Society for American Baseball Research

BIBLIOGRAPHY COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER

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Comments from the Chair

Andy McCue

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Welcome to the fall. As I write this, only the Indians-Red Sox series of the first round of the playoffs is undecided. By the time this newsletter is mailed, the World Series will probably be close to ending. And, that of course, means we enter our annual Dark Ages, relieved only by free-agent signings, the occasional trade, and the run-up to whatever the next labor dispute is going to be.

I'd like to welcome Jay Hurd (14 Douglas Rd., Medford, MA 02155; jhurd@fas.harvard.edu) to the Committee. Jay will be a contributor to RBI and we hope to get him involved in other Committee projects.

Through the efforts of Steve Roney and Ted Hathaway, the continuing yeoman efforts of Current Baseball Publications editor Rich Arpi are available (http://www.sabr.org/cbp.shtml) on the Internet. The site contains CBP from 1995 through the second quarter of 1999. The third quarter 1999 CBP should be posted by the end of Oct. 1999. This prompts the question of how many Committee members could not print out this information from the Web. I ask because about half the Committee's annual budget goes to photocopying and mailing costs for CBP. It would save the Committee (and SABR) a nice piece of change if we could make this a Web-based service. I will hold off on this if enough people contact me and say they need to keep receiving it in printed form.

Skip McAfee and I have spent a good deal of time straightening out the Committee's list of baseball books for which Committee members have prepared indexes. We've added 15 indexes to the list. Joe Murphy especially has been active; he has indexed The Way It Is by Curt Flood with Richard Carter (1971), Baseball is a Funny Game by Joe Garagiola (1960), They Played the Game by Harry Grayson (1944), Legends of Baseball by Walter M. Langford (1987), Baseball's Greatest Players by Tom Meany (1953), The Greatest of All: The 1927 New York Yankees by John Mosedale (1974), and baseball names only for Farewell to Sport by Paul Gallico (1938) and The American Sporting Scene by John Kieran (1941). Roger Erickson indexed Lucky to be a Yankee by Joe DiMaggio (1946) and The Kansas City Athletics by Ernest Mehl (1956). Tom Hetrick indexed Baseball in 1889: Players vs. Owners by Daniel M. Pearson. Terry Smith indexed Batting: One Thousand Expert Opinions by Frank C. Lane (1925). These are all, as usual, available through Len Levin's SABR Research Library, 282 Doyle Ave., Providence, RI 02906-3355 (401/351-3278).

Also concerning indexes, I'm happy to report that, for the first time, some of the Committee's indexes are on their way to commercial publication. Skip McAfee's index to Roger Kahn's *A Season in the Sun* (1977) and Roger Erickson's index to Kahn's *Good Enough to Dream* (1985) have been submitted to the Univ. of Nebraska Press, whose editors expressed their satisfaction; those books, with fresh afterwords by Kahn, are scheduled to be republished in Spring 2000. Skip also completed subject and name indexes (with much careful corrective work on misspelled and incorrect names) to Alfred H. Spink's *The National Game* (2nd ed., 1911). The reprint is due to be published by Southern Illinois Univ. Press in Spring 2000.

I recommend your attention to Ted Hathaway's proposal elsewhere in the newsletter for research on the availability and location of library newspaper holdings around the country. We haven't produced a committee Research Guide in some years and this would make an excellent product.

Through the RBI project, we received a box full of clippings and photocopies of old media guides from the Texas League. The clippings were mostly a scrapbook kept in Tulsa in the 1930s and 1940s. The material was passed on to the SABR Minor League Committee.

I received the following announcement from Lloyd Johnson (P.O. Box 22481, Kansas City, MO 64113): "Anyone interested in contributing to a database of minor league player statistics for the Museum of Minor League Baseball should contact Lloyd Johnson (816/822-2516 or e-mail lloydj@msn.com) or Mike Webber (785/242-6638 or e-mail kcbbfan@aol.com). Inputters and original researchers are needed."

Research in Baseball Index (RBI)

Ted Hathaway

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Since the SABR national convention in June, my work with SABR has exploded. Chairing the Internet Committee (IC) has been very time-consuming and sometimes stressful. Fortunately, I have managed to separate my work on the IC from RBI and we were able to get much done over the summer. Because of my IC responsibilities, however, I was unable to prepare a report on the second quarter totals in time for the July newsletter, so this will combine the totals for both the second and the third quarters. A great deal has been done, indeed.

First, hats off to our co-director Tim Cashion for his yeoman work on USA Today Baseball Weekly. Tim has now finished most of the run of this publication, from 1991 to April 1999, indexing more than 21,000 articles! Tim's most recent contribution came last May when he submitted more than 13,500 new articles to the database. Thank you for your perseverance and dedication, Tim.

Brad Sullivan found time this past spring and summer to work on some RBI projects, despite his hectic schedule as Sports Information Director at C.W. Post University. He indexed *Broadcasting* (1931-1937; 105 articles), *Time* (1954-1958; 108 articles), and *The Sporting News* (1961 and 1971; 4670 articles). As always, Brad's work is central to the success of RBI and is much appreciated.

Bob Boynton completed another 171 articles from 1999 issues of *Sports Illustrated* but they will unfortunately be his last. Bob has decided to hang up his keyboard and move on to other baseball endeavors. His work on the RBI has been excellent and his contributions will be missed. The Committee at the 1999 SABR national convention officially recognized Bob's work. His totals for RBI were 1348 articles, 43 books, and 26 book sections cataloged. Thanks for all you've done, Bob.

Terry Sloope gave us a large chunk of work this past quarter, including: *The Minneapolis Review of Baseball* (1984-1989; 320 articles) and *Sport* (1950, 1969-1971; 527 articles). This now means we have completely cataloged *Sport* from 1962 to the present (3486 articles). Terry

is now working on earlier years of *Sport* which generously have been loaned by Committee member and RBI cataloger Steve Milman. Terry has also keyed in hundreds of handwritten entries submitted by Terry Smith as well as preparing the text of this newsletter for the Committee's web site (http://www.baldeagle.com/bibcomm).

Speaking of Terry Smith, he has indexed 679 articles from *Baseball Magazine*, including all articles by Frank C. Lane from 1912 to 1937, as well as completing all other articles from 1912 and 1913.

John McMurray has continued his work on new issues of *Baseball Digest* and *Sports Collectors Digest*, cataloging a total of 70 during the summer. Cataloging new issues of current publications is a good, steady way to contribute to the project and I recommend it to any member interested in an easy way to begin working on RBI. Please contact me if you are interested.

Rich Puerzer has recently begun work on cataloging *Spitball* with 18 articles so far. Adding this important fiction publication to RBI will be a real bonus for us. Thank you, Rich, and good luck.

A variety of other publications have been cataloged as well: American Legion Magazine (1942-1965; 143 articles); Christian Science Monitor (1999; 28 articles); Liberty (1924-1930; 72 articles); Leslie's Weekly (1882-1922; 924 articles); Life (1925-1935; 1958-1961; 87 articles); Outing (1883-1898, 1916-1922; 134 articles); Senior Scholastic (1952-1968; 131 articles); Sports Illustrated (scattered issues, 1976-1996; 292 articles); Stars and Stripes (1943-1945, 1953; 329 articles); and hundreds of articles from dozens of nonsport publications from the 1960's.

This brings us to a total of 23,278 new article source references added to the database in the last two quarters, most of it coming in the second quarter. There were 4863 entries added this past quarter.

What good has this done? More business for RBI, to be sure. In the last newsletter, Andy McCue reported that sales of RBI and RBI search results had added almost \$1300 to SABR's coffers in the previous year. We have almost equaled that total in just the past three-plus months (\$1149). A dozen copies and subscriptions to RBI have been sold in that time, plus many individual searches. Some "celebrities" using RBI in recent months have been Daniel Okrent, Jack Kavanagh, Norman Macht, Pat Williams (executive vice-president of the Orlando Magic), and David Margolick (author of At the Bar, and Undue Influence). RBI customers can now charge their orders directly through the SABR office and it is now possible to order copies of the database directly from the SABR web site (http://www.sabr.org/merchandise/rbi.shtml). As always, all RBI receipts benefit SABR only; RBI is a completely volunteer effort.

Web Notes

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The new SABR Web site (http://www.sabr.org) contains some Bibliography Committee products worth noting. Current Baseball Publications by Rich Arpi is available full-text: http://www.sabr.org/cbp.shtml. This not only contains the current issue, but all previous issues of the current year, plus the annual compilations back through 1995. As this is one of the most significant products of our Committee, I am delighted to have it up as part of the main SABR Web site.

As noted elsewhere in this issue, Research in Baseball Index (RBI) is now listed as a SABR product for sale along with other SABR publications (http://www.sabr.org/merchandise/rbi.shtml). Anyone interested can purchase copies of RBI in various computer formats directly from the SABR Web site. As always, SABR members enjoy a substantial discount.

Jay-Dell Mah, the new SABR Webmaster, is currently working on compiling, for the SABR Web site, a complete index to the SABR Research Library. It is planned that this directory will link directly to electronic copies of the research documents referenced in the directory

as they become available. This would allow SABR members and other researchers direct access through the Web to these important documents. All SABR members who have previously submitted research to the SABR Research Library (well run by Len Levin) are encouraged to resubmit their work in electronic format, if possible. All formats are welcome, although Word, ASCII, and HTML are preferred. Please contact me for more details.

A Web site of note for Bibliography Committee members is Amazon (http://www.amazon.com). This may seem obvious, commercial, or banal, but it really is an excellent Web site for searching a truly extensive database of books in and out of print. As a bibliographic tool it is handy and informative. In addition to status and brief bibliographic information, many entries also contain user reviews, which can offer additional information. The search engine is generally fast and readily takes free text, although common titles can sometimes bring up many titles and necessitate a lot of browsing. Whether you chose to purchase something and use their somewhat uneven service is another matter. I am speaking strictly in terms of looking up books using their database. For this reason, it is definitely worth a look.

New Bibliography Committee Project Proposal

An Historical Catalog to American and Canadian Newspapers

We are looking for interested Bibliography Committee members to research and prepare a useful finding tool for baseball research. This catalog would allow researchers to find out quickly what newspapers were in print and for how long for each major- and minor-league city in the United States and Canada. A sample entry might look like this (the following dates and names are not necessarily accurate):

Minneapolis (MN)

Minneapolis Journal, 1853-1918 Minneapolis Tribune, 1856-1985 Minneapolis Times, 1891-1947 Minneapolis Star, 1925-1981 StarTribune, 1985-present

Researchers typically look to newspapers for the best information on local baseball, but the names and runs of these newspapers are often difficult to find. A handy guide like this one would be a real time-saver.

The catalog would be arranged geographically, along with a title and a place-name index. The best sources for compiling the information would be: Roswell's American Newspaper Directory (1869-1908), Ayer's American Newspaper Annual and Directory (1880-1970), and Gale Directory of Publications (1970-present).

Anyone interested in working on this project should contact Ted-Hathaway, 3536 Orchard Lane, Minnetonka, MN 55305 [612/908-0299 or sabrbi@baldeagle.com (e-mail)].

Book Reviews

Ted Hathaway

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VIVA BASEBALL!: Latin Major Leaguers and Their Special Hunger

Samuel O. Regalado. Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1998. 224p. \$39.95 (hc), \$16.95 (ppr)

After arriving in the United States in the 1950s, Felipe Alou was disgusted to find nothing but steak to eat, day after day. Accustomed to the Caribbean staples of rice and beans, Alou found the high-fat, high-protein American diet very heavy. We've all heard the stories for years

about newly arrived Latin American players knowing no English but "ham and eggs" and subsisting on nothing else for months.

In this fascinating study of culture shock and the Latin American immigrant experience, Regalado shows that the difficulties experienced by Latin American ballplayers extended way beyond a mere language barrier. Latin Americans were isolated, discriminated against by teammates, managers, fans, and media, and pigeonholed by convenient stereotypes that persist to this day. It was more than a matter of simple misunderstanding: Americans not only did not recognize the cultural differences of Latin Americans, it apparently didn't even occur to them that these differences might exist and what effect they might have on Latin Americans.

Despite the presence of Latin American players in the major leagues since the turn of the century, and the large influx of Latin Americans after World War II, it wasn't until the 1960s that big-league clubs began to make any kind of special accommodation for them. The usual experience was to be assigned to the low minors in some remote backwater. "Where is Michigan City, Indiana"? Juan Marichal asked plaintively upon learning of his 1956 destination. These players were usually the only Hispanics in town. Few, if anyone, on their teams spoke Spanish. Add to this the fact that many Latin Americans were dark-skinned in a time when Jim Crow still prevailed and it is no surprise to learn of the soul-crushing loneliness and homesickness they felt. Yet, club management saw fit to do nothing for them.

Indeed, the ignorance and insenstivity of management and the media is astonishing. Journalists, unable to communicate with the Spanish-speaking players, usually resorted to ethnic stereotypes while complaining of the players' "silence". The language/culture gap also brought on attempts to "Americanize" Latin American players by giving them unwanted nicknames (e.g., Bobby instead of Roberto, Matty instead of Mateo, Minnie instead of Orestes). When players sought other Latin American players for some welcome company, they were depicted as "clannish" and earned the resentment of American teammates as well as the media.

It got no better when players learned some English, opening the door to verbatim quotations by a press apparently eager to compound the "he talks funny" image of Latin American players, and leading players such as Roberto Clemente to regard the press warily. Clemente fought against negative media his entire career, mostly in silence, but occasionally lashing out: "The more I stay away from writers, the better I am," he once screamed. "You know why? Because they're trying to create a bad image for me. You know what they have against me? Because I'm black and Puerto Rican." At other times, reported routinely heard: "You guys never give me credit."

Other persistent stereotypes extended to Latin American players; e.g., the "lazy wetback" and the "fiery Latin". From Dolf Luque to Jose Canseco, Latin American players showing temper or any unwillingness to go along with the media have been written off as "moody". Likewise, a stint on the disabled list might lead the press or a manager to wonder about a player's work ethic or commitment to the team.

The chapter on "Fernandomania" is truly excellent. The author convincingly demonstrates that the wild enthusiasm for Mexican pitcher Fernando Valenzuela in 1981 was not only a liberation for Latin American players from the second-rate treatment they had so long received, but also a defining moment for all Hispanics, both in the United States and in Latin America, particularly Mexico. Valenzuela's popularity crossed all ethnic and even international boundaries. Even the media were sent scrambling trying to accommodate the Spanish-speaking star. The Hispanic community in the United States, so long ignored but rapidly growing in recent decades, found a catalyst in Valenzuela that forced Hispanics into the national consciousness, making them an indelible part of the American national culture. Finally, Regalado shows that with Fernandomania, baseball achieved one of those rare moments in the game's history, such as the integration of Jackie Robinson, when its significance transcends the sport to influence the society as a whole.

Drawing from a wide variety of sources (newspaper and magazine articles, personal interviews, and books), Regalado gives a general history of Latin Americans in the major leagues, while focusing mainly on the epxeriences of individual players, such as Minnie Minoso, Felipe

Alou, Tony Oliva, Roberto Clemente, and Bobby Avila. While the author is generous in his detail of the players' baseball accomplishments, his work is as much a social and ethnic history as it is a baseball book. However, readers should not be led to think they will find the reading dull or "academic". Regalado's prose is concise and economic, he quotes liberally, and he relates numerous interesting anecdotes. Readers interested in the role of Latin Americans in baseball history, their treatment in American society, and the experiences of individual players will find *Viva Baseball!* an interesting and rewarding book.

BALL, BAT and BISHOP: The Origin of Ball Games Robert W. Henderson. New York: Rockport Press, 1947. 220p.

Henderson made a name for himself in the baseball world more than 60 years ago when he decisively demolished the "Doubleday myth" concerning the origins of baseball. In a series of articles published in *Bulletin of the New York Public Library* ["How Baseball Began", Apr. 1937, p.286; "Baseball and Rounders", Apr. 1939, p.302; and "Baseball; the Earliest Known Rules", July 1940, p.529], he not only provided substantial evidence pointing to rounders and its congeners, as the true antecedents of the game, he went on to point out the lack of any credible evidence that Abner Doubleday had anything to do with the "invention" of baseball.

Henderson, who held the interesting post of librarian for the Racquet and Tennis Club of New York, is actually better known for an earlier work, Early American Sport: A Checklist of Books by American and Foreign Authors Published in America Prior to 1860, Including Sporting Song (1937), which is still in print. Ball, Bat and Bishop, while covering the history of the origins of other ball games as well as baseball, reiterates and expands on the author's original arguments concerning the origins of baseball. Unfortunately, Henderson should have stuck to bibliography and stayed away from history.

Henderson's central argument is that virtually all ball games are descended from ancient fertility rites, specifically those of ancient Egypt. From these ancient games, we progress to "la soule", a generic name for a host of ball games played throughout medieval Europe, from which most modern ball games developed. Henderson uses many literary and historical sources demonstrating how these games were incorporated into formal and ecclesiastical rituals through the centuries. He makes the interesting argument that having two sides in a contest was used to symbolize good versus evil, summer versus winter, day versus night, and all the other opposing dualities that characterize human experience and the natural world, dualities of particular interest to ancient and primitive societies. The ball itself was the symbol of procreation and fertility; the importance of controlling and possessing it is obvious.

The significance of sport, particularly ball games, in religious or social rituals is undeniable. The parallels drawn between the practices and customs of organized sport and organized religion have been made by many. But his argument that ball games were the product of these rituals is unconvincing. I believe Henderson is putting the cart before the horse.

A simpler explanation is that ball games evolved by themselves. The creativity of children in "inventing" games from the mundane materials on hand is evident to anyone. Adults in primitive cultures, especially pre-agrarian societies, experience frequent periods of idleness in which there is time for recreation. Round or roughly round objects abound in nature: fruit, nuts, rocks, clods of dirt, bits of sod, chunks of wood, etc. Throwing, kicking, or hitting these objects with equally abundant sticks and making a game of it takes little imagination. Asserting that these simple activities were invented in the framework of elaborate ritual strikes me as getting the facts backward. Henderson should have remembered that religions have long made it their business to appropriate popular customs into their rituals as a way of reinforcing the devotions of the populace.

The real "font" of ball games seems more likely to be "la soule'. Henderson described it as being played with a ball driven with the foot, the hand, or sticks of varying kinds. "The ball was usually made of leather, stuffed with bran, hemp, wool or some similar material. Occasionally it was wooden." In other words, participants kicked, threw, or

hit homemade balls with homemade sticks, the materials on hand. There is no need to summon complex explanations for such a simple activity. Given the description, it is easy to see how la soule was the real parent of our modern games of cricket, football, soccer, tennis, golf, and baseball.

Of particular interest to readers here is, of course, Henderson's coverage of baseball's origins. Nearly a third of the book is taken up with this subject, and it is by far the most interesting reading. He finishes with two lengthy chapters on the Doubleday myth and the story of how this came about is fascinating. The author wonders at how anyone could have bought the myth and it truly is ridiculous. Unfortunately, Henderson makes his point too stridently and takes the matter too seriously. He dissects the Mills Commission's "findings" with lots of parenthetical slams and a "gotcha" manner of fault-finding. This is shooting fish in a barrel. He admits that by the 1930s most journalists held a patronizing view of the Doubleday myth and considered it to be a "harmless legend"-which, indeed, it is. But Henderson could not tolerate the myth and grew indignant at any perpetuation of this misconception, championing Alexander Cartwright as the true "Father of Baseball". I find this a bit much. Albert Spalding and A.G. Mills may have been the collective Parson Weems of baseball in inventing the Doubleday myth, but like the cherry-tree tale about Washington, the Cooperstown origin of baseball is equally harmless.

Sad to say, the flaw of Henderson's central argument on the origins of ball games, and his overly energetic attack on the Doubleday myth, are not the only shortcomings of this book. Many of the chapters make for dull reading as the author ploddingly records various literary and historical references to each ball game. Looking over his list of references at the end of the book it is clear that it is well researched, yet the omissions are considerable. Henderson covers all manner of ball games from polo to stoolball to billiards, yet he makes no mention of croquet, squash, lapta, pesāpallo, Ping-Pong, rugby, and, most surprisingly, basketball.

In addition to exposing the fraud of the Doubleday myth, Henderson's studies in the 1930s of the origins of baseball gave us the first real understanding of the true antiquity of the game. We can appreciate him for this approach. The reader's time would be better spent, however, looking over Henderson's original articles in the *Bulletin of the New York Public Library*, while those wanting a history of ball games might try *An Illustrated History of Ball Games* (Heinemann, London, 1978) by Nigel Viney and Neil Grant. *Ball, Bat and Bishop* is not recommended.

Book Review

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UNDERWORLD

Don DeLillo. New York: Scribner, 1997. 827p. \$27.50

Underworld is now available in a paperback edition for a lower price, in case anyone is inspired by this review to purchase a copy. Underworld seems to this reader of genuine but marginal interest to SABrites. It is a very long, very ambitious novel, and its baseball content is small, though not negligible. In the Oct. 1992 issue of Harper's, DeLillo published what was then called "Pafko at the Wall", the setting of which was the Polo Grounds on Oct. 3, 1951. This novella, much revised, is now the first section of Underworld; it's been entitled "The Triumph of Death", after the painting by Brueghel.

The blurb on the back of *Underworld*, from Michael Ondaatje, seems accurate: DeLillo "offers us another history of ourselves, the unofficial underground moments. ... This book is an aria and a wolf-whistle of our half century. It contains multitudes." Among them are Simon Rodia, Lenny Bruce, a fictional graffiti artist and another whose masterpiece is a repainting of an abandoned fleet of B-52 bombers, J. Edgar Hoover and Clyde Tolson, nuns (one named Edgar), a central character

who's made his fortune in trash, a chess prodigy, a numbers runner, war games, ball games, and a memorabilia collector. Some of these lasts are of interest to a SABRite.

DeLillo seems to have taken pains to be accurate about the events of Oct. 3, 1951. At least he seems to have the details of Russ Hodges' broadcast of Thomson's home run correctly. He makes much of the coincidental announcement the next day of Russia's explosion of atomic bomb—another, more meaningful "Shot Heard 'Round the World". At any rate, DeLillo seems to render us all Dodgers fans. There's not a Giants fan in sight in the book, and many of the characters share a feeling of dread: the worst will happen.

One of the more interesting plots of the book for SABRites is the fate of the ball Thomson hit. In fact, should one wish to, it's possible to read that story without taking on the whole book. DeLillo does not present the events of the book in chronological order, so it will involve some skipping around. Start with the "Prologue" (p.11-60), which describes the events of Oct. 3, 1951. Then read the three "Manx Martin" chapters (p.137-150, 349-366, 641-656), which take you through the next day. Charles Wainwright, who buys the ball from Martin, is pictured in 1961 on pages 526-535, and his son Chuckie, to whom he gives the ball, is pictured in 1969 on pages 606-616. Then read about memorabilia collector Marvin Lundy's quest to authenticate the ball (p.305-324, Nick Shay's friend Brian's encounter with Lundy (p.167-186), Nick's call to Marvin to find if he's willing to sell (p.187-193), and finally Nick's current state as the ball's owner (p.91-100).

All these folks are full of angst, and those of us who collect baseball memorabilia may be startled by DeLillo's portrait of Marvin Lundy as someone who collects to ward off the terrors of the world, but this is what the book seems to be about. "Let's be honest," DeLillo writes, "it was Marvin who shuffled, Marvin who was the truer schlimazel, badlucked in his own mind, Marvin the Dodger fan, doomed in ways he did not wish to name" (p.324). DeLillo calls Marvin's search to authenticate the baseball "an eerie replay of the investigations into the political murders of the 1960s" (p.180-181).

Baseball, for DeLillo, holds a special place among American spor because of what he calls "the deep eros of memory" (p.171). Lunchimself describes the memorabilia collector (p.182):

"People who save these bat and balls and preserve the old stories through the spoken word and know the nicknames of a thousand players, we're here in our basements with tremendous history on our walls. And I'll tell you something, you'll see I'm right. There's men in the coming years, they'll pay fortunes for these objects. They'll pay unbelievable. Because this is desperation speaking."

Desperation? Lundy himself exemplifies finally DeLillo's notion of the "deep eros of memory". He thinks to himself (p.191-192):

"All that frantic passion for a baseball and he finally understood it was Eleanor [Lundy's wife] on his mind, it was some terror working deep beneath the skin that made him gather up things, amass possessions and effects against the dark shape of some unshoulderable loss. Memorabilia. What he remembered. What lived in the old smoked leather of the catcher's mitt in the basement was the touch of his Eleanor, those were his wife's eyes in the oval photographs of men with handlebar mustaches. The state of loss, the fact, the facticity in its lonely length."

DeLillo's version of America, and of baseball, is difficult and not very pleasant finally, but it is also worth the experience of reading *Underworld*, even in part.

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