overlooked, certainly under-analyzed, contributions to the golden age of baseball writing. These player-autobiographies are interesting rhetorically and thus germane to our purpose because they were all engendered as responses, reactions to the image baseball players were supposed to conform to. Ted Williams, although the author of a more traditional ATT, creates an interesting twist on the rhetorical triangle, switching from subject--written about--to writer writing about those who initially wrote about him. He does this with some passion, a good sense for an interesting anecdote, and he offers his ready-made audience some original glimpses into his subject--Ted Williams. The book adds little to the

genre of player autobiography besides its necessary inclusion in the subgenre mentioned above, and its interest as a rhetorical oddity of sorts.

What makes Jim Brosnan's The Long Season and Jim Bouton's Ball Four stand apart from the rest of the extant canon of baseball books by participants--the enactors--is the establishment of the author's character apart from their baseball accomplishments. We do not read the accounts of these two relief pitchers because we are overwhelmed with curiosity as to how they achieved their amazing success; their careers furnish opportunities for reflection rather than glory. When we read the books of Hall-of-Famers like Williams, we are likely to be disappointed, since their achievements cannot be explained adequately, even with assistance. But Brosnan and Bouton establish themselves as new voices with unique perspectives, intelligent, virtuous, perhaps profane but, we suspect, genuine as they set out to illuminate a subject vibrant with public curiosity. Since neither writer had the kind of ready-made audiences a Cobb or a Williams had, they had to create the audience for this kind of prose, familiar in its anecdotal quality, new in tone, thesis, its independence from the tired traditions of inarticulate athletes.

Their voices are not the same, however, and their books have important differences. Brosnan's voice is detached, unemotional, a stance he considered original since the image we often have of the athlete is one of a whooping, whomping,

cheering man. As he writes of this discrepancy in his book:

The professional life, moreover, grinds and polishes the emotions to a fine, hard core--the professional spirit. Amateur baseball fans may resent, at times, the apparent lack of constant, noisy enthusiasm that is one part--but only a part--of athletic spirit (xii).

Thus the coherence in The Long Season comes from the tension created between athlete and observer as Brosnan struggles to re-invent the athlete. Bouton, on the other hand, seems to stress emotional commitment. In perhaps the most quoted line in player autobiographies, he concludes that "you spend a good piece of your life gripping a baseball and in the end it turns out that it was the other way around all the time" (398). The coherence in Ball Four comes from this tension--of author struggling with baseball the game as opposed to baseball the business. Bouton finds one irresistible while the other is, in the words of pitcher/PHD Mike Marshall, "an Ass" (260). Bouton is less detached than Brosnan; he is in love with the game, and this alone, once his readers understand it, establishes the essential good will necessary to facilitate the reception of his rhetorical message.

Having heard from three significant player/authors, we can turn our attention to those for whom the tale is told, the audiences of the game. There are critical differences in angles of perception between participants and the perceivers. Brosnan, writing an essay for The Atlantic Monthly, opines: "Baseball as a ritual has no deep and mystical meaning. It depends upon personalities to maintain the fanatic fervor of

the fancy" (70). In the following chapter, three "personalities" who are not players use still other rhetorical strategies to see, or perhaps create, the mystical meanings that Brosnan could not see in baseball.

Chapter 3

Essays

In the previous chapter, we considered the rhetorical characteristics of player autobiographies, in particular two whose authorship lies solely with the players in question. I feel that this is a neglected area in other attempts to account for and catalogue types of baseball writing; too often the tale as told by the players is dismissed as belonging to Hall's "att" category and thus not an entirely serious undertaking. But as I have said, the contributions of Bouton and Brosnan to helping create a new intellectual audience better prepared to receive this golden age of baseball writing should not be ignored, nor their fine efforts taken too lightly. Still another neglected area is the baseball essay. Often cited but rarely analyzed, the notable works of these writers are often given some credit for elevating the level of "proseball," but this work is taken for granted, appreciated as surprisingly lyrical, reflective, useful to the quest for baseball knowledge as distinct from mere baseball information. But the only element of these essays usually discussed is style, and thus they appear merely as pastorals, lilted tributes to the imaginative play on the peaceful, verdant fields below. This is a misconception, and I would like to consider three

essayists whose work exhibits more than poetic styles, revealing instead an intensity of human conflict through their writings about baseball.

In his introduction to his volume of collected contemporary baseball poems titled Hummers, Knucklers, and Slow Curves, Don Johnson discusses "our need to transform a game meant to be played by eighteen players on a large field" (xix). This is an interesting and useful phrase -- "our need to transform" -- and may well be a kind of cornerstone on which to settle our exploration of baseball essays. In an essay much quoted already in this text, Hall's "Proseball: Sports, Stories, and Style," the poet admits to being tired of constant queries as to what specifically integral to the nature of baseball engenders so much literary effort, but he does proffer that "baseball provides harmless dissipation for those of us who need an occasion to be less serious or ambitious or depressed than we usually are." Two paragraphs later he refers to baseball as that "clean, well-lighted place that keeps the terrors away until dawn" (117). Both of these notions carry a desperate quality, something not altogether voluntary, rooted somewhere deeper than the writer/observer's child-like appreciation for a good game of ball.

In considering the baseball essay, I have chosen those pieces which seem most to exhibit this "need to transform" that Johnson mentions, for these pieces are far more dramatic than other forms of baseball reporting. In addition, they

represent a kind of synthesis of all manner of baseball literature. As we noted in the previous chapter, players have, on occasion, exhibited their own "need to transform," to alter an image, to create new audiences, and to insinuate themselves into the wide world of rhetorical baseball. In this chapter, we shall observe the essayist as he adopts the game to his numerous needs, writing as much about his response to the games as about the quality of play itself.

I mentioned synthesis in the previous paragraph; it seems clear that baseball essays are comprised of bits and pieces of a number of forms. The baseball essayist is not merely a reporter, although he attends and observes specific games and describes key moments. In this light, we must remember Jerome Klinkowitz's call for rhetorical attention to "the unadorned game" which he feels is a vital characteristic of contemporary baseball fiction. Leave the myth and religion down on the field, he seems to be saying. The game itself and its numerous and complex series of actions can supply all that a writer needs. We can see this at work in John Updike's poem, "Tao in the Yankee Stadium Bleachers:"

The Inner Journey seems unjudgeably long
 when small boys purchase cups of ice
 and, distant as a paradise,
 experts, passionate and deft,
 wait while Berra flies to the left (449).

There is religion at the ball park, and deep thought, but it is not more crucial than what the batter does on the field. True, there is poetry in the baseball essay -- later in this chapter we will consider an essay by the poet Updike -- but,

as we will observe, it is poetic not simply because of its metre or high regard for pastoral descriptions.

Baseball essayists are not simply biographers either, although practically every endeavor will feature portraits of ballplayers, usually at some interesting juncture of their careers. As George Will writes in Men at Work, "baseball is a game of failure, and hence a constantly humbling experience" (1-2). There are, for example, several good essays dealing with the topic of life after baseball for the player who has known practically nothing else for over two decades. This theme can also be used by the poets, is popular with them, in fact, as can be seen in Rodney Torreson's poem about former Yankee Bobby Murcer:

After your ascent into the
broadcast booth, then higher
into the rites
of the front office, your soul still roams the field,
combs it for hits
that never got through (Johnson 109).

Our earliest poetic memories may contain Houseman's "To an Athlete Dying Young," we may have winced at the sight of a crippled Mickey Mantle, a confused and mortal Willie Mays, heroes who stayed around too long. As we will see in an essay by Roger Angell, there is poignancy in failure.

I have been using lines of verse and references to poems here to call attention to the poetic quality of good contemporary baseball essayists, the best of whom combine straight and accurate reporting and talents for biography with the poet's sensibility in order to create their art.

Although this poetic sensibility is usually manifested in two distinct areas -- allusion and metaphor -- there is often a poetic rhythm about this writing as well, as this line from Updike well illustrates: "It was for our last look that ten thousand of us had come" ("Hub Fans" 64). There is a preponderance of allusion in baseball essays. Updike labels the three stages of Ted Williams' career "Jason, Achilles, and Nestor;" Roger Angell titles his summary of the 1975 World Series, "Agincourt and After;" Roger Kahn begins his pursuit of the Brooklyn Dodgers by comparing himself to Nick Adams and Stephen Dedalus.

One of my personal favorites is Luke Salisbury's examination of the ongoing Red Sox failures in his quixotic book The Answer is Baseball: "We live in a Bill James age of analysis, in which our prejudices, intuitions, and memories are rigorously discredited with cold hard numbers, but how can one explain the Boston Red Sox without sounding like William Butler Yeats on the subject of gyres" (228). This is a very instructive quotation, using a contemporary reference to Sabremetrics guru Bill James to cast faint echoes of the other, more literally respectable William of the same name, and then finishing off with the Yeats allusion. This illustrates the baseball essay in microcosm, where the straight ball can co-exist with heady poets in a perfectly coherent and unified piece. This phenomenon may have as much to do with audience as with writing style. If Bouton and Brosnan, considered in the previous chapter, were writing for

the more intellectually oriented baseball fan, so too is the baseball essayist.

As Kahn remarks in his essay "Intellectuals and Ballplayers:"

The romance between intellectuals and the game of baseball is, for the most part, one-sided to the point of absurdity. A large percentage of intelligent Americans evaluate the four hundred men who play major baseball as awesomely gifted demigods. A large percentage of the muscular four hundred rate intellectual several notches below umpires ("Intellectuals and Ballplayers," 342).

If we add to the "muscular four hundred" the fat four million --those rabid fans whose interests in intellectual pursuits equals that of the players they pay to watch and boo, we can clearly see that baseball essayists write for other intellectuals, heaping allusions and metaphors in an act of pure defiance, or perhaps to alleviate self-doubt, to justify the countless hours of emotional commitment to this boy's game. The essayists I will consider in this chapter seem not at all interested in Hall's "harmless dissipation" theory and are clearly more attracted to Johnson's "need to transform" their watched games into the stuff of fine and lyrical writing. Thus these writers are poets as well; their purpose is to examine aspects of baseball with a seriousness and attendant literary style they feel it deserves.

There are many examples of metaphors in the baseball essay. Descriptions of the parks themselves are often enhanced with this technique. For Roger Kahn in The Boys of Summer, "Ebbets Field was a narrow cockpit" (xi-xii). For

Updike in "Hub Fans Bid Kid Adieu," Fenway Park was "a lyric little handbox" (53). Roger Angell is especially adept at metaphor and simile, often employing them when describing the action of the field or the eccentric form of a particular player. Thus, he writes that in a crucial game between the Tigers and the Red Sox in 1967, "the hits flew through the night air like enraged deerflies;" later a Tiger pitcher is described as "working like a man opening a basket of cobras" ("The Flowering and Subsequent Deflowering of New England," 31). Angell is at his best when in the presence of the Cuban whirlwind -- ageless Luis Tiant, whose amazing pitching motion Angell catalogues in stages as "Call the Osteopath...Out of the Woodshed...The Runaway Taxi...Falling off the Fence...The Slipper-Kick...The Low-Flying Plane" ("Agincourt and After," 295).

One final component of these essays, a borrowing from another genre, is drama. I mean the kind of dramatic action these writers generate by noting a tension between writer and event as they lose their journalistic objectivity and become involved in the events they have been sent to observe. To be sure, there is scenery -- usually the stadiums and locker rooms themselves, as when John Updike begins his classic essay with the above-cited description of Boston's Fenway Park. Furthermore, built-in plots are inherent in all sporting events. But much of the effective tension in these pieces comes as the writers resist immersion in the event or the spirit of a team in a pennant race, finally giving in and

penning a swirl of personal history, baseball fact and statistic, player persona, and game drama, mixed with the metaphors and allusions to plumb the mysteries of baseball. The contemporary baseball essay is a thing unto itself, a unique literary blend which breaks certain barriers as it takes us out to the old ball game in a brand new vehicle.

In this chapter, we will consider a seminal essay by John Updike, several pieces by Roger Angell, and one extraordinary effort by Jonathan Schwartz. There are others, of course, this being the golden age of baseball writing: the probing, factual, and intelligent Men at Work: The Craft of Baseball by George Will, Thomas Boswell's How Life Imitates the World Series, and more. I have left out Roger Kahn, whose work belongs in spirit but not in genre. His estimable The Boys of Summer has informed and influenced a number of contemporary writers, and his mixture of personal and baseball history is a critical element in the new baseball rhetoric, illustrated well in my last chapter by Don DeLillo's novella Pafko at the Wall, a book which owes a good deal to Kahn. And it is precisely this personal involvement of the writer, the working out of certain problems, the exhibition of this "need to transform" that has drawn me to the essays I have chosen. The sports world with its printed word has plenty of profiles; we are here interested in rhetorical illuminations, the deeper soul of this golden age.

John Updike's "Hub Fans Bid Kid Adieu" appeared first in The New Yorker in 1960. This fact points out the probable

irony of the catchy title, one more appropriate to an article in The Sporting News. The essay itself is an enigma and must have surprised its initial readers with its fusion of straight reporting, baseball exposition, classical references, and moving, lyrical passages. Typical New Yorker readers would have been more at home with the allusions than the intense personal involvement of the writer, however. The essay's stated subject is Ted Williams' last game at Fenway Park in Boston on the 28th of September, 1960, after a long and stormy career with the Red Sox. Williams' last at-bat in the major leagues is one of baseball's most cherished moments, even though it came not in the bright national focus of a world series but on a gray and empty day during an otherwise insignificant game between two teams going nowhere.

The relative anonymity of the situation becomes one aspect of Updike's praise for his subject, who for the author has always "radiated, from afar, the hard blue glow of high purpose" (50). Teddy Ballgame took his hitting seriously, no matter how meaningless the particular game, as he would on the day of Updike's visit: "Whenever Williams appeared at the plate...it was like having a familiar Leonardo appear in a shuffle of Saturday Evening Post covers. This man, you realized -- and here, perhaps, was the difference, greater than the difference in gifts -- really desired to hit the ball" (69). That Williams was capable of smashing his 521st home run on his last at-bat through the damp haze of the September afternoon is as much an aspect of his personality

as was his obstinate refusal to acknowledge the imploring cheers of the faithful ten thousand. Updike makes use of both the talent and the recalcitrance on his way to chronicling one of baseball's magic moments.

At least one reason the essay is effective is clearly, as Hall has suggested, its style: "the prose is so velvety one surrenders assent" ("Proseball" 119). The piece is a goldmine of quotable material. But there is also inherent in the essay a fine dramatic tension, engendered by a careful rendering of the necessary background, including descriptions of Williams' career, the ball park itself, and the September situation. Into this is woven a sense of yearning and premonition, the promise of a quick glimpse into the mystery at the center of baseball. Perhaps most importantly, the writer's active involvement with the event and its surroundings lends the necessary tension. This interesting mixture, velvet prose to describe a simple, sweaty game, a professional reporter becoming a character in his own piece are crucial features in the essay. It is, as Hall has claimed, the prototype for the contemporary baseball essay, postmodern and belletristic.

The essay opens as if a theatre audience had just experienced the dimming of the house lights and their first gasping glimpse of a magnificent set:

Fenway Park, in Boston, is a lyric little bandbox of a ballpark. Everything is painted green and seems in curiously sharp focus, like the inside of an old-fashioned peeping-type Easter egg. It was built in 1912 and rebuilt in 1934, and offers, as do most

Boston artifacts, a compromise between Man's Euclidean determinations and Nature's beguiling irregularities. Its right field is one of the deepest in the American League, while its left field is the shortest; the high left-field wall, three hundred and fifteen feet from home plate along the foul line, virtually thrusts its surface at right-handed hitters (52).

The passage is an excellent sample, containing as it does sharp images gained through use of metaphor, allusion, and straight factual information. These elements co-exist nicely in the contemporary world of baseball writing, serving to clarify information while opening up different levels. The references feed us backwards, but baseball is old, seems always to have been old, but has somehow always remained a part of its present. If the ghost of Ruth can haunt the Bosox still, Euclid can peep from over the wall at Fenway. The metaphors are usually far removed from the object being described - in this case an Easter egg for a ball park - but they too work to create an intensely felt as well as visualized portrait.

As the essay continues, the author appears in the narrative:

On the afternoon of Wednesday, September 28th, 1960, as I took a seat behind third base, a uniformed groundkeeper was treading the top of this wall, picking batting-practice home runs out of the screen, like a mushroom gatherer seen in Wordsworthian perspective on the verge of a cliff (52).

The writer, toting his poetic and pastoral luggage with him, will be not only a witness to this event but perhaps some sort of willing participant. Having established through literary allusion and crisp description his credentials for

the educated readers of The New Yorker, Updike shifts slightly to reassure those more prone to reading box scores than Coleridge that his baseball knowledge is sound as well. A brief history of Ted Williams follows, full of statistics, highlights, low moments, and the harsh words of some of Ted's journalistic detractors, especially a column on the very day in question by The Boston American's Huck Finnegan, charging that Williams was too selfish a player who never hit in the clutch. As Updike speculates, "whatever residue of truth remains of the Finnegan charge those of us who love Williams must transmute as best we can, in our own personal crucibles" (59). Here emerges one of the essay's major themes: that the subject is not simply Williams but Williams' relationship with those who watched him ply his trade for over 20 years.

Updike's participation in the event is critical; it gives perspective and intensity that greater distance would have failed to allow. Here is the essay's crucial and most dramatic moment, directly after the splendid Ted has homered off Jack Fisher of the Orioles on his last at-bat in the major leagues:

Like a feather caught in a vortex, Williams ran around the square of bases at the center of our beseeching screaming. He ran as he always ran out home runs -- hurriedly, unsmiling, head down, as if our praise were a storm of rain to get out of. He didn't tip his cap. Though we thumped, wept, and chanted 'We want Ted' for minutes after he hid in the dugout, he did not come back. Our noise for some seconds passes beyond excitement into a kind of immense open anguish, a wailing, a cry to be saved. But immortality is non-transferable. The papers said that the other players, and even the umpires on the field, begged him to come out and acknowledge us in

some way, but he refused. Gods do not answer letters (71).

The above passage works well on a number of levels. After the effective whirling feather simile, Updike creates a religious image through sounds -- "a wailing, a cry to be saved," and then finishes with a direct reference to Williams as a God figure. It creates an illuminating and intensely felt picture of the utterly disdainful and unsympathetic athlete surrounded by the emotional hurricane of the crowd, including Updike.

A conscious separation from the straight reporting is evident here, and not only in that the "papers said" something which was not available to Updike from his vantage point. Sports reporters, while gaining access to otherwise forbidden areas of possible knowledge in the press boxes and locker rooms, often lose palpable and emotional touch with the event they are covering. (In chapter four, we will see Don DeLillo using both the press box and the grandstand in his examination of another famous homer -- Bobby Thomson's.)

Donald Hall, in commenting on the difference between Updike's account of this moment and a more traditionally journalistic endeavor by Ed Lynn of Sport, opines that Lynn "hangs around the locker room and reports in workmanlike prose about a baseball player who is talented, sullen, complex, and definitely lower than the angels. Lynn's metaphors are less enthralling, his Ted Williams more credible" (119). But "Hub Fans Bid Kid Adieu: was not

intended solely for credibility at the local, factual level, and if Updike gets a bit carried away with his figurative language, especially in the passage cited above, he is no more carried away than was the crowd surrounding him, something Lynn may not have experienced in his view from the glassed-off and sterile press box, high above the smell of the crowd. Updike's purpose was also different; he meant not to simply report and describe but to connect -- writer to his subject, subject to the writer. This is an essay full of strained and yearning relationships.

A number of other specifics need mentioning in our investigation of this fine essay. Updike spends considerable time and talent sketching the various individual fans who happened to sit near him on that shared experience:

Two girls, one of them with pert buckteeth, and eyes as black as vest buttons. ...On my other side was one of those frowning, chestless young-old men who can frequently be seen, often wearing sailor hats. ...A young lady, with freckles and a depressed, dainty nose that by an optical illusion seemed to thrust her lips forward for a kiss. ...The crowd looked less like a weekly ballpark crowd than like folks you might find in Yellowstone National Park (65).

Updike devoted two full pages to descriptions of this sort, descriptions which both generalize the nature and overall impression of the crowd while isolating its most individual characteristics. (Again, we will see DeLillo make use of this element, as we begin to suspect the later novelist was quite familiar with Updike's classic essay.) This personalizing of the individual crowd members adds to Updike's sense of sharing the experience, both with his

fellow crowd members and, ultimately, with his readers: "It was for our last look that ten thousand of us had come" (64).

Also, as I stated before, the essay is full of quotable moments, many of which move us towards the heart of what Roger Angell calls "this mystery" at baseball's venerable center. My favorite of these lucid moments occurs just prior to the description of the final swing, and again involves the crowd:

Understand that we were a crowd of rational people. We knew that a home run cannot be produced at will; the right pitch must be perfectly met and luck must ride with the ball. Three innings before, we had seen a brave effort fail. The air was soggy, the season was exhausted. Nevertheless, there will always lurk, around the corner in a pocket of our knowledge of the odds, and indefensible hope, and this was one of those times, which you now and then find in sports, when a density of expectation hangs in the air and plucks an event out of the future (70).

The passage also echoes Updike's sense of community, of a shared experience, of the observers being connected to the event in some ineffable, yet palpable way. More than just boors with their beer, the crowd constitutes one of the many vital spokes that make up this mysterious wheel of baseball, and its subsequent attraction.

The significant features of "Hub Fans Bid Kid Adieu" are important enough to follow throughout our examination of the contemporary baseball essay. First, although the subject matter is baseball, the game or string of games are not reported in straight journalistic fashion. Certain moments of the game will probably be illuminated, fixed in time, like

Williams' last swing, but only so the major themes can be covered. No one grounds to short unless God is visible in the first sacker's stretch, or the ump's missed call compared with Herod's judgment. Second, the dramatic conflict is probably more than the built-in action of sports, man against man, man against game. Since the outcome is probably known, like Greek tragedy, the interest and momentum is gathered in the telling. Teddy Ballgame's sullen refusal to be loved one last time is the single most dramatic moment in Updike's essay. Third, the essay is as much about how we view these moments in these games as it is about the games themselves. The crowd is as much a character as the players, as is the vital audience in any rhetorical situation. Fourth, the characters portrayed need, more than their prodigious athletic prowess, to suggest themselves as subjects to writers. Rather than create "rhapsodic tributes to the game's giants," Don Johnson suggests that these writers "tend to take a darker look and to focus on more local conditions" (xix). The problematic side of Williams' psyche and his troubled relationship with his city, both fans and press, make him a good subject. Finally, as Hall has pointed out, the writing need not be "workmanlike" but can and should be metaphoric, full of images, allusions, anything the writer can bring to bear for his exploration.

There has been a tendency in the past few years of writing about baseball writing to lump Roger Angell and Roger Kahn together, or at least to speak of them in breaths hardly

far apart. Both Don Johnson and Donald Hall use them in the same sentence in their summaries of baseball prose. Besides the similarities of name, they both published books with similar titles: Kahn's The Boys of Summer in 1971 and Angell's The Summer Game in 1970. Both are High Bellettristic, both seek to plumb the mysteries of the game, both are intellectuals with an inordinate attachment to a phenomenon that their titles imply to be juvenile. Even the titles of their subsequent publication were similar: Kahn's A Season in the Sun and Angell's Five Seasons. Kahn is not technically an essayist, preferring book-length non-fiction, although the introduction to Boys of Summer has been anthologized as an essay in numerous places. Kahn is too important to ignore completely, and I note his probably influence on practically all of the writers I am considering from here on in. Even so, I will focus on the baseball essays of Roger Angell, perhaps the best known baseball writer of the last twenty years.

Angell's method is to write two long pieces for The New Yorker each year; then, when he has enough, he collects them in one volume. His essays are usually one of two forms: a summation of the season past, or a profile of some specific and interesting figure or phenomenon in the baseball world. Angell may be the essential baseball writer in that he writes often about each season's particular events and dramas. Unlike Updike, he is a baseball writer. He is there not just for the cherished moments but for blowouts and laughers

alike. He tries to put each session in some sort of learned and comprehensive perspective with each essay. And since he is in it for the long haul, he has moved through different levels of baseball appreciation until he seems able to draw conclusions and perceptions from the ball he sees that the rest of us are incapable of. Accused by Don Johnson of being a part of the tradition which writes rhapsodies in tribute to the game's great players, Angell is hardly that, though he admits he will "go on watching the game and to take pleasure in its scarcely diminished pleasures" (Five Seasons 9). Angell is "rhapsodic" only as he searches for the center of the mystery he perceives baseball to hold -- "to pursue my private discoveries of the beauties and complications of this old sport" (FS 8). His subjects are not always the glorious success stories; more often than not he locates the quirkish, the forgotten, the failed side of the game. However, he writes always with one abiding conviction: that there is an entity, alive, conscious, reflective, called baseball, and all his better pieces are attempts to focus on one specific aspect of this game in order to illuminate the whole. As he writes in "The Interior Stadium" concerning the 1968 World Series, "It was something about the levels and demands of the sport we had seen -- as if baseball itself had somehow surpassed the players and the results. It was the baseball that won" (Sport Inside Out 155).

There is one important distinction between "Hub Fans Bid Kid Adieu" and the writings of Roger Angell. Updike seems to

stress the event at the center of his essay as a thing to be shared, one that bespeaks community, with possible religious and certainly social implications, Angell seems to prefer the player in isolation, fixed as in a photograph so the writer can achieve distance, perspective, proportion. Angell's pieces are not as noisy as Updike's; there is a joy in them but it is a quieter, calmer pleasure, the one taken from a last look at a ballpark long after the last out has been made. Typical is his description of the fans at Fenway after the seventh game of the 1967 World Series in his essay "1967: The Flowering and Subsequent Deflowering of New England:"

I ducked up one of the runways for a last look around Fenway Park, and discovered several thousand fans still sitting in the sloping stands around me. They sat there quietly, staring out through the half darkness at the littered, empty field and the big wall and the bare flagpoles. They were mourning the Red Sox and the end of the great season" (37).

Typical of Angell's baseball essays is the feeling of a somewhat lonely, quiet moment of mourning not just for an agonizing loss but for the death of the season, the gray thought that no more ball will be played here for six months.

Angell's essays do not preclude the kind of communal sharing so appealing to Updike, not by any means. As James Memmott explains in his insightful essay on Angell's writing: "though the very space and nature of baseball reinforce the view that men are isolated from one another, the game also provides the opportunity for men to be brought together through shared feelings, feelings which are irresistible and spontaneous and potentially recollectable" (161). For

Angell, the most appealing image in "Hub Fans" would be the figure of Williams caught "like a feather in a vortex," rounding his last four bases in solitude and silent contempt. Furthermore, it is the ability to remember such an image which interests Angell most.

In "The Interior Stadium," Angell's most celebrated essay, he explores and explains baseball's relationship to time and memory. He even has instructions, a kind of a how-to process, by which we may gain entry into this theory:

Sit quietly in the upper stand and look at the field. Half close your eyes against the sun, so that the players recede a little, and watch the movements of baseball. ...and we see now that all movement in baseball in a convergence toward fixed points -- the pitched ball toward the plate, the thrown ball toward the right angles of the bases, the batted ball toward the as yet undrawn but already visible point on congruence with either the ground or a glove (156).

Angell believes that because of this phenomenon, which he calls baseball's "clean lines," key moments of games "can be restored in retrospect...the absolutely distinct inner vision we retain of that hitter, that eager base-runner, of however long ago." This is Angell's "Interior Stadium" theory, that baseball's unique arithmetic and geometry help to allow an intensity of recollection which can work at all times, even or especially when tarps of ice glaze the frozen infield. And there are numerous benefits to participating in this mental activity, since Angell believes that "by thinking about baseball like this -- by playing it over, keeping it warm in a cold season -- we begin to make discoveries. With luck, we may even penetrate some of its mysteries" (148).

Along with metaphysical considerations which have certainly raised the level of baseball discourse to dizzying new heights, Angell has also helped solidify the notion that this sport is an apt subject for rhetorical discovery, that a writer could learn life's deeper lessons by writing about baseball as well as he could if his subject were, say, the homeless, the obsessed, the tragic or a murdered president. In fact, some of Angell's most engaging pieces, when they are not overtly metaphysical, are portraits of baseball's version of the homeless, the obsessed, the tragic. As baseball is a game of failure, it allows ample opportunity for discoveries along this line. Angell has nicely chronicled the obsessed in a piece called "Three for the Tigers," an endearing portrait of three life-long followers of the Detroit baseball club. He follows the tragic impulse to the door of Fenway Park in two seasonal entries entitled "The Flowering and Subsequent Deflowering of New England" and the later Boston disaster of 1975, "Agincourt and After." Furthermore, his study of a baseball failure is perhaps his most riveting profile.

In the world of professional baseball, ultimately financial despite its other attributes, homelessness translates into being released, cut adrift by all teams when time removes talent and all usefulness has vanished. This can happen at any time, as is marvellously and painfully chronicled by Angell's portrait of ex-Pirate pitcher Steve Blass, who went from World Series hero to the waiver line in

less than four years at what should have been the prime of his career. Blass, a sinker ball pitcher who used an excellent boring, cutting fastball to jam right handed batters, simply and suddenly lost the ability to throw strikes. As Angell reports:

Of all the mysteries that surround the Steve Blass story, perhaps the most mysterious is the fact that his collapse is unique. There is no other player in recent baseball history -- at least none with Blass' record and credentials -- who has lost his form in such a sudden and devastating fashion and been totally unable to recover ("Gone for Good" 248).

It is obvious why this story caught Angell's attention: it possesses that element of mystery which will heighten our appreciation for the depth of the sport. Angell follows Blass as he relives his past glories, coaches his son's little league team, adjusts, attempts to find words for his unexplainable fall from grace and ability. The piece ends with Blass, in animated fashion, describing what it felt like to pitch effectively in the majors: "'It's 'Gimme the ball, boom! Click, click, click,...shoom!' It's that good feeling. You're just flowing easy" (259). This is an effective rhetorical moment to let the essay end with Steve Blass describing how he felt when he was pitching so well.

But it is at the beginning of the piece where Angell creates the metaphor which sustains and enlightens the entire piece. It is quintessential Interior Stadium, a real fixed image for the ages:

The photograph shows a perfectly arrested moment of joy. On one side -- the left, as you look at the picture -- the catcher is running toward the camera

at full speed, with his upraised arms spread wide. His body is tilting toward the center of the picture, his mask is held in his right hand, his big glove is still on his left hand, and his mouth is open in a gigantic shout of pleasure. Over on the right, another player, the pitcher, is just past the apex of an astonishing leap that has brought his knees up to his chest and his feet well up off the ground. Both of his arms are flung wide, and he, too, is shouting. ...By luck, two of the outreaching hands have overlapped exactly in the middle of the photograph, so that the pitcher's bare right palm and fingers are silhouetted against the catcher's glove, and as a result the two men are linked and seem to be executing a figure in a manic and difficult dance. there is a further marvel -- a touch of pure fortune -- in the background, where a spectator in dark glasses, wearing a dark suit, has risen from his seat in the grandstand and is lifting his arms in triumph. This, the third and central Y in the picture, is immobile. It is directly behind the overlapping hand and glove of the dancers, and it binds and recapitulates the lines of force and the movements and the theme of the work, creating a composition as serene and well ordered as a Giotto (224).

The description of this famous photograph catches Angell's subject at the absolute apex of his career. Blass's was indeed "an astonishing leap," and his fall was just as breathtaking. Angell's use of an actual photograph to further his thesis is a good illustration of his technique as a whole: Roger Angell always attempts to snap just such a verbal photo - "a perfectly arrested moment of joy" so we can better understand the game. It also illustrates his belief that inherent in the game itself are artistic possibilities that can be as ordered and composed as if brushed by the hand of an artist.

It would be a mistake to close a section on the baseball writing of Roger Angell without including some examples of his style. Like Updike, Angell makes use of allusion and

metaphor. He is quite fond of the simile, my favorite being his description in "1967: The Flowering" of an uncertain pitcher: "Lolich, working like a man opening a basket of cobras, walked Yastrzemski" (31). From the same essay comes a brief description of a particular game as "the rackety, exhausting contest" (31). In another consideration of a Red Sox failure, "Agincourt and After," Angell uses assonance to describe "some cool and useful hitting by Tommy Davis and Brooks Robinson" (289). Perhaps most interestingly, his allusions are often brief re-writes of famous lines, almost puns but still usefully descriptive. In his essay about the actual baseball, "On the Ball," he closes with an echo of Martin Luther King, Jr.: "We leap up, thousands of us, and shout for its joyful flight -- free, set free, free at last" (23). The opening lines of "The Interior Stadium" conjure up William Wordsworth:

Sports are too much with us. Late and soon, sitting and watching -- mostly watching on television -- we lay waste our powers of identification and enthusiasm and, in time, attention as more and more closing rallies and crucial putts and late field goals and final playoffs and sudden deaths and world records and world championships unreel themselves ceaselessly before our half-befuddled eyes (147).

Even his titles carry allusions: "Buttercup Rampant," "Mets Redux," "How the West Was Won," "Agincourt and After," and "In the Counting House."

The effect of all this literary punning is two-fold. First of all, it probably pleases his initial and primary audience, who are, after all readers of The New Yorker and

have come to expect that sort of thing. But more importantly, these references point to the literary worthiness of the man who has used them -- Mr. Angell himself. The allusions attest that this man is well-read, a capable writer who could write about multitudinous other affairs but **chooses** to write about baseball. This underlines his major theme that baseball is a worthwhile endeavor, a combination of events mysterious and gratifying. And he keeps on going back, for, as he says, "always, it seems, there is more to be discovered about this game" ("Interior Stadium" 155). Like Updike, Angell is in his seat at the park. For all of Angell's artistic technique of photographic isolation for the purpose of study, reflection, recollection, he is still a fan of the game and its beauty. No writer has done more to establish baseball's respectability as a literary subject as Roger Angell.

The last essay I wish to discuss is, to my knowledge, the only baseball essay ever written by its author Jonathan Schwartz, a novelist and New York radio personality who has the misfortune to be a Red Sox fan. If baseball is responsible for a lion's share of good sport writing, then within this formula the Boston Red Sox have engendered a good proportion of this literary outpouring. In his introduction to The Red Sox Reader, Dan Riley calls the Sox "probably the most amusing team in baseball history" based on an earlier definition of the word -- muser -- from the:

Middle French...which...has something to do with the gaping mouths of animals and metamorphosed in time to mean, variously, 'distract,' 'bemuse,' 'bewilder,' 'absorb.' All of which the Red Sox have done throughout their history with a consistency bordering on the diabolical, leaving more than a few mouths agape up and down the New England landscape (xv).

Riley later dedicates the book "to the notion that while the Yankees have always had the better players, the Red Sox have had the better writers" (xvi).

There does seem to be a long list of Red Sox failures, not Cub-like records of long futility but numerous painful near-misses, many of which Angell chronicles in a rapid, stream-of-consciousness list in the aforementioned "The Subsequent Flowering and Deflowering of New England," the style of which is a combination of radio narrative, headlines, and snippets of dialogue from the astounded fans:

Hi, neighbor, have a Gansett,...Oh, God, look, Slaughter's going for home! C'mom, Pesky, throw the ball, throw the ball! ...Ted First A. L. Slugger To Top .400 Since...Did Not Spit Kid Swears...and Slaughter, running all the way, beat the startled Pesky's hurried... (29).

This talent for painful failure has engendered much good writing, most of it including some account of the author's misery. Roger Kahn writes, "you may glory in a team triumphant, but you fall in love with a team in defeat" (The Boys of Summer xii).

This is apparently what has happened to Jonathan Schwartz, as he writes his account of one of the most painful Red Sox memories: the 1978 playoff game with the hated New York Yankees. In this essay, we see the writer's love.

Schwartz's account is poetically titled "A Day of Light and Shadows" and was published in Sports Illustrated five months after the event concluded in Yastrzemski's pop up against the cloudless October sky. It is a prose cousin to a confessional poem, focusing not on one game as a community event, as Updike's essay does, but as a moment of personal anguish and self-revelation. Updike and Angell are present at the games they report; Schwartz is a major character in his piece. Thus his essay serves nicely as a bridge to Don DeLillo and the possibilities of postmodernist baseball fiction.

One of the tasks involved in writing about an athletic contest whose results are known to virtually all readers is to find an avenue for tension, since the natural drama provided by the game itself has sagged through time. Schwartz solves this problem by shifting the focus to himself and his relationship to this sport, this team, this game, and finally, to the particular moment in the game when all intensity burns white hot underneath and is almost unbearable. When we read "A Day of Light and Shadows," we already know that the Yankees won an excruciatingly tense, almost mystical game to eliminate the Red Sox from the pennant once again, and so the essay begins to be about the author himself. We see him in his living room celebrating the Yankee loss on the last day of the regular season which would necessitate a one-game playoff between the Red Sox and the Yankees for the American League championship. The

celebration is tainted somewhat by "the restless woman roaming through the apartment," and Schwartz confesses that his relationship with her has suffered severely because of his other love -- the Red Sox -- and his inability to handle rationally the emotional ups and downs of that particular union. He later accepts congratulatory phone calls from friends, another nice touch nudging our attention towards Schwartz, showing how we as fans often seem to make the games our own, to be won or lost, mourned or celebrated. This focus is evident in the very first line of the essay: "In the kitchen in upper Manhattan, Luis Tiant appeared to be in charge of the Red Sox 162nd game of the year" (58). Schwartz does not say that he watched Tiant from his Manhattan kitchen but suggests that Tiant is in the kitchen, meaning that the real game is wherever it is perceived. And so Schwartz has created his rhetorical tension; the drama of the situation need not be whether the Red Sox will lose yet another crucial game to the Yankees --we know they will --but how the author will handle it.

We have good reason to be worried for the author's safety when the Sox lose yet again. One reason for our worry may be his \$15,000 phone bill, compiled through his habit of dialing the air-check numbers of a radio station that broadcast Sox games so he could listen from wherever he happened to be at the time:

In a hotel in Paris, I heard George Scott strike out in Seattle. From my father's home in London, I had heard George Scott strike out in Detroit. From Palm

Springs, California, I had listened to at least 100 complete games, attaching the phone to a playback device that amplified the sound. One could actually walk around the room without holding the receiver. One could even leave the room, walk down the corridor and into a bathroom to stare glumly into one's eyes in the mirror and still pick up the faint sound of George Scott slamming into a double play in Baltimore (59).

Note the final image, searing yet comic, of writer watching writer in the mirror as the bad news is received. This is a self-portrait more than an account of who won a baseball game. And the combination of tragedy and comedy works well also. The clownish figure of George Scott reminds us that it's just a game where everybody fails. The sad face of Schwartz is unable to free him from this illusion that sports is significant. The initial response to tragic news is often laughter, and this is at work here as George Scott creates the tragedy brought to Schwartz through the medium of radio. And the significance is in Schwartz's own eyes, his own kitchen. One is led to believe that the foolish Scott sleeps well at night after his prodigious whiffs while our author, sleepless, weeping, sees it again and again.

When Schwartz finally arrives at the game, deciding to watch it in person rather than at home, alone in his own misery, he begins to notice the atmosphere, the climate of the game as one of the characters in the unfolding drama. Updike describes Fenway Park as that "lyric little bandbox." Schwartz is more interested in his own mental landscape:

Always, when I think of baseball games that have been played, I see them as if they had taken place in the light of day...for such a majestic encounter there

had been provided...a shimmering neutral Monday.
...It was the afternoon of my imagination, the
handpicked sunlit hours during which my perpetual
baseball game had been played (60).

In a situation already hazy with dizzying anticipation, Schwartz has here added another element of potential tension -between the actual game on the field and the countless imaginary games all ball fans play. For Angell these games are bits of real baseball viewed and recollected; for Schwartz and other Red Sox aficionados, weary from waiting too long for triumph, they may simply be dreams. This passage adds to our tension because, even though we know the outcome, the author here presents us with the sense that his long and unrewarded journey may be almost at an end, that a mystical merging of what has been dreamed about and what has happened on the fields of the real may be just over the horizon.

Schwartz watches much of the game from a photographers' booth suspended beneath the roof seats along the first base line, and his essay does, up to a point, report some of the critical facts of the game. But in keeping with the inner landscape theme of the piece, he includes bits of dialogue from the players involved, dialogue which reveals that they too were aware that this contest was somehow special. The true voice is the author's, however, and we watch him wander the outer environs of the park, unable to sit still. In a nice touch, he even finds a phone and dials the air-check number, listening for a minute to the broadcast of a game

being played a few feet from the phone, seeking familiar friendly voices, further focusing the essay not on baseball but how we receive baseball, both emotionally and actually, free to choose our favorite medium.

The game progresses to its incredibly dramatic finale, as here real life joins with art to allow a writer ample material. On this day, as Roger Angell might have put it, the baseball disappointed no one. Schwartz finds himself out on the left-field roof to watch the final inning in which the Red Sox, whom Schwartz had given up on, have come back to within one run of the Yankees. As Yastrzemski strides to the plate with two outs and the tying run on third base, the game and the author's helpless reception of it merge in an odd and revealing burst of action:

I screamed at Yaz from the leftfield roof. 'Bunt goddamn it.' I even waved my arms, thinking that I might catch his eye. He'd call time out and wander out to leftfield. 'What did you say?' he'd shout up at me. 'Bunt' I'd yell back. 'Interesting' he'd say. Then Yaz would lay down a beauty...Burleson...would score the tying run (68).

In Schwartz's manic and heightened interior stadium, operating in a reverse, fictive fashion, he attempts to influence the outcome of the image. The moment of frenzy passes, gives way to the poetry of self-revelation. He writes:

Carl Yastrzemski, nearly my age. I gazed down at him through my tears. I thought: Freeze this minute. Freeze it right here. How unspeakable beautiful it is. Everyone, reach and touch it (68).

We are reminded of Williams running out his last homer like

Updike's "feather caught in a vortex," and of Angell's picture of Steve Blass's "astonishing leap." Like the spectator in the dark glasses in that photo, whom James Memmott believes to be a symbol for Angell himself (162), Schwartz is also in this last snapshot.

The essay ends up simply with the printing of the Red Sox 1979 spring training schedule; there is no journalistic reporting of Yaz popping up to Nettles to send the Sox home losers again. But the printing of the schedule means that Schwartz will be back and that, like Lily Brisco in Virginia Woolf's To The Lighthouse, he has had his vision. He has perhaps discovered a true beauty in the experience, one unavailable to those who do not suffer first. Compare Schwartz's final image to a very similar passage in an essay by Thomas Boswell about the same game, "The Greatest Game Ever Played:"

When Captain Carl stood at the plate facing Gossage with the tying run dancing off third and the winning run on first, that moment should have been frozen...for once baseball had achieved a moment of genuine dramatic art--a situation that needed no resolution to be perfect. A game, a season, and an entire athletic heritage for two cities had been brought to a razor's edge (15).

This is fine and thought-provoking writing, but it does not bring tears to my eyes as Schwartz's passage does, does not affect me in an empathetic manner. What is clearly lacking is Schwartz's hoarse voice shouting down at "Captain Carl," the tentative hand reaching out. What for Boswell's is "an entire athletic heritage for two cities" for Schwartz is the

personal drama of one soul. Boswell suggests that baseball has achieved "a moment of genuine dramatic art" in this game. Schwartz adds the real element of drama to the situation, another level in which the game, not in the ultimate scheme of things very important, is played out in the psyche of a flesh-and-blood character for whom the outcome is vitally important. He has taken baseball to the level where the game is not only a subject worthy of good writers but the possible resolution of their own personal dramas.

In conclusion, if John Updike began what Hall calls "The High Belletristic Tradition," helping to bring fine and lyrical stylists to the game of baseball, he also influenced future essayists with his sense of drama, with the exploration of the intricate relationships between game and fans, and his belief that how we watch the games and how we feel about what we watch is an important aspect of baseball rhetoric.

If, as Bart Giamatti suggests, baseball is a kind of narrative, then it is logical to focus on the audience as one key element of this formula. And this is not an uncomplicated relationship; there are a number of ways to receive baseball games, all of which, in the hands of a good writer, can form the stuff of good dramatic tension. The essayists who appear in this chapter as well as countless others have brought the grace of learned style to the writing of baseball. The essays they have created can be as exciting as the games they report and record. As Jerry Klinkowitz has

claimed, baseball is a kind of fiction anyway, a made-up game which is then re-invented by the tellers -- be they reporters, poets, or manic essayists seeking the deeper meaning of their (and our) baseball addiction through the healing powers of their writing.

Chapter 4

Pafko at the Wall

A novella about Bobby Thomson's miracle homer in 1951, Don DeLillo's Pafko at the Wall provides the subject for my final chapter and serves well as a springboard to summation. This work by a respected postmodernist novelist who last tackled the Kennedy Assassination is further evidence that baseball can serve as a legitimate subject for serious authors of all genres. Also, it is appropriate to close with a piece of fiction given Jerry Klinkowitz's contention cited in chapter one that baseball is a perfect vehicle for a writer of fiction since it is "at once invented (as a game) and real (by virtue of its history and of its observable nature once underway)" (7). Klinkowitz argues that there are only slight differences between the written report of an actual ball game by a newspaper beat writer and a novelist's description of a game in his work of fiction "because in each case their subjects are imaginative inventions" (7). DeLillo's work also echoes Giamatti, with an odd postmodernist twist in which the game, a kind of narrative itself, is narrated by the writer as well as by the radio broadcaster. The tellers of the tale and how they receive it become as important as the tale itself.

Finally, Pafko at the Wall owes much to the essayists considered in the previous chapter. Although this influence

can be traced primarily to Updike's notion of the communal experience, there is much of Angell's sense of mystery and his focus on the inner visual residues these games can leave. In addition, the fans and their emotional stake in the games they watch is a critical aspect of DeLillo's work, thus recalling Jonathan Schwartz's anguish and final epiphany. The subject of DeLillo's Pafko at the Wall is a dramatic 1951 playoff game between the Giants and the Dodgers to decide the National League pennant. The author, who has worked in the historical vein before in Libra, uses the actual event and many of its factual participants, inventing only two fans who first become friends and then adversaries as they struggle for possession of the ball Bobby Thomson has hit into their portion of the stands to win the game for the Giants. The novella is a good illustration of Klinkowitz's theory; furthermore, it can stand on its own as a fine and exciting piece of baseball writing, one which both combines many factors of rhetorical baseball while still offering its own innovation.

Bobby Thompson's homer, the "miracle of Coogan's bluff," is considered by many to be the single most dramatic moment in baseball history. DeLillo has been interested in critical events of the American psyche before, and devotes over 450 pages in Libra to examining the 6.9 seconds surrounding the assassination of John F. Kennedy in Dallas on November 22, 1963. In a line from that novel which could easily apply to his motive for writing Pafko at the Wall, a CIA agent says:

"Let's call a meeting to analyze the blur. Let's devote our lives to understanding this moment, separating the elements of each crowded second" (15). The fact of Kennedy's assassination and the subsequent thirty year obsession with it has become an aspect of American culture, but this moment involved the leader of the free world and several layers of mystery which now seem critical to understanding America's direction from that time forward. On the surface, Bobby Thomson's miracle homer contained none of these factors. And so it will be instructive to surmise what may have interested DeLillo in a baseball game after spending five years exhaustively researching the death of a president.

It is not unusual for postmodernist writers to be interested in historical events, usually so that the author may, according to Marguerite Alexander, consciously subvert or "challenge received versions of history" (16). One of the ways this is accomplished is by featuring characters whose views were not considered exactly mainstream by the society or its more traditional literature. "In other words," continues Alexander,

kinds of experiences and ways of living which are marginalized in the classical realist novel, placed on the periphery as socially and morally undesirable, are not being allowed a central position, whatever moral judgements may obliquely emerge (16).

This can explain Libra, whose main characters include Lee Oswald, Jack Ruby, David Ferrie, and other odd types who hung around the periphery of the intelligence community in the late 1950s. By re-examining an historical event from

perspectives considered unworthy of being given voice by earlier generations, postmodern writers like DeLillo can express their alienation from mainstream society and traditional explanations; more importantly, they can illustrate the subjective nature of truth and reality. As Richard Alan Schwartz says: "Postmodernism, then, pictures a subjective, relativistic world full of contradictions and dependent upon individual observers for its definition" (136).

One can see that writers of DeLillo's generation have been more interested in the Oswalds of the world than the Kennedys; thus, Lee Harvey Oswald's voice is the main vehicle of the narrative in Libra. Here is the conscious subversion, the event viewed from angles previously unavailable. And Oswald would certainly interest the postmodernist writer; not only were his views and life itself mysterious, shadowy, but his voice was removed before he could tell his story. To describe the assassination from his vantage point would necessitate a fictive voice, yet one not necessarily any further from the truth than any official version might be. In fact, the Kennedy Assassination is the perfect postmodern event, containing as it apparently does room for innumerable truths. But, we may ask, what interested DeLillo turning his focus from a presidential assassination to a sports event lacking in mystery and political undertones, though high on drama? DeLillo apparently felt that Thomson's home run contained the kernel of significance other intellectuals had

perhaps overlooked. And true to the postmodernist credo, DeLillo is able to find other voices through which to funnel the narrative. Interestingly, one of the crucial voices is precisely that, a "voice" whose literal function was to narrate the event as it initially occurred. Choosing such voices is, in fact, part of DeLillo's main thematic intention.

Red Smith, writing his column on the day of Thomson's famous homer, issues what appears to be a challenge to novelists when he opens "Now it is done. Now the story ends. And there is no way to tell it. The art of fiction is dead. Reality has strangled invention. Only the utterly impossible, the inexpressibly fantastic, can ever be plausible again" (Einstein 321). Interestingly enough, Smith goes on to describe a drunken fan fighting through cops to get to the field, where he gleefully runs the bases, sliding into third. DeLillo uses this event at the end of his novella, where "the raincoat drunk is running the bases. ...They see he is going to slide and they stop and watch him leave his feet." The man then becomes, for the novelist, the concluding image, the hovering symbol, a magnet for all he has described: "All the fragments of the afternoon collect around his airborne form. Shouts, bat-cracks, full bladders, and stray yawns, the sand-grain manyness of things that can't be counted" (70). It is clear that DeLillo's postmodernist proclivities drew him to the miracle of Coogan's bluff in order to find significance in non-traditional areas, to find

ways of re-inventing this reality so as to make it the good stuff of fiction, to locate a way to tell the story from voices not already heard. It seems obvious that DeLillo read the Smith column, took up the challenge to create good fiction out of highly fictive reality, and borrowed the running drunk while he was at it. Like Roger Angell, DeLillo makes use of photographs; like Updike and Jonathan Schwartz, the dramatic tension comes at least partially from the perceivers and their relationship with the event rather than the participants and the outcome of the contest.

DeLillo's title was probably derived from a photograph of the deciding moment in the game, showing Dodger leftfielder Andy Pafko at the base of the wall looking straight up. The wall extends about 20 feet above Pafko's head, where the stands begin. In the stands, we can see people beginning to react. Some are turning towards something that appears to be happening just to the left of the support pole which has a #35 on it. Still others are reaching out their hands for what we know is the baseball that Bobby Thomson has just propelled into their section. The photo is clear, and we can make out individual features of many in the crowd. Just to the right of the #35 support post there is a young black male who appears to be wearing glasses. He is sitting among the mostly white male crowd, many of whom are wearing sport coats. The ground on which Pafko stands is littered with shredded paper, almost as if it has been snowing (Harper's Oct 1992 cover).

This photograph is important to DeLillo's creative process. One could think of it as the Zapruder film of the Bobby Thomson homer, allowing us to see what everyone was doing the moment the ball went in. It is also a catalyst for the novella and thus helps to connect DeLillo to the essay writers discussed in the previous chapter. It is Jonathan Schwartz's perfectly frozen moment, beautiful in its ability to capture and frame forever an emotion as much as a kinetic sequence. We can interpret the despair beginning to emanate from Pafko, the raucous joy about to burst wildly from the stands. Those in the stands have begun to open their mouths and move their bodies to create what Russ Hodges feels in the novella to be a "shudder passing through the stands, and then...the swelling bedlam" (59). DeLillo tells us on at least four occasions that many people looked immediately at the big clock on top of the clubhouse the moment the ball went in --"3:58"-- A moment frozen in time and space.

The frozen moment also recalls Roger Angell, for it is both an event for the interior stadium -- etched forever in the minds of those who witnesses it -- as well as a photograph whose various elements have come together in coherent composition. Below, at that specific moment beginning to be aware of his despair is Pafko, standing in the almost surrealistically littered grounds, a wasteland of trash and garbage mounded with white and colored paper of all sorts and of astounding volume. Above, reaching out, grasping, are the many faces of a New York ball crowd, a

crowd who will exult as one but which possesses numerous distinguishing features. The chaos is about to begin. All eyes in the picture are searching for the ball, the one small white object that has arced into all of their lives with profound effect. As DeLillo writes, "The game doesn't change the way you sleep or wash your face or chew your food. It changes nothing but your life" (49). It is a perfect picture of a beginning and an end, a victory and a defeat occurring simultaneously, which is, after all, what the moment in baseball did mean for the two teams involved. Like the photo of Blass at his apex, Angell would find this photo equally inspiring, a physical manifestation of his interior stadium.

The photo appears to have been crucial to the writer himself as he began to re-create this event into his novella. There are actually a number of photos of this event, a DeLillo includes them in the issue of Harper's, where the piece initially appeared. Another picture seems to have been taken just a second after and is from a vantage point slightly to the west of the first. It shows Pafko slumped slightly against the wall, no longer looking hopefully up for a possible caroming ball. From this angle, we can see both the lower and the upper decks of left field, and from the upper deck, caught cascading down like weirdly thick snow is a blizzard of this white patina that we have already observed at Pafko's feet in the first shot. DeLillo will make use of this image as well, part of what he calls the "sand-grain manyness of things that can't be counted" (70). The spilling

storm of debris becomes almost a character in this piece; it is certainly an integral part of the setting.

Another photo which appears to have given rise to a section of the novella is one taken before the game. It features a barricade behind which stands a long line of people, apparently waiting to enter the Polo Grounds for the momentous game. The fans look happy; many are teenage boys carrying sacks, perhaps lunches they were supposed to have eaten at school that day. It is also likely that boys playing hooky that day to watch the game might not have had the price of admission. Perhaps inspired by this photo and others like it, DeLillo has his main fictional character--a young bespectacled black man named Cotter--gain his entrance by leaping the turnstiles with scores of other youths who rush the scene all at once. Like Napoleonic charges in battle, many go so a few can survive. Cotter survives, flying athletically over the turnstile, juking past a fat cop, and escaping into the bleachers, where he chooses to hide out in section 35 of the left field bleachers. There are black faces in the photo of the boys and the barricades, as DeLillo has obviously noticed. DeLillo's use of such photographs points up an important aspect of the novella: that how we respond and record an event becomes, in the postmodern world, of equal significance with the event itself.

If available photographs of this event were part of DeLillo's research for this project, there were also other

elements of media which found their way into the text. It seems likely that DeLillo read the Red Smith column and plucked the sliding drunk from the pages of Smith's field to plunk him down 32 years later in a postmodernist novella. He may also have been interested in Smith's apparent belief that the true drama was on the field and could never be topped in fiction, a sure flung gauntlet for a writer like DeLillo. But, apart from Smith's column and the photographs, the biggest influence on this novella seems to have been the emerging medium of the radio broadcast. This is an odd choice for a writer to make, choosing to rely more on the spoken word than the pages and pages of written words churned out concerning the vent. But the presence of Giant announcer Russ Hodges--and the incredibly fortuitous circumstance that led to the taping and thus the preservation of his amazing response to Thomson's homer--has given postmodernist DeLillo his chance to flaunt Red Smith and write a drama that transcends the outcome of the game. As DeLillo has Russ Hodges say to himself just before the Thomson homer: "Do not talk against the crowd. Let the drama come from them" (58).

Besides young and probably fictional Cotter, sitting in section 35, the other main character in this piece is Hodges. We see Hodges enter the booth before the game, carrying his "overworked larynx and the makings of a major cold" with him on his last day with the Giants this year. His thoughts take him first to consider the long season now almost over. He wonders: "Can you do games, can you do play-by-play almost

every day through the deep summer and not be located in some version of the past?" Later his memory takes him to important sporting events he has witnessed. He recalls the Dempsey/Williard fight his father had taken him to, and he surmises: "When you see a thing like that, a thing that becomes a newsreel, you begin to feel you are a carrier of some profound sort of history" (38). We can begin to see DeLillo's interest in the event as subject for a work of fiction as well as in Hodges as a chief character in the work. Those who see the games, witness the memorable moments, are indeed kinds of "carriers," but those who report the events are even more significant, official carriers or purveyors of truth. DeLillo literally follows his Libra credo, "separating the elements of each crowded second" (15) regarding Russ Hodges' memorable call of Thomson's shot. He devotes two pages to the brief time frame during which Thomson swings, the ball goes in, and the tumult begins. It is a familiar vocal memory for ball fans, most of whom have heard the crackling reproduction of Hodges' call, taped impulsively by a man on Twelfth Street in Brooklyn with a new tape recorder and a fanciful nature.

Branca throws. ...There's a long drive. ...It's gonna be. ...I believe. ...The Giants win the pennant. ...The Giants win the pennant. ...The Giants win the pennant. ...Bobby Thomson hits into the lower deck of the left-field stands. ...The Giants win the pennant and they're going crazy. They're going crazy (59,60).

After a bit, words fail Hodges: "Then he raises a pure shout, wordless, a holler from the old days. ...The thing

comes jumping right out of him, a jubilation" (59,60). The ellipses immediately above stand not for pauses in the actual recording but for DeLillo's narrator. It is clear that DeLillo feels Hodges an integral part of this moment and especially our collective memory of it.

Obviously, announcers like Russ Hodges report the games they observe in a different manner than writers like Red Smith. With no time for reflection, reconsideration, careful word choice, they sing out in sometimes purely emotive responses to what they think they have just observed. But more importantly for DeLillo's purpose here, they are indeed part of the invention process. Hodges was one of a number of early announcers who worked re-creations, filling in details while waiting for laconic teletype messages: "Mays ground to short." "Lockman singles to left." In the booth that day, Russ remembers his days in Charlotte doing games like that:

Somebody hands you a piece of paper filled with letters and numbers and you have to make a ball game out of it. You create the weather, flesh out the players, you make them sweat and grouse and hitch up their pants. You construct the fiction of a distant city, making up everything but the stark facts of the evolving game. ...You sit at the mike and fill time, make time (as with a girl), you talk out the time in your small-town baritone...and it is remarkable...how much summer and dust the mind can manage to order up from a single letter lying flat (45).

Here DeLillo clearly establishes Hodges as a fellow novelist of sorts, creator of "the fiction of a distant city." The parallel clearly reminds us of Klinkowitz, for whom the game is always an invention of one kind or another. We have triple mirrors at work here: an invented game recreated by a

radio announcer and then re-invented by the fiction writer. Here is the postmodernist's interest in the layerings of reality, of the subjectivity of truth, of the ascendancy of individual perceptions over one accepted version.

There is a twist in these fictive circles, part of a postmodernist "playfulness" suggested by Marguerite Alexander (3). As Hodges is describing his days re-creating games via teletype, he remembers:

Back in Charlotte doing ghost games he liked to take the action into the stands, getting the fans involved--people bestiring themselves to chase a foul ball, scrabbling under the seats, and always its a kid who comes up with the ball, towheaded or freckle-faced, and why not? If you're going to make a moment, give it a lilt, a lucky bounce (45).

Something like this happens in DeLillo's text with his fictional creation, young Cotter, a character possibly born from DeLillo's close scrutiny of the first Pafko-at-the-wall photograph, which shows a young black youth in glasses sitting among the mostly white crowd. As Thomson's ball goes into section 35, an intense struggle for the baseball ensues. Cotter, neither freckle-faced nor towheaded, battles beneath the seats with unseen rivals. It is a malicious contest, a battle of will and skill which Cotter eventually wins by Indian-burning the outstretched arm of the hand that grasps the ball, scooping up the loose ball, and walking swiftly from the scene.

Interestingly, Jim Bouton narrates a similar incident in Ball Four. When he was young, Bouton got into a battle in the stands for a foul ball with a young black boy. Bouton

surmises that while "I wanted the baseball, he had to have it" (25). This is yet more evidence of a specific connection between all forms of writings about baseball, what Richard Alan Schwartz calls the "shared human experience" of baseball (139). Cotter has no desire to share his "catch" with his rival, who turns out to be a gregarious white man named Bill Waterson who had befriended Cotter during the game, even bought him a Coke. The young boy had begun almost to admire this man, impressed with his "singleness of purpose, his insistence on faith and trust" (48). It is just this "singleness of purpose" that drives the older white man to pursue Cotter, wanting the baseball he had almost had in his grasp. A chase sequence ensues, and Cotter, realizing that running from a respectably dressed white man would turn the crowd against him, keeps a brisk but controlled pace and a safe distance between himself and the pursuing Waterson.

This chase is one of the few bits of drama in the novella not completely known to the readers, and it serves DeLillo's social consciousness. Waterson had been nice to Cotter, friendly, unprejudiced as they share the game, its foods, sounds, stretches, and potential misery. Waterson is always optimistic, ever sure that their beloved Giants will rally. He even becomes a spokesman for the game itself, and, sounding like Roger Kahn or Donald Hall, finds the common ground, the generational links of the game: "That's the thing about baseball. You do what they did before you. That's the connection you make. There's a whole long line"

(47-48). At the crowning moment, however, the two new friends do not share these connections, turning into instant rivals for a bruised and elusive prize. Waterson has spoken of the "whole long line," meaning generations of men sharing their baseball memories and experiences, but the sad and realistic fact remains that Cotter is not Waterson's son. Thus, while they share the ball game briefly, their experiences of the American culture of the early 1950s is radically different. Cotter wins the baseball -- perhaps for the reasons Bouton conjectures -- but also because he is quicker and more skilled at this kind of struggle.

Ironically, Cotter finally triumphs in the chase because of the barriers that separate the races; his strategy of brisk nonchalance while in white New York serves him well. Waterson, on the other hand, loses his calm and his racial equanimity disappears as he shouts in frustration "Don't be so god-damn al-mighty nigger-ish. Not with me, okay?" (68). Waterson attempts to apologize, claiming the passion of the moment and the quest confused him, partially blaming Cotter for his use of "the word. Goddamn, you made me say it and there's no forgiving the fact, is there?" (68). But by now the chase has brought them into Cotter's territory, "past the ballpark crowd, this is unmixed Harlem here" (69). Bill realizes it too, and the contest for possession of the ball is over, won ironically not by the towheaded, freckle-faced boy but a talented, street-smart black kid from Harlem.

The struggle has taken much, much longer than Hodges would have had time to describe, or even invent, and the final outcome is not necessarily one he would feel comfortable reporting. In America in 1951, there are still deep racial divisions and physical, palpable, and recognizable barriers between black and white which disappear for three hours at the ball park but are re-erected as soon as the last ball goes in. But the game does represent some hope for equality. Cotter has shared the game with the multitudes who were not interested in his skin color for those three hours, and the game has not lost its lustre, for he intends to sit in his room with his prize "and let the home run roll over him, soaking his insides with deep contentment" (69). And so the twist is finished -- the fictive characters, inventions first of a radio announcer and then given some new shading by the novelist -- carry the work's most serious social message. Here DeLillo clearly intends for us to see himself and Hodges as partners in this fiction: they have both contributed to this invention.

Often in postmodern writing of the late 20th century a sense of impending doom appears. According to Alexander, these "feelings of despair and impending annihilation... alienate many readers, who feel that it is possible to lead perfectly satisfactory lives with the world as it is" (19). [Ihab Hassan writes that "outrage and apocalypse...provide mirror images of the contemporary imagination" (6).] These elements of postmodernist fiction are not absent from Pafko

at the Wall, but make their appearance in a strange manner, almost a parody. An unlikely (and probably fictitious) quartet attends the game together: Frank Sinatra, Jackie Gleason, restaurant owner Toots Shor, and J. Edgar Hoover, head of the FBI. The anal/retentive head G Man himself receives word from a subaltern that the Soviets have exploded their second nuclear bomb. Hoover understands the political and worldwide significance of this event, which will be announced by the White House later in the day. He decides nothing can be gained from his quick departure, and so he remains at the game, thinking of war now instead of baseball. He remembers the Sunday chaos of Pearl Harbor, and "now this, he thinks. The sun's own heat that swallows cities" (44). The sun image is picked up by Russ Hodges later on the same page; he uses it in reference to "real baseball. The thing that happens in the sun." DeLillo is distancing Hoover here from the shared, communal experience that the 35,000 plus are about to have through the grace of baseball. For as Hodges sees a unity below him, "the crowd made over in that one-thousandth of a second when the bat and the baseball are in contact. A rustle of murmurs and curses, people breathing soft moans, their faces changing as the play unfolds across the grassy scan," Hoover sees a group doomed, the burned furnace of their unity:

Edgar looks at the faces around him, open and hopeful. He wants to feel a compatriot's nearness and affinity. All these people...have never had anything in common so much as this, that they are sitting in the furrow of destruction (46).

To further underline Hoover's isolation from the community of baseball, his inability to see or feel the true significance of the events unfolding around him, or join in the joy, DeLillo brings the odd little Director in contact with a medieval death scene in the form of scattered debris. Up above them a man is tearing out the pages of a Life magazine and, without ripping them, simply lets them drop and flutter earthward. It's an odd catalogue of American consumerism and American cultural artifacts, and it's swirling down like a blizzard:

The pages keep falling. Baby food, instant coffee, encyclopedias and cars, waffle irons and shampoos and blended whiskeys. ...And the resplendent products, how the dazzle of a Packard car is repeated in the feature story about the art treasures of the Prado. It is all part of the same thing. Rubens and Titian and Playtex and Motorola. And here's a picture of Sinatra himself sitting in a nightclub in Nevada with Ava Gardner and would you check that cleavage (57).

The passage contains much that is significant. It is, first of all, a wonderful image, taking place as it does while the ill-fated Branca warms up to pitch to the waiting Bobby Thomson: the frenzied, oblivious crowd showered with magazine pages that plummet from somewhere above.

This image also underscores what will be one of DeLillo's main points: that popular culture is as significant and revealing as are more traditional symbols; thus, we have the Rubens flying equally with the Playtex ad. This pastiche accords nicely with DeLillo's ultimate and personal contention: that a book need not be about the death of kings to say something important. Put more specifically,

the seconds the shots were fired in Dallas are of no more or less significance in attempting to understand the American experience than the moment Thomson's ball went in and they all went crazy. Finally, it is revealing that Frank Sinatra, somewhat of a fictional figure in real life, plucks a picture of himself from the deluge. The incident may be a comment on his sizable egomaniacal tendencies, on his ubiquity in the early fifties, or it may show DeLillo's proclivity for creating weird mirror effects. As in Libra, fiction looks more real than history, actual characters appearing in a work of fiction find images of themselves, and all is an invention of sorts.

From the swirling storm of debris, Hoover grabs a page from his shoulder, a representation of Peter Bruegel called "The Triumph of Death" and is fascinated with what he sees:

Across the red-brown earth skeleton armies march.
Men impaled on lances, hung from gibbets, drawn on
spoked wheels fixed to the tops of bare trees, bodies
open to the crows. Legions of the dead forming up
behind shields made of coffin lids (58).

Hoover is overcome with attraction and repulsion, but finally gives in, finds the second page and keeps staring at the picture, storing images, making connections. Thomson has hit his homer, and the bedlam rages around our new art student:

He finds a second dead woman in the middle ground,
straddled by a skeleton. ...He stands in the aisle
and they're all around him cheering and he has the
pages in his face. The painting has an instancy that
he finds striking (64).

This is a supremely ironic moment: Hoover has just witnessed the most dramatic moment in baseball history and yet he finds

far more immediacy in a torn reproduction of a 16th century painting. He finally forces himself to look at the ball field -- "it is a wrenching effort" -- and connects the painting to what he sees:

Those who run around the bases calling out the score. Those who are happy and dazed. The ones who are so excited they won't sleep tonight. Those whose team has lost. The ones who taunt the losers. ...The screamers and berserkers. The old friends who meet by accident out near second base. Those who will light the city with their bliss.

As he is leaving, Hoover turns once more to the field and watches fans dropping from the wall to the field below:

"There is something apparitional in the moment and it chills and excites him and sends his hand into his pocket to touch the bleak pages hidden there" (66).

This is the last we see of Hoover, clutching his strange ballpark souvenir, seeing death and horror in joy and celebration, being titillated by it. He has had his vision too, and, in the postmodernist scheme, it is a valid one, although it is shared by no one else of the whooping 35,000. This vignette seems to parody the apocalyptic view in so far as it is presented in a comic manner, a foolish Hoover amidst the rabble. It also reinforces the notion that people interpret a situation only in the ways possible to them. Hoover, shut off from the Polo Ground love-in due to his fastidious and officious nature, is fed visions of doom and destruction, first from his aide and then, mysteriously, from above, and he interprets accordingly. Like the photograph of Pafko at the wall which also features individuals within the

crowd, this novella allows for the singular vision while noting the crescendoed significance of the communal one. Cotter is alone in his room with the ball, Hoover clutches his crumpled apocalypse, oblivious to the potential for salvation he has just witnessed.

In the final analysis, DeLillo's Pafko at the Wall is a significant piece of baseball writing for at least two reasons. First, it directly addresses the question of the legitimacy of the subject for serious writers interested in aspects of culture and levels of narrative. As Russ Hodges leaves the Giant clubhouse where he has been conducting the obligatory post-game interviews, senseless and inarticulate though they are, he begins to think clearly of history and its relationship to what he has just witnessed:

Isn't it possible that this midcentury moment enters the skin more lastingly than the vast shaping strategies of eminent leaders, generals steely in their sunglasses -- the mapped visions that pierce our dreams? Russ wants to believe a thing like this keeps us safe in some undetermined way. This is the thing that will pulse in his brain come old age and double vision and dizzy spells -- the surge sensation, the leap of people already standing, that bolt of noise and joy when the ball went in. This is the people's history and it has flesh and breath that quicken to the force of this old safe game of ours (70).

In this rich passage DeLillo accounts for his interest in Pafko and Thomson and this particular moment, and it is heady stuff coming from a writer fresh off his literary adventure with the murder of a king. Heed moments such as this, he says, for they are significant too. In the passage too we see Angell's interior stadium, Schwartz's frozen moment, and

the small, wild hordes shouting their goodbyes to Boston's indifferent Kid. This is also Giamatti, who has called baseball "a Romance Epic of homecoming America sings to itself" (95). Here in "the people's history" games like this will be sung for decades as fathers and sons and grandfathers feel the images pulsing and clear in their inner diamonds. DeLillo even offers up J. Edgar Hoover as a kind of weird sacrifice to the postmodernist appetite for apocalypse. Ignore the centuries' old lament of doom and destruction, of death chasing the chaotic mob; attend to the game at hand, the present joy, for in it is safety. Do not misinterpret the mob's shrieks as pain while it may well be the stuff of deep and significant celebration. And they're going crazy.

Secondly, and critical to our purpose here, in Pafko at the Wall, DeLillo is not interested just in the game but, like Jonathan Schwartz before him, more intently concerned with how we perceive the game. Virtually all of DeLillo's apparent sources for this piece are reproductions of the game, both visual and verbal, the photos and the tape of Hodges. No one doubts the creative and artistic potential of photographs, and DeLillo has taken pains to point out the inventive nature of baseball broadcasting. In this sense, he may have created a pure form of what Klinkowitz is calling for when he writes of the "unadorned game." In other words, the entire focus of this work is on the game and its receptions, a truth accomplished by radio:

The game and its extensions. The woman cooking cabbage. The man who wished he could be through with drink. They are the game's remoter soul. Connected by the pulsing voice on the radio, joined to the word-of-mouth that passes the score along the street and to the fans who call the special phone number and the crowd at the ballpark that becomes the picture on television, people the size of Minute Rice, and the game as rumor and conjecture and inner history (48-49).

In fact, this novella can be encapsulated by the first line in that passage: "the game and its extensions." Whereas the action of the work moves from game to street to clubhouse, encompassing social realities, personal visions, rhetorical theory, it all springs, flows from the experience of the game itself. DeLillo may have expanded the game's extensions, but what he says is the truth, as we can see from the essayists considered in the previous chapter, who talk of the incredible network of information and interest on the streets during an important game (Angell), the interaction of those in the stands (Updike), and the fanatic calling special phone numbers to catch distant scores (Schwartz). There are other fine novels which cover aspects of factual baseball history in a fictive mode, including Eric Rolfe Greenberg's The Celebrant and Harry Stein's Hoopla, but non concentrates with such a singleness of purpose on the "unadorned game" as does DeLillo's Pafko at the Wall, a work which combines aspects of baseball non-fiction and baseball rhetorical theory to open new doors to any postmodernist who wishes to investigate "our safe old game" and its relationship with "the people's history" of America.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

At the beginning of this work, I referred to Charles Einstein's The Fireside Book of Baseball and the wide rhetorical range contained in its table of contents. For the previous three chapters I have been investigating some areas missing from scholarly considerations of what Peter Bjarkman calls "the current baseball boom" in writing and publishing. Part of the reason for the boom is that many writers find significant links between baseball and other aspects of life. In Gregory Corso's poem "Dream of a Baseball Star," the poet makes some of these connections between poetry, religion, and his favorite ballplayer:

I dreamed Ted Williams
leaning at night
against the Eiffel Tower, weeping.

He was in uniform
and his bat lay at his feet
--knotted and twiggy.

'Randall Jarrell says you're a poet!' I cried.
'So do I! I say you're a poet!'

He picked up his bat with blown hands;
stood there astraddle as he would in the batter's box,
and laughed! flinging his schoolboy wrath
toward some invisible pitcher's mound
--waiting the pitch all the way from heaven (Johnson
15).

As the poem progresses, The Kid swings futilely at heaven's hundred pitches, "all afire." After missing them all, a

strangely-attired ump "Thundered his judgement: YOU'RE OUT" and a "phantom crowd's horrific boo / dispersed the gargoyles from Notre Dame" (Johnson 15). In Corso's poem we can see some of this sport's appeal to the writerly mind. The poem is about our relationship with heroes: our need for them, our despair when they fail, as they must. As Don Johnson analyzes the piece, it "most powerfully chronicles the disappearance of heroism and poignantly epitomizes our almost desperate need for baseball heroes, despite our recognition of their vulnerability" (xii). We have seen this "desperate need" in several of the baseball essays examined in chapter three. But the poem could be about anything, really, from dreams to myth to religious fervor. This is what writers have discovered about baseball as a potential subject, that it offers a wide range of rhetorical possibilities.

Corso's poem works in images, as we would expect, given the theories of Roger Angell concerning the visual aspects of baseball and memory. The first image of Corso's poem shows Williams propped up against the Eiffel Tower, crying. His bat, powerless-looking, lies at his feet. Every element of this image contradicts historical reality. During his career, Ted Williams was observed spitting, screaming, and gesturing obscenely; he was not known for his weeping. There are any number of familiar structures in which Corso could have put the Sox star; the Eiffel Tower is certainly not one of them. And Teddy Ballgame always hit; his bat was potent and powerful to the last swing, never impotent nor "twiggy,"

and he rarely missed two pitches in a row, unlike the hundred he whiffs at here. Much of the writing examined in my previous chapters contains contradictory elements of this sort: that ballplayers can be intellectuals, that this sweaty summer game is mystical at its center, with the power to create tantrums in intellectuals, that a single stroked homer could be more vital to a nation than the decisions of presidents.

At the end of the poem, Corso's emotions rise in intensity:

And I screamed in my dream
 God! throw they merciful pitch!
 Herald the crack of bats!
 Hooray the sharp liner to left!
 Yea the double, the triple!
 Hosannah the home run! (Johnson 15).

This merging of exhalted religious language with the lingo of the game illustrates what many writers do with the game of baseball. The sport allows writers to be sacred and profane, elevated and common, universal and specific. Good baseball writing perceives and uses the connections of this sport to our cultural and spiritual histories, to our personal memories, and to the way we experience and record important events. While poets may alter the real baseball to achieve a surrealist effect, as Corso does, prose writers usually stay mainly true to the historic truth, using poetic language to heighten the intensity of the images perhaps, but never losing their reverence for the sport. If there is a connecting thread to most writing about baseball in the past

few decades, it is that baseball is much more than a simple game: it is essentially literary. It is, in some fashion, not only a tale told but part of the telling process. Baseball writing attests that there is a mystery at the center of the game which is worth pursuing. The sport grips its participants and its celebrants strongly, refusing to let them go.

The current baseball boom in writing has engendered several good examinations of the phenomenon. Even so, I felt that there were several serious omissions in these investigations, and therefore I have attempted to fill them in. Despite the habitual dismissal of player-autobiographies, I feel that at least two significant efforts in this genre--Brosnan's The Long Season and Bouton's Ball Four--are sophisticated pieces of prose which deserve attention. First of all, these two player-autobiographies re-invented the image of the ballplayer into a cruder but more realistic, recognizable character, one more fans could identify with. They also changed the persona of the player-writer into that of a deeper-thinking, more open-minded and concerned voice than baseball fans had previously encountered. By challenging and criticizing the business aspect of baseball, and by bringing to the fan a more realistic, less heroic, look at the daily lives ballplayers actually led, these books widened the audience for the sport to include more youth, who clearly saw the intended parallels between the authors' battle with the baseball establishment

and their own struggles with college presidents and the selective service.

I also believe that there is much to be gained from an investigation of certain essays on baseball. Many of these essays contain dramatic and poetic elements that deserve more attention. As I have tried to illustrate, in the world of baseball writing, these essays by Angell and Updike and Schwartz may be as significant as novels. And finally, as essays on this sport seem almost like works of fiction given the intensity of the imagery and the appearance of the author as a character, baseball novels in the postmodern era are often grounded in fact. Postmodernist writers like Don DeLillo see in baseball opportunities to explore postmodern themes: the multiplicity of angles from which to view an event, the sense of isolation inherent in the game's structure, the mixture of the artistic with the popular aspects of culture to create uniquely American memories. Baseball is indeed "greatly literate" and so provides a complex and variegated field for writers of all genres to explore.

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