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April 18, 2011

Foucault Steps Out to the Ballpark

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Abstract

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This is a study of applied philosophy. In it, I use Michel Foucault's methods of historical analysis, which he calls archaeology and genealogy, to rediscover the history of Major League Baseball. This Foucauldian history will allow me to dive deeper than would a standard history of ideas, and from a submerged structural level, let me reveal new truths about the game and its storied history. Hopefully, then, armed with new knowledge from a new vantage point, I can offer a statement about the status of baseball's current game.

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Table of Contents

Introduction-----	1
Chapter 1- Opening Foucault's Toolbox-----	3
Archaeological History-----	3
The Counterpart to Archaeology: Genealogy-----	11
The Fusion of the Two Histories-----	13
Deriving Power-Knowledge-----	20
Chapter 2- A Foucauldian Analysis of Major League Baseball-----	23
The Thinking Man's Game-----	25
The Spectacle of the Scaffold: Baseball in the Modern Episteme-----	32
The Limits of the Modern Episteme: Baseball Enters the Post-Modern-----	38
Chapter 3- Where Baseball Deviates-----	46
Baseball versus the Post-Modern-----	47
The Person or the Player-----	52
Conclusion-----	55

Introduction

"I write to be a kind of tool-box others can rummage through to find a tool they can use however they wish in their own area... I don't write for an audience, I write for users, not readers."¹ A statement from French philosopher Michel Foucault, this quotation has come to embody my mission. In "Foucault Steps Out to the Ballpark," I will arm myself with Foucault's tools of historical inquiry and use them on a field that Foucault did not cover: Major League Baseball. I will conduct an analysis of the sport in a way that I believe Foucault would have done, and in turn hopefully provide a new way to approach baseball history.

But why baseball? Because, as he himself says, Foucault's method lies on the shelves of knowledge, ready to be accessed and applied to various structures of thought. And what is a more fitting recipient of this Foucaudian method than my favorite game; one that I have always felt contained within its essence a certain component of knowledge absent in other sports? Both the baseball game itself, constructed to contain spurts of action within a general framework of inaction, and its history, undeniably intertwined with and engrained in American history, provide layers of power and knowledge relationships that rest in standard history's subconscious. Foucault's method will let me access that subconscious.

Foucault defines a modern era, or episteme, beginning at the turn of the 19th century and perhaps coming to a close in the early 1960s. Because a bulk of baseball's

¹ Michel Foucault (1974). 'Prisons et asiles dans le mécanisme du pouvoir' in *Dits et Ecrits*, t. II. Paris: Gallimard, 1994, pp. 523–4). Cited in wikipedia article, Michel Foucault.

history falls within that modern structure, I will attempt to lay it onto and compare it to the grid that Foucault has already created, hoping to find new truths from a new vantage point. If baseball's history can be applied to Foucault's histories of knowledge and power, then I will use the most current bracket of baseball history, from the 1960s to the present, which I will call the post-modern, to reveal the current structure that encloses us. Essentially, I will try to pick up where Foucault left off, using baseball to exhibit the next episteme that he never got the chance to analyze. Perhaps, then, I can offer a conclusion about baseball today from my Foucauldian standpoint, one that reveals new truths about the game that a standard history would overlook.

To conduct such a hefty project, I needed to be a student of both Foucault and baseball. Aside from reading many books on both topics, I was extremely fortunate to conduct major interviews with three baseball experts: George Will, a highly esteemed political columnist, but for our purposes a well respected baseball analyst and author; Fay Vincent, the eighth Commissioner of Major League Baseball, whose experience dealing with the business of baseball helped my research immensely; and Solly Hemus, a former player and manager whose years in the game coincide with the ones of particular importance in this study. Needless to say, each man is highly regarded in his respective field, and I am honored to have spoken with them. And while it is true that each of these men chose to speak with me out of the kindness of their hearts, and that their general tone made me feel more an equal than a subordinate, I must conclude that their comfortable generosity reflected as much on baseball as it did their good nature. I don't know of any other field in which renowned men such as these would gladly talk to a student with no credentials. There's something about baseball that connected us all.

Chapter One- Opening Foucault's Toolbox

Michel Foucault spent his later years sidestepping associations with various labels of philosophical thought, specifically the claim that he was a structuralist. His statement at the end of *Discipline and Punish*, in which he concludes an analysis of the birth of the modern prison system, answers these labelers: "At this point I end a book that must serve as a historical background to various studies of the power of normalization and the formation of knowledge in modern society" (DP, 308).² Foucault is conscious of the impact of his analysis, careful to explain that his approach is not to promote an overhaul of the prison system, but simply to provide an understanding of its machine. Foucault acts similarly obliquely in his study of knowledge in *The Order of Things*, quick to dodge claims that he encourages future systems of thought by affirming: "Of course, these are not affirmations; they are at most questions to which it is now possible to reply; they must be left in suspense, where they pose themselves, only with the knowledge that the possibility of posing them may well open the way to a future thought" (OT, 386).³ What is it, then, about Foucault's analysis that makes philosophical critics try to categorize him? And more importantly, what is it about Foucault's analysis that it is so important for him not to be categorized?

Archaeological History

The answer lies in Foucault's archeological and genealogical methods of historical analysis. Though different, both methods dive deeper than the standard history of ideas,

² Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish*. New York: Vintage, 1995. From this point on, this paper will refer to it as DP.

³ Foucault, Michel. *The Order of Things, An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. New York: Vintage, 1994. From this point on, this paper will refer to it as OT.

within which standard logic and language are included, to find the tectonics that shape history. These common denominators of historical thought lie in the subconscious of the subjects of that history and shape their development. When doing an archaeology of knowledge in *The Order of Things*, Foucault calls the tectonic brackets “epistemes.” Lying underneath the standard history, these epistemes, like the plates below our planet’s surface, collide and break. Therefore, the denominators of history are not fluid, but are rather “enigmatic discontinuities” that provide “minuscule but absolutely essential displacement” (OT, 217, 238). For Foucault, these ruptures create such subtle but distinct changes that forms of thought quickly become obsolete, explaining, “By revealing the law of time as the external boundary of the human sciences, History shows that everything that has been thought will be thought again by a thought that does not yet exist” (OT, 372). Therefore, the concepts of knowledge change, as differing discourses fill in the space within them, but also the structure of knowledge itself changes. As an example of such structural change, Foucault describes in *The Birth of the Clinic* the case that a doctor from the 18th century and another from the 19th century could look at the same diseased organ and draw two completely different conclusions as to what the disease is and how it should be treated. Though the answers differ so significantly, neither doctor would be wrong, since within their respective epistemes each doctor’s statements would be considered true. Using another example, as reported by Professor Flynn, a learned Jesuit chemist in the 1600s notes in his records seeing “vermiculi,” which in Latin means ‘little worms,’ as he viewed with his microscope an iron bar in water. It wasn’t until the 1700s that Joseph Priestley discovered oxidation, which clearly was what the Jesuit had witnessed a century before, but Foucault would explain that the

Jesuit chemist had not seen that which had not yet been discovered and hence was invisible, but rather he simply saw “little worms.”

An archaeologist must be armed with more information than the standard historian. No one book can encompass an episteme, nor can a reading of major works of a given time period sufficiently explain it. Only from an understanding of many books from a given period, from both famous and obscure authors, can an archaeologist reveal the shape of an episteme. For it is the concept, not the author who authors it, that both sets the limits and opens the doors of epistemological thought. In other words, put in Foucauldian terms, the language speaks us; we do not speak the language. As a result of this inversion, all thinkers, regardless of their notoriety, are symptoms of their episteme. Therefore, an author proposing knowledge of a differing thought structure only does so because the epistemic break has already occurred, not because his analysis ushers in a new episteme. Not unlike a phase change, in which a solid, liquid, or gas changes composition as a result of its temperature adaptations and not of its own doing, Foucault’s archaeology must value the thought, not the thinker. Philosopher Georges Canguilhem explains Foucault’s mission in his article The Death of Man, or the Exhaustion of the *Cogito*?⁴ “Foucault cites none of the historians in a given discipline; he refers only to original texts that slumber in libraries. People have talked about ‘dust.’ Fair enough. But just as a layer of dust on furniture is a measure of the housekeeper’s negligence, so a layer of dust on books is a measure of the carelessness of their custodians” (85). Therefore, Canguilhem would be pleased to find Foucault, after

⁴ Georges Canguilhem, "The Death of Man, or Exhaustion of the *Cogito*?" Gary Gutting, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 74-94.

describing the ways in which language changes from the classical to the modern episteme, asserting this very notion: “Only those who cannot read will be surprised that I have learned such a thing more clearly from Cuvier, Bopp, and Ricardo than from Kant or Hegel” (OT, 307). The search for obscurity would also explain why Foucault references various lesser-known thinkers throughout *The Order of Things*, such as Bauzee (122), Boissier de Sauvages (163), and Malestroit (211).

Canguilhem defines Foucault’s tendency to impersonalize the subject as his “*other history*, in which the concept of event is retained, but in which events affect concepts and not men” (82). Following this analysis, the doer of an action, or the communicator of an idea is removed, and the action or idea is left alone. Foucault describes this process as an effort to turn documents into monuments. Within the standard history of ideas, the document is the essence of history. Battles and treaties provide the bullet points on a flowing, yet surface-dwelling timeline, and the hand that writes the document is valued just as equally as the document written. The role of standard history is to ask about the human consciousness within the document, interpreting the intention of the document-writer, including his means and circumstances. The document, therefore, serves a distinct purpose, allowing for the “reconstruction...of the past from which [it] emanates and which has now disappeared far behind [it]; the document was always treated as the language of a voice since reduced to silence, its fragile but possibly decipherable trace” (AK, 7).⁵ History, therefore, tries to decipher these traces left by men by focusing on speech, language, and ultimately intentionality.

⁵ Foucault, Michel. *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*. New York: Pantheon, 1972. From this point on, this paper will refer to it as “AK.”

In short, the traditional history that Foucault criticizes ‘memorizes’ the silent monument and turns it into a speaking document.

Foucault’s archaeology does the opposite. It is an attempt to turn the speaking document into a silent monument, displacing the primacy of the subject found in traditional history and phenomenology. The voice of the intender is replaced by the voice of the archaeologist, who does not interpret the monument, but develops it. The monument is therefore much more active than the document. It serves to be analyzed and tinkered with, all in hopes of finding new totalities or relationships. The monument must not be ‘memorized’, or lie in ‘memory,’ for this reason. The silence of the monument allows for new voices to displace the space that the old voices of the authors or intenders used to fill.

Another indicator of the archaeological importance of the monument lies in the use of discourse within it. Foucault defines discourse as “the group of statements that belong to a single system of formation.”⁶ Essentially, it is the space between words and things, linking the two entities through signs and epistemic commonalities. Through language, discourse defines what can be said about a concept or topic, creating a specific vocabulary and style needed to communicate a certain idea. Put simply, discourse creates the order of things. To study the discursive formations of a given period, or episteme, is to examine the practice of communication without the speaker present, for filling the gaps between words and things requires activity, both to define the two terms and to examine the space between them. Like the move from the document to the monument, the

⁶ Flynn, Thomas. *Sartre, Foucault, and Historical Reason Volume II: A Post Structuralist Mapping of History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005. p. 312

archaeologist studies discourse so that he may operate at a more unconscious, impersonal level.

The traditional history can be explained through Descartes' *cogito*, in which he famously asserts: "I think, therefore, I am." This humanistic claim suggests a doubled man, meaning that the human is both the subject and predicate. The study of discourse and the questioning of the document, which removes the individual from discursive thought and puts silent monuments at the forefront of philosophical thought, would understandably rework some of the older foundations of traditional history. The *cogito* is one of those philosophical foundations. British philosopher Bertrand Russell, although not a supporter of the archaeological approach to historical analysis, rewords the *cogito*, or displaces its discourse, by claiming that a more fitting assertion would be: "I think, therefore there is thought." An impersonal *cogito* focuses thought inward on itself, not outward towards some symptom of it. This clearly exemplifies the goal of archaeology: to create a method of analysis in which, with the intender removed, the discursive subject can be isolated, examined, and related to other discourses, ultimately creating a study of commonalities and the ruptures between them.

Jean-Paul Sartre, a French philosopher and contemporary of Foucault, adequately describes his colleague's archaeology as that of a slide show rather than a movie. This metaphor is especially apt, for it soundly explains many of the features of and functions within archaeology. First it explains the slide itself and its relation to the viewer, for which we will look to Velasquez's "Las Meninas" as an example. In the still image, the painter, Velasquez, seemingly paints either the viewer or himself, based on his vantage point, although the reflection of a mirror in the background of the frame suggests that it

might be the king that he is painting. The submerged dialogue between the painter, the painted, and the viewer creates a web of relationships, causing Foucault to say, “representation is represented at every point” (OT, 307). This maze of representation is exactly what defines a monument and separates it from the document, for it quietly stands to be actively interpreted and assessed. In the fabric of the painting and the relationships within it, the viewer is as tangled as the painted characters. Foucault goes on to explain: “All the interior lines of the painting, and above all those that come from the central reflection, point towards the very thing that is represented, but absent” (OT, 308). Foucault uses this painting to illuminate a structural, epistemic change by emphasizing the diminishing role of man, “the very thing that is represented, but absent,” within a network in which he is both subject and object. By revealing the mutually exclusive relationship between man and representation, meaning that modern man’s death must insure the end of representation, “Las Meninas” proves the power of the picture, or the slide in the slideshow. Only through an analysis of this picture, or monument, could Foucault explain this point, for it allows the viewer literally to draw out the lines that expose man’s absence.

The slide show metaphor also explains the relationship between one slide and another, for which “Las Meninas” can also be helpful in expounding. It is as if the painting, through the grid of representation, provides distinct numbers and figures for the archaeologist to plug into an equation and calculate a result, which he can then hold up to and make distinctions with the results of other frames. This means that works of art like “Las Meninas”, or *Don Quixote*, or the writings of Marquis de Sade, all of which Foucault attributes a certain indication of epistemic change, can be analyzed as

monuments and held to one another. Such a comparison highlights certain absences and deficiencies, through which the archaeologist can define the episteme beneath it. Where the slide show has sturdy, grounded frames with gaps in between them, allowing for comparison, a movie has flowing plot. With no comparative space in between and no resting table to lie out its components, the movie, like the standard history of ideas, makes archaeology impossible.

Armed with an understanding of the archaeological method, we can look to the initial question posed earlier: what is it about Foucault's analysis, archaeology, that it is so important for him not to be categorized? The publication of *The Order of Things*, in which Foucault makes various claims about numerous fields of knowledge, received significant criticism. After all, how can one profess to know so much about so many intellectual fields that he can alter the entire system of thought that had previously governed them? This is precisely the reason that Foucault cannot be labeled though. This is precisely why he chooses to use obscure texts from obscure writers instead of the most famous works and minds of a respective field. Is it because the writer is merely a symptom of his episteme, and therefore all writers and works, big and small, are considered of equal importance? Yes, that is true. But Foucault has an ulterior motive. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, he explains: "I have tried to define this blank space from which I speak, and which is slowly taking shape in a discourse that I still feel to be so precarious and so unsure" (AK, 17). Foucault writes from a blank space, or at least claims he does, so that he can stay out of the way of specialists in the fields that he addresses. To use small, obscure names is to duck under the wheelhouses of intellectual experts, who surely have a firm grip on the most notable thinkers and works of their

respective fields of knowledge. Foucault is dodging these experts, hoping that by studying and referencing obscurities, he can catch them off guard, finding himself in that blank space that lies far away from the standard criticisms that he expects. This is why Foucault, in his introduction of *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, in which he defines his method of archaeology, reminds his critics of the following: “I am no doubt not the only one who writes in order to have no face. Do not ask who I am and do not ask me to remain the same: leave it to our bureaucrats and our police to see that our papers are in order. At least spare us their morality when we write” (AK, 17).

Despite Foucault’s many efforts to avoid criticisms for his archaeology, there is one aspect of its history that he cannot defend: archaeology cannot explain the cause of an epistemic transition. In fact, Foucault professes that causality is irrelevant in archaeology, for it merely serves to identify ruptures, not to explain them. As a result, the archaeological method is criticized for not predicting contingencies, or for not offering solutions to contemporary social issues, since its analysis has no place for graphs containing trends or tendencies. Therefore, in an attempt to remedy this glaring shortcoming while still maintaining the principles of an archaeological analysis, Foucault turns to genealogy.

The Counterpart to Archaeology: Genealogy

Genealogical history is archaeology with an element of curiosity. It retains the epistemic focus of archaeology, searching for the lowest common denominator of thought, but it does not conclude that these underlying structures are inevitable. In short, it wonders about causality. Foucault uses the genealogical method in *Discipline and Punish*, in which he explains the development of the modern prison system. Now the focus is no

longer on discourse but on the non-discursive, or simply put, power relations. At the end of “Part Two: The Gentle Way in Punishment,” Foucault explains the three ways to organize the power to punish that existed in the later part of the eighteenth century. The first was based on the old monarchical law, which publicly punished criminals with a focus on torturing the body, for physical pain represented an extension of sovereignty and the restoration of its law. In the second way, “the reforming jurists saw punishment as a procedure for requalifying individuals as subjects, as juridical subjects,” meaning that it used signs of punishment, such as community service, to instill a sense of humiliating and noticeable punishment that did not injure the body as the first model did (DP, 130). The third model, however, coerced criminals not by using signs like the second model, but by applying the traces that those signs leave. These traces, meaning habit and behavior, train the delinquent to become a productive member of society, rather than the branded criminal that the other two models create. Foucault acknowledges that it is the third model that will take hold, but then he does something that highlights the difference between the archaeological and genealogical method: he asks why.

The problem, then, is the following: how is it that, in the end, it was the third that was adopted? How did the coercive, corporal, solidarity, secret model of the power to punish replace the representative, scenic, signifying, public, collective model? Why did the physical exercise of punishment replace...the social play of the signs of punishment and the prolix festival that circulated them? (DP, 131).

Though his genealogy asks about causality, it does not consider it as central to its method as does the standard history of ideas. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault never actually answers this question that he poses. Instead, he outlines the extent to which the third model takes hold, creating a carceral society in which “prisons resemble factories,

schools, barracks, hospitals, which all resemble prisons” (DP, 228). But because he poses the question, and then goes into an elaborate description of the extent to which the prison pushed criminals towards normalcy, he saves himself from the same criticisms he heard for his archaeology in *The Order of Things*. To consider causality, and then to give analysis in line with this questioning, Foucault relieves himself of the high levels of abstraction within *The Order of Things* and the archaeological method itself.

The Fusion of the Two Histories

Though archaeology and genealogy are two distinctly separate methods, they are not mutually exclusive. In fact, they frequently overlap and complement each other. In *The Order of Things*, in which Foucault applies his archaeological method, he presents the doubling of man as one of the challenges of the modern episteme. This means that Foucault sees the subject of the question, “who is man?” also to be the object, or answer, creating an ambiguous man without a clear identity. The classical episteme finds representation at its center, making the question of man’s identity transparent and, therefore, quite simple. The experience of nature is the subject, and man becomes the object. In modern thought, “there has been a fourfold displacement...for it is now a question not of truth, but of being; not of nature, but of man” (OT, 323). Therefore, for example, where language in classicism was its own subject, with man merely as a means to represent it, modernity finds man as “the subject of a language that for thousands of years has been formed without him” (OT, 323). This means that man, as a knowing subject, cannot see himself as that subject, since he must hold himself as the object of his knowledge. What results is a man who can only find recognition as an object, but that recognition presents him as rather hollow. To find a grounding that resolves these

tensions, modern man looks towards an origin, hoping to trace his existence back to some buried foundation of knowledge. Foucault explains: “In the modern experience...the retreat of the origin is more fundamental than all experience, since it is in it that experience shines and manifests its positivity; it is because man is not contemporaneous with his being that things are presented to him with a time that is proper to them” (OT, 335). Essentially, once the modern man begins to dive down in search of stability, hoping to find it in a previous time rather than his own, he begins to consider a history of causality. Here lies the flaw of modern man.

Through his genealogical means in *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault arrives at a similar conclusion. The prison has absolute power over the criminal within it. To execute this power, or power-over, the prison monitors the prisoner and regulates his every activity, hoping to instill in him a habit of social normalcy and productivity. Foucault acknowledges the social criticism of such a practice, for to put a prisoner to work “rewards the skill of the worker and not the improvement of the convict,” (DP, 240) and often times provides him with safer jobs than those of the innocent unemployed (DP, 241). Foucault does not concern himself with the benefits or criticisms of such a practice, but he does state the most important result of it: “The prison is not a workshop; it is, it must be of itself, a machine whose convict-workers are both the cogs and the products; it occupies them continually, with the sole aim of filling their moments” (DP, 242). To be both the cog and the product of a prison system means that the criminal is both the subject and object of its machine. In short, the modern prison system, like the archaeological modern episteme, though through completely different means, creates a doubled man.

The subject of modern morality provides another instance of the archaeological and genealogical methods working together. In the *Order of Things*, which has come to represent Foucault's archaeology, he claims, "modern thought has never, in fact, been able to propose a morality" (OT, 328). Because of the modern doubling of man, in whom knowledge traverses between thought and unthought, causing it to seek some origin outside of itself, Foucault believes that modern knowledge cannot stem from within. He goes on to say, "thought has already 'left' itself in its own being as early as the nineteenth century; it is no longer theoretical" (OT, 328). A retreat to knowledge from without causes the modern man to find an empty morality, one with an absence of virtue. A modern morality, therefore, is impossible.

Without contradicting his archaeology, Foucault's genealogical method suggests that morality might have taken up a new residence. As if accepting his archaeological claim in *The Order of Things* that morality in the modern episteme is impossible, Foucault's genealogy searches elsewhere for it. This search brings Foucault to the process of turning a thief into a docile worker. Using a statement from 19th century French politician Leon Faucher, Foucault asserts, "Work is the providence of the modern peoples; it replaces morality, fills the gap left by beliefs and is regarded as the principle of all good. Work must be the religion of the prisons" (DP, 242).⁷ Genealogy, then, finds a morality: work and discipline. Though archaeological knowledge cannot provide this modern morality through its methods, genealogy can. Whether or not a morality founded on hard work and rehabilitation is sufficient, Foucault does not say. The fact remains that the genealogical method picks up the slack of its counterpart to provide the

⁷ Faucher, Leon, *De la reforme des prisons*, 1838.

missing morality. “This is the utility of remuneration for penal labour; it imposes on the convict the ‘moral’ form of wages as the condition of his existence” (DP, 243). Foucault uses Faucher’s writings to provide an example of genealogical morality in action, describing the prison labor at women’s workshop at Clairvaux: “On a throne, above which is a crucifix, a sister is sitting; before her, arranged in two rows, the prisoners are carrying out the task imposed on them and...the strictest silence is constantly maintained...It seems that, in these halls, the very air breathes penitence and expiation” (DP, 243-4). He then contrasts this instance of ordered discipline by rehabilitating delinquents with a description of a standard cotton-mill whose workers have no sense of the morality that the carceral society instills: “listen to the conversations of the workers and the whistling of the machines. Is there any contrast in the world more afflicting than the regularity and disorder of ideas and morals, produced by the contact of so many men, women and children?” (DP, 244).

Though the doubling of man and existence of modern morality highlight the common ground between differing methods, they are merely tributaries into the most significant joint use of archaeology and genealogy: the modern move towards efficiency. Foucault’s “Limits of Representation” chapter in *The Order of Things* describes the crossroads and displacement between the classical and modern epistemes, to which he looks to the field of economics as an example. He first addresses the classical concept of labor as toil and time, or a day’s work. Classicism regarded labor as a clear measuring tool, for “a man’s labour was in fact equal to the value of the quantity of nourishment necessary to maintain him and his family for as long as a given task lasted” (OT, 222). A symbol of direct representation, the measure of equivalences was the need for essentials,

namely food, meaning a day's worth of labor would provide enough for a worker to support his family. On Foucault's reading, economist Adam Smith's analysis of labor,⁸ however, displaces the classical notion of representation and indicates the rise of the modern political economy. His analysis asserts that labor "is no longer simply a way of expressing exchange in terms of need (and trade in terms of primitive barter); it reveals an irreducible, absolute unit of measurement" (OT, 223). The modern episteme removes the direct representation of the simple input/output ratio of work to necessity, and in its place, labor is infused with an element of time, becoming work and the measure of work. Foucault explains that the numerator of the labor equation, a day's work, remains the same. What changes is the denominator, or the number of objects produced. Therefore, labor becomes not toil and time, as it was in the classical period, but toil plus time. Man now becomes subjected to "time and to the great exterior necessity" (OT, 225). His output is measured by efficiency and productiveness. A day's work overflows classical basic need and spills into a product requiring organic structures to contain its varying factors. These varying factors require a new science of measuring labor exchange that can be quantified, and as a result give rise to a new set of positivities.

Foucault's analysis of language also reveals the modern move towards efficiency. Analyzed comparatively by representation, language significances were measured so that they could be vertically compared to their deeply rooted, original values. The rise of the modern episteme adds another function: the horizontal comparison of languages by using inflection. The comparisons are still made using aspects of representation, but with "formal elements, grouped into a system, which impose upon the sounds, syllables, and

⁸ Smith, Adam, *The Wealth of Nations* (1776; University Library Edition).

roots an organization that is not that of representation” (OT, 235). Essentially, language becomes thicker, with each word containing dimensions other than simply meaning, or name. Inflectional modifications, therefore, correspond to modifications in meaning, syntax, or grammar, indicating that an interior “mechanism” makes modern language irreducible to representation. Resulting from this thickness within the word’s “character”, language becomes temporal, for the emphasis on certain syllables, or length that they are held, affects the word’s meaning.

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault finds the same emphasis on efficiency through the ultimate model of the carceral society: the Panopticon. Based on a model created by Jeremy Bentham, in which a building with a large tower stood in the center of surrounding prison cells, the Panopticon was a visibility trap. From the tower looking at the prisoners, the authorities could see everyone, but the prisoners could neither see nor communicate with other jailers or wardens. Foucault explains: “He is seen, but he does not see; he is the object of information, never a subject in communication...And this invisibility is a guarantee of order” (DP, 200). The criminal must always assume he is being watched, though he can never really know, and as a result he becomes ruled by an unverifiable and disindividual power. The enforcement of this power lies only in the criminal, who must assume that he is being constantly surveyed, making the criminal his own guard. Because there is no actual connection to any authority, the Panopticon functions “to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power” (DP, 201). What results from this mechanism is the most efficient form of power possible, allowing for the greatest number of people to be controlled by the smallest number. And Foucault attributes this control

not to the enforcement of prison authorities, but simply to its architecture. As a means of further understanding the power within this model, one can look to sociologist Max Weber, who assigns to all rationality two forms. The first is instrumental rationality, which can also be called end rationality and refers strictly to efficiency and productivity. Weber's other rationality is means based, which he calls value rationality. Weber's instrumental, or end rationality lies at the heart of Bentham's Panopticon model.

The Panopticon emerged from a classical form of discipline that did not use its architecture to ingrain obedience. This classical form was the blockade, an enclosed institution on the edges of society that turns itself towards negative functions: "arresting evil, breaking communications, suspending time" (DP, 209). This is a much more straightforward method, focusing on nothing but the physical punishment for controlling crime and creating order. In the modern, Panoptic form, physicality is displaced by the subtle mind control of a large number of prisoners at once. The prisoners are not simply shut into a dark cell, but rather they are free to live in the light. As they live in the light, though, they are ruled over by an invisible eye, constantly examining them. Like the archaeological man and his double as both the subject and object of his existence, the prisoner's own eye and the Panoptic eye become synonymous, for he exists both as the guard and the guarded. Though Foucault remains mostly objective throughout this analysis, he does not understate the influence of the Panopticon in society. In fact, he emphasizes the appeal that such a mechanism had on a population that had grown accustomed to the straightforward physicality of standard methods of punishment. After all, an omniscient power source that cannot be seen has a much wider and stronger influence than the representative relationship between the body of the criminal and the

sovereign body of the king, especially if that influence presents itself as a helpful, rehabilitative force coercing populations towards a societal normalcy. With this in mind, Foucault asks, “is it surprising that prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals, which all resemble prisons?” (DP, 228), for they all examine workers, students, or prisoners and try to move them towards normalcy. Clearly, then all of modern society is affected by Panopticism and its emphasis on swift efficiency, for all citizens spend time in at least one of these public institutions.

Deriving Power-Knowledge

If it is safe to combine archaeology and genealogy, then it is safe to combine their subjects of interest, or derivatives, which in *The Order of Things* and *Discipline and Punish*, are knowledge and power, respectively. A crucial statement in Foucault’s approach to his genealogical analysis highlights this power-knowledge union:

Perhaps, too, we should abandon a whole tradition that allows us to imagine that knowledge can exist only where the power relations are suspended and that knowledge can develop only outside its injunctions, its demands and its interests. Perhaps we should abandon the belief that power makes mad and that, by the same token, the renunciation of power is one of the conditions of knowledge. We should admit rather that power produces knowledge (and not simply by encouraging it because it serves power or by applying it because it is useful); that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations... In short, it is not the activity of the subject of knowledge that produces a corpus of knowledge, useful or resistant to power, but power-knowledge, the processes and struggles that traverse it and of which it is made up, that determines the forms and possible domains of knowledge. (DP, 27-8)

Power and knowledge are therefore inseparable. When forming the structures of a given system, they do not simply overlap; they require each other.

With an understanding of the power-knowledge union, we can now do a re-run of what was said in *The Order of Things*, this time considering archaeology in terms of power relationships, as well as knowledge. It will be this term, power-knowledge that will provide us the standpoint from which to view the institution and practices of American Baseball, both the essence of the sport and the relationships within it, which is the topic of our next chapter. Foucault defines power as “action on the action of others,”⁹ which, when combined with knowledge, casts a shadow over the entire archaeological process in *The Order of Things*. Essentially, Foucault’s archaeology becomes analyzed with inclusion and exclusion in mind, meaning that the forms of knowledge that he describes can be scrutinized and questioned. Power-knowledge asks what is in the truth, or what counts as the knowledge that Foucault ascribes to different epistemes, hoping to find the relationship between things and their structures. This process questions control, authority, and competency.

Conscious of power-knowledge, we can reassess the modern man. By questioning his existence, searching outward for some origin or tradition that can ground him, the modern man slips into, and in effect creates power-knowledge. He approaches the structures of knowledge, shown in *The Order of Things*, while wondering about his own power and competency, which results from the genealogical methods within *Discipline and Punish*, causing him to become unsatisfied with his modern position. It is his look towards an origin, farther and farther away from himself, combined with his questions about the structures that

⁹ Flynn, Thomas. *Sartre, Foucault, and Historical Reason Volume II: A Post Structuralist Mapping of History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005. p. 314

surround him that indicate his demise, causing Foucault to sense that the modern episteme is “perhaps nearing its end” (OT, 387).

Though power-knowledge allows us to witness the fading modern man and his quest to know himself, leading him away from his position of power in the modern episteme, it is important not to see it as completely negative. In fact, Foucault goes further, insisting that we “cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it ‘excludes’, it ‘represses’, it ‘censors’, it ‘abstracts’, it ‘masks’, it ‘conceals’. In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth” (DP, 194). Foucault urges his reader to appreciate that power, when combined with knowledge, is constructive. Though it may tear down the modern man, power-knowledge built him first, putting him in a position of power that inspired the very curiosity that ended him. Foucault also points out that power-knowledge, and the subjects upon which they act, are transitory. Any recipient of the influences of power-knowledge must accept this fact, never growing complacent with the norms of the fleeting structure beneath his feet. After all, an episteme rises and falls “like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea” (OT, 387).

Chapter 2- A Foucauldian Analysis of Major League Baseball

In 1966, Foucault published *The Order of Things*, bringing his structural history into the center of the public arena. At the conclusion of his findings, Foucault leaves his readers and critics with his final statement: that we stand atop an epistemic rupture as the ground is shifting beneath our feet. The modern episteme is evaporating, as its essential component, man, is being led away in search of his origin, leaving a vacancy at the heart of the epistemic quadrilateral. Though Foucault is sure of the rumblings beneath his feet, he offers no prediction of the episteme to come.

The very same year that *The Order of Things* was published, members of the Major League Baseball Player's Association met secretly in Miami. The purpose of this meeting was to elect a new executive director of their historically ineffective association, one who would represent them by channeling their emerging activity into a productive challenge to the all-powerful owners. Baltimore Orioles pitcher Robin Roberts suggested the name Marvin Miller, a union man and economist, to be considered for hire. The committee would vote after Miller devoted two months to visiting spring training facilities. Miller spent his time asking questions and finding many unsettling answers. He would come across figures like Bob Barton, a journeyman, disgruntled backup catcher who at one point in his career found himself a third-string reserve on the Giants instead of a starter somewhere else. "I might not have been an Einstein, but I was no dummy," said Barton, who began to question the omnipotence of the baseball owners.¹⁰ In just ten

¹⁰ Charles Korr interview with Bob Barton, November 16, 1989.

years the Major League Baseball Player's Association, using Miller as their weapon, had abolished the controlling Reserve Clause that had ruled over them for almost a century.¹¹

Just ten years earlier in 1956, New York Yankee Mickey Mantle had won the American League Triple Crown, the most distinguished, single-season offensive award in baseball. After asking for a well-deserved raise, his general manager George Weiss angrily refused, threatening to hire a private detective to follow him around and report his findings to Mantle's wife (Mantle was notorious for his off-field antics). Mantle, in later years, added to the story, "[Weiss] threatened to trade me to Cleveland for Herb Score and Rocky Colavito."¹² This was the personal account of one of the best and most desired baseball players in the history of the game. For a more average ballplayer, whose value was far less than Mantle's, circumstances could have only been worse. "You basically had baseball players being indentured servants, and if the word weren't so charged, they really were slaves. I mean, they had no freedom," states the former MLB commissioner Fay Vincent.¹³

That the players wanted freedom from owners was not a new notion. They had been trying for years before 1966. The threat of the Mexican League in the 1940s stands as proof, for many players tried to switch to the newly created league that would rival existing American baseball while offering more money and freedom to players. It is within their means of obtaining that freedom, however, that the real structural change lies.

¹¹ Implemented in 1879, the Reserve Clause allowed each team to "reserve" players for each upcoming season. Players therefore had no ability to change employers.

¹² Dave Anderson, *New York Times*, January 26, 1992.

¹³ My Interview with Fay Vincent, December 17, 2010.

Also, on February 23, 1960, six years before this Miami meeting, forty-four-year-old Ebbets Field was knocked down. Walter O'Malley moved his Brooklyn Dodgers to Los Angeles and convinced the New York Giants' owner Horace Stoneham to move to San Francisco, ending a long-standing, beloved, New York baseball culture. The sixteen east coast clustered teams in Major League Baseball that had existed since 1901 had become twenty-four by 1969, scattered across the country.

The temporal and spatial alignment of Foucault's findings in France and the changes in Major League Baseball are not a coincidence. Rather, they occur along the same fault line that Foucault predicts at the conclusion of *The Order of Things*. To further this fusion of seemingly different arenas, the modern episteme about which Foucault speaks accurately describes American baseball pre-1966. But where Foucault never gets to witness the development of the post-modern episteme, baseball does. Therefore, this essay will suggest that because it parallels both Foucault's modern period and its rupture, Major League Baseball¹⁴ picks up where Foucault leaves off and, though through a different vehicle, correctly defines the post-modern episteme.

The Thinking Man's Game

But why Major League Baseball? What gives baseball the authority to provide a continuation of Foucault's archaeology and genealogy? After all, of all of the subjects Foucault studies, baseball relates to none of them.

To answer this, we must broaden our question. Baseball is a specific kind of game, which is a specific form of play. An appreciation of baseball and its worth entails

¹⁴ Hereafter referred to as MLB

an understanding of its more generalized taxonomic levels. Therefore, we must first look to the importance of play, for which we will use Johan Huizinga's *Homo Ludens*.¹⁵

Just as the term homo sapiens, man the thinker, has come to define anatomically modern humans, Huizinga suggests another apt description of modern man: homo ludens, or man the player. "It is a *significant* function- that is to say, there is some sense to it," he remarks of play, emphasizing that even within child's play lies a deliberate importance (HL, 1). That play means something does not automatically associate it with other universal views, but rather it is in itself a thing, or entity. As such, play stands as the antithesis of seriousness, embodied by these other universal views, and exists on its own. These two features of play, its non-seriousness and its conscious stance away from ordinary life, can be overlooked as being thoughtless. Huizinga is quick to point out, however, that play "absorb[s] the player intensely and utterly" (HL, 13). Its means of doing so is of particular relevance: "Play only becomes possible, thinkable and understandable when an influx of *mind* breaks down the absolute determinism of the cosmos" (HL, 3). Here lies the root of play: the use of the mind, or knowledge, to remove it from normalcy.

A prominent feature of the mind as it pertains to play is to surround it with an air of secrecy. Within the walls of play, the mind acknowledges that ordinary rules do not apply. This is why the player 'dresses up.' He becomes another, extra-ordinary being, one that recognizes his isolation from ordinary society. With no ordinary rules, the player must create his own within play, for "[play] proceeds within its own proper

¹⁵ Huizinga, Johan. *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture*. New York: Roy, 1950. Print. From now on, this paper will refer to it as HL.

boundaries of time and space according to fixed rules and in an orderly manner” (HL, 13).

This is the point when the taxonomic level narrows focus, and play becomes the more proximate genus: game. Game is play with rules. For an understanding of its significance, we will turn to the philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein. In his work *Philosophical Investigations*, he uses the following example: “we get [a] pupil to continue a series (say +2) beyond 1000 - and he writes 1000, 1004, 1008, 1012” (PI, 185).¹⁶ Though the pupil is corrected for his flaw, he wonders why, for he carries on in the same way. This example reveals the arbitrary quality inherent in rule-making, and uncovers the classic Foucauldian question: “Who has the right?” In doing so, like in *Discipline and Punish*, Wittgenstein finds power relationships at the core of rule-making. Essentially, these rules are artificial. Their value lies within the name, not within its use, meaning that its truth or falsity within the context of the game determines its worth, not its function. Wittgenstein explains: “This was our paradox: no course of action could be determined by a rule, because every course of action can be made out to accord with the rule” (PI, 201).

If game is the proximate genus of this taxonomy of play, then sport is the species. It exists to combine the functions of its two preceding forms, being the knowledge required in play and the power required in game. Therefore, within sport lies power-knowledge, the term that Foucault derives from *Discipline and Punish* that implies “that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge”

¹⁶ Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Philosophical Investigations*; New York: Macmillan, 1953. Print.

(DP, 27). Paul Weiss, in *Sport: A Philosophic Inquiry*, gives context to this idea. When defining the components of the game, Weiss first establishes this fundamental truth about the component of knowledge in power-knowledge: “Only if one submits to rules can one play in a game. Only if one submits to a game as having its own rationale, which is to be made manifest by an actual living through its prescribed beginning to its prescribed ending, does one play a game” (SPI, 140).¹⁷ Weiss then offers his analysis of power within the context of power-knowledge, which for our purposes we can call power-over, saying, “an athlete may pommel his adversary; he may hurt him badly and may even be the cause of his death; but what he tries to do is to achieve, not to destroy” (SPI, 141). This sounds remarkably like Foucault, who insists that “we cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms...power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth” (DP, 194). Therefore, in this sense, power-knowledge is used to win. It allows the player to play, and then provides the means to play well. Weiss puts this complete definition of power-knowledge in perspective, defining the quality of the athlete as “how effectively his power can be used to bring about a successful outcome under established rules” (SPI, 141).

All professional athletes effectively implement power and knowledge, for each professional sport has within it a set of rules that encourages competition. It is my belief, however, that no major American sport implements power-knowledge more fully than baseball. Its inherent rules or structure, reverence of statistics, and storied and cherished history make it the ultimate exemplar of power-knowledge in sports.

¹⁷ Weiss, Paul. *Sport; a Philosophic Inquiry*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1969. Print. For our purposes, this text is referred to as SPI.

First, the game's structure. Fay Vincent, former MLB commissioner, offers his opinion:

I like that the heart of the game is one person against one person, the heart of the game is the pitcher against a batter, and in that is based the fact that that particular challenge, hitting a baseball coming at you at about 100 miles an hour that's curving, and dipping and dropping is the most sublime challenge in all of sports.¹⁸

This is the first, most basic level of the game, which happens to be the most difficult. A baseball game is only set in motion by this single, individual duel. Of course, we must not ignore the fact that these two people are still members of a team and are motivated not by their personal sentiments, but by the game's rules. And, as such, it is the direct challenge between pitcher and hitter, requiring nothing else but pure ability and ingenuity that dictates all of the action. But it does more than that. Baseball uniquely spends a bulk of its nine innings dwelling on inaction. Will the runner steal? Will the pitcher throw a curve ball or fastball? Who covers third base if the batter bunts? The primary pitcher/batter competition creates a hypothetical, psychological undercurrent existing between players and fans alike. Watching baseball with former Giants manager Roger Craig in the early 1990s, Vincent was fascinated by the extent to which Craig was interpreting the game. Craig would feed him his thoughts, revealing to him the unwritten script within the baseball game, one that incorporates virtually every player on each roster in such a way that layers the certain, definite pitcher/hitter battle amidst a complicated and silent war.

The game itself is so simple. I mean it's just one guy throwing a ball and the other guy trying to hit it...but what was going through his mind was on an entirely different level from the level at which

¹⁸ My Interview with Fay Vincent, December 17, 2010.

I was enjoying the game. He was analyzing things based on data that I didn't have access to but even if I did I wouldn't have known enough to relate it to what was happening on the field. I think one of the great mysteries of baseball is why so many really smart, intellectual people find it fascinating. And I think it's because you can never master it. The strategies and the moves and peculiarities of a situation are infinite.¹⁹

Baseball's focus on statistics also contributes to its power-knowledge supremacy over other sports. Because it is formatted to occur in episodes, pitch by pitch, out by out, inning by inning, with the space in between emphasizing these episodes, the game produces a fabric of numbers that evokes interesting comparisons. In other words, baseball does have its own space and time. And as a result, baseball triggers conversation in a way that other sports don't. Home runs, steals, and batting averages all stand to represent these distinct snapshots of action, whereas the fluidity of a basketball game dilutes the potency of a pinpointed occurrence. This sounds exactly like Jean-Paul Sartre's analogy of Foucault's archaeology, occurring as a slide show and not as a movie. But because these statistics stand as an accurate representation of the game through its own space and time, baseball rules and records hold a thread of consistency that objectively measure players' worth. A baseball fan can accurately assess power-knowledge relationships by comparing the statistics of various players and teams, even if they played in an entirely different era under different circumstances, for to be a .300 hitter means the same today as it did in 1900. Political columnist and avid baseball fan and writer George Will was quick to explain this idea further:

That's why you ask a baseball fan what is the career home run record, what is the single season home run record, or who holds the record for most hits, they can tell you. You ask a normal NFL fan who holds the record for most touchdowns in a season or a career

¹⁹ My Interview with Fay Vincent, December 17, 2010.

or the most passing yards in their senior career, they won't be able to tell you.²⁰

What unfolds, then, is a thick network of statistical comparisons that spans baseball's history, tying every player into the game in a way that other sports do not. As proof of such statistical emphasis, one can look to August 8th, 2007, when current MLB commissioner Bud Selig was intentionally absent from AT&T Park in San Francisco to protest steroid-user Barry Bonds' pursuit of his 756th career home run. Out of respect for Hank Aaron's home run record, 755, Selig chose to miss out on a proud and public moment for baseball, feeling that a refusal to honor Bonds was more important than an opportunity to honor the game. Since then, Bonds has been essentially brushed under the rug, remembered more for his stain on the game's integrity than his superhuman talent. On October 23, 2006, Shawn Merriman, an elite NFL²¹ linebacker, was suspended for four games for using steroids, a relative slap on the wrist compared to Bonds' martyrdom. No one, commissioner or fan alike, felt that Merriman's actions disrespected Dick Butkus or Lawrence Taylor, widely regarded as the best linebackers of all time.

Having discussed baseball's structure and focus on statistics, the Bonds issue has uncovered the third feature of baseball that makes it unique: its history. While America became a television nation at the end of the 1950s, allowing football and basketball to "explode on the American consciousness," baseball is in its third century.²² Its long history, preceding even the American Civil War, engrains and intertwines it with American culture, often revealing the country's state of being. In short, using a

²⁰ My Interview with George Will, December 2, 2010.

²¹ National Football League

²² My Interview with George Will, December 2, 2010.

Foucauldian term, baseball's history serves as a monument.²³ The game's rules and statistics are continuously applied to itself and its history, finding new ways to interpret and develop the numbers that lie dormant in other sports. What results is a knowledge-power machine, present in every aspect of its game, in its rules, action, inaction, history, and web of objective statistical comparisons.

The Spectacle of the Scaffold: Baseball in the Modern Episteme

With an understanding of baseball and its merit as a symbol of power-knowledge, we can attempt to add Major League Baseball to Foucault's existing analysis. To do so, we must assess the power relationships that exist within the same spatial structure as the Foucauldian modern period. We will start with the power relationship of the players and the owners.

"I think my first contract was 3000 dollars a year which is quite a comparison to what they're getting now in the millions,"²⁴ stated Solly Hemus, a ten-year big league shortstop (1949-1959) mostly with the Cardinals. "All I go by is my own case and I think I really felt that I was probably being paid accordingly to the market." Many players felt like Hemus did, that they were making an honest living playing a boy's game. There was no sense in complaining about salary or trade decisions by the owners, for as Hemus explains, "I didn't really have a trade that I could go back to and make any more and needless to say I loved to play the game so I enjoyed what I was doing."

Even when this romantic notion wore thin, as paternalistic owners exercised their power over the players, players remained loyal and obedient. After Hemus hit .304 in 1954, the best batting average of his career, owner Gussie Busch cut his salary, claiming

²³ See p. 4

²⁴ My Interview with Solly Hemus, December 21, 2010.

as many owners of the time did that the decision was “for the good of the team.” Hemus reflected on Busch’s decision: “I was real happy with the ball club the way it was and I never look back on anything like that but I figured I should at least get what I got last year.” His loyalty to the governing, power-holding system was tested further when Busch traded him to the Phillies against his wishes. He wrote Busch a letter in 1956 begging him not to go through with it, and then years later reflected on that letter: “Well I was very disappointed needless to say. I was...you know I think once a Cardinal always a Cardinal that’s the way I feel.” Faithful words from a disrespected man. But Hemus knew what so many players of the era knew: “Well you didn’t have a choice at that time. That’s just the way it was.”²⁵

Foucault often offers an epistemic caveat, that complacency is dangerous. There is no denying that the baseball players in the Foucauldian modern episteme were complacent and blissfully ignorant, and that the owners knew it and took advantage. In no instance is that more evident than in the paternalistic style of long time Dodgers general manager Buzzy Bavasi. “As far as I’m concerned, anything goes at salary time,” said the owner, who took pride in fooling his players. Among other things, he would tell a player how little his teammates were making by showing him faulty contracts, and when asked about it, Bavasi gloated, “I pulled that phony contract stunt a dozen times, and I’ll do it every chance I get, because this war of negotiation has no rules.”²⁶ This is simply one example of the limitless control of the owners, who relished their constitutionally granted right to buy and sell players under the guise of this general American notion of baseball innocence and romanticism.

²⁵ My interview with Solly Hemus, December 21, 2010.

²⁶ Buzzy Bavasi, *Sports Illustrated*, May 22, 1967.

The examples of Bavasi's power and Hemus's lack of it reflect more than the owner's control over the player, but also how exclusive and narrow that relationship really was. When Hemus mentions that he can only account for his own, specific case, and Bavasi flaunts his ability to keep players in the dark about their teammates' salaries, we are presented with almost a Platonic allegory of the cave, for the player's gaze is fixed towards a fabricated reality that the owner controls. Were he to turn to his teammates and learn of their similar plight, he would discover a true reality, but the power lies with the ownership to keep the player's gaze fixed. As a result, the baseball player becomes docile and obedient, convinced that his owner has his interests in mind. Thoughts immediately rush into our heads of Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon, which represents the modern episteme in the prison system. An omnipotent eye, refusing its subject any contact with other prisoners, controls the docile delinquent by turning him into his own guard who must trust that invisible power to rehabilitate him.

While these invisible lines bound players to their owner, indicating an unpleasant servitude worth forgetting, the game in the modern episteme actually thrived. To appreciate it, let us look at a picture of Hall of Famer and Giants centerfielder Willie Mays playing stickball. The picture was taken in 1954, when Mays patrolled the expansive outfield of the Polo Grounds for the New York Giants. Mays looks to be gearing up for a swing, awaiting a pitched ball from one we can only assume was an average New York citizen. He is wearing his street clothes and playing in the middle of a New York neighborhood, probably close to the Polo Grounds. The picture only shows thirteen people watching the superstar, two of whom are involved in a conversation leading them away from watching Mays' swing. The ease in his face as he plays reveals

a comfort with his environment, and the nonchalance of the sidewalk viewers suggests that Mays' presence is common and natural. It is as if Mays is on the neighborhood team, having a little innocent fun before heading to the ballpark to help the Giants win the 1954 World Series.



National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum

Fay Vincent gives another personal account of a celebrity engaging with average citizens.

In the 50s, Harry Truman, who was President of the United States, would get up in the morning when he was in New York...he used to stay at the Carlisle Hotel. He would take a walk at 6:00 or 7:00 every morning. He had one secret service agent with him. They'd

walk all over the Upper East Side. Nobody threatened him; people said hello to him.²⁷

Truman and Mays illustrate the milieu in the American modern episteme that made baseball so enjoyable. An owner's tight leash kept the players loyal to their teams and communities, for they were less likely to be traded and more connected to their storied baseball town. Also, the players' average income, dictated by their owner exclusively, was only seven or eight times the average income of the ordinary working man, making the baseball player a very blue-collar, everyman figure.²⁸ Given that their baseball salary was not sufficient to support most of their families year-round, players had to take off-season jobs in town, furthering their connection to their fans. Pitcher Ted Wilks (1944-1953) worked in a power plant. Third baseman Richie Hebner was a gravedigger in the early 1960s. Yogi Berra, three time all star in 1951, 1954, and 1955, sold sporting goods at Sears. The players' low income and neighborhood, stick-ball-playing persona, combined with the notion articulated by owner and promoter Bill Veeck that baseball is a game unlike others because one does not need to be either seven feet tall or seven feet wide to play it, made the player extremely relatable. After all, to see 5'7", 185 pound Yankee Hall of Famer Yogi Berra working at Sears would give the fan that sense of comfort, that maybe if he could hit major league pitching, he, like Berra, could be wearing pinstripes.

The close relationship between the fan and the player, created by his sedentary team loyalty and an inherent everyman status, gave baseball the undivided attention of the country in the modern episteme. Aside from the tangible relatability of the player to

²⁷ My Interview with Fay Vincent, December 17, 2010.

²⁸ Hauptert Michael J. "The Economic History of Major League Baseball." University of Wisconsin, La Crosse, <http://eh.net/encyclopedia/article/hauptert.mlb>

the fan, two distinct features contributed to baseball's monopoly of the sports world in the modern episteme: architecture and technology. The game in the early 1900s was played with a rope lining the edge of the outfield, with fans watching the game behind it. They would often pull and push the rope in front of them, deliberately trying to affect the outcome and help the home team, taunting the visitors as they did it. Even after fences were put up, fans were still close to the action and in many cases able to get onto the field. The old Yankee Stadium allowed its fans to leave at the end of the game through a door in the center field fence, a direct route to the parking lot. Sportsman's Park in St. Louis, Crosley Field in Cincinnati, Forbes Field in Pittsburgh, Shibe Park in Philadelphia; all of these baseball parks were architecturally designed to give the fan an intimate experience of the game. But no field illustrated the extent of the unique intimacy like Ebbets Field, home of the Brooklyn Dodgers. "No fans were more noisily critical of their own players than Brooklyn's-- and none were more fiercely loyal once play began."²⁹ Being the smallest park in the National League, Ebbets Field blurred the lines between fan and player. Everyone knew each other. Fans would line the fence before games and talk to the players. But they didn't stop when the game began. Red Barber, long time Dodgers announcer, describes a few memorable fans:

Hilda Chester was one...Once in a while she would write a note and drop it down to Pete Reiser in center field and have him bring the note in to Leo Durocher (the manager)...Eddie Battan was a real fan of Brooklyn. He would whistle at a ballplayer, say a pitcher like Wyatt, and he would start calling "Whit" and he'd keep calling "Whit" at the top of his voice until Wyatt took off his cap and bowed to Eddie Battan. (B, 240)

²⁹ Ward, Geoffrey C., and Ken Burns. *Baseball: an Illustrated History*. New York: A.A. Knopf, 1994. Print, p. 240; Hereafter referred to as B.

Ebbets Field was an amusement park. A brass band, called the Dodger *Sym-phony* played during the game. Tex Richards, the Dodgers' public-address announcer, once called over the loudspeaker, "Will the fans along the railing in left field please remove their clothes?" There was an atmosphere at Ebbets Field that made every player and fan alike feel as if he were a contributing player on the field, a sensation that no other sport has generated.

The technology in the modern period, being mostly absent of television, consisted primarily of radio broadcasts. "Baseball was wonderfully made for radio," explains George Will, "because the intricacies between the action allowed for the most talented broadcasters to paint these word pictures to set the scene and anticipate the next event, pitch, out, etc." Broadcasters like Red Barber made radio broadcasting an art form, using the space between the game's moments of action to activate the listener's imagination, requiring him to bury himself deeper into the experience. The constant action of other major sports, such as football or basketball, requires attentiveness from its radio listener, but baseball's action, being sparse, allows the listener's mind to wander. Fans can mow the lawn, do the laundry, and wash their car as the game lingers in the background, filling their subconscious with images of diving catches and double plays. Red Barber, Mel Allen, Harry Caray, Vin Scully, and Ernie Harwell were all masters at that. They understood the quality within baseball that makes its story perfectly told through radio, and allowed the fan to intimately experience the game through that medium. No other sport could do this.

The Limits of the Modern Episteme: Baseball Enters the Post-Modern

The patronizing relationship between owner and player and the intimate relationship between fan and player, though seemingly different, have something in common. They both contain within them a semblance of direct representation. Both relationships are narrow; players look up to their owner, down at themselves, and nowhere else, and fans enjoy a close connection with their team and ballpark while no other sport consumes their attention. These relationships are displaced, however, by a new set of relationships, significantly altering the nature of the game as it once was.

The owners' control of the players had been the primary feature of the modern period in baseball. While the Reserve Clause loomed over the bulk of the episteme, players and owners had engaged in an exclusive, direct relationship. The modern baseball player, like the Foucauldian modern man, searched within himself for his origin and worth, always ending up looking at his owner who determined it for him. Because of his Panoptic servitude, the player felt that he could look nowhere else, for ownership controlled his visibility.

Therefore, the move from the modern to the post-modern occurs when man breaks this fixed gaze, looking elsewhere for his sense of worth. His gaze turns left and right, looking at his fellow players, who, like him, are trying to channel their frustration that their worth is determined not from within, but from without. It is with his fellow ballplayers that man will find himself and his worth, finally ending the modern epistemic search that led him away from himself in the first place. Put simply, at the heart of the post-modern quadrilateral, *man* becomes *men*.

A clear symptom of this underlying change is the joint holdout of Sandy Koufax and Don Drysdale in 1966. Both star pitchers for the Dodgers, they refused to report to

spring training, claiming they both were underpaid. In hopes of making their holdout more effective, they argued together, asking for one million dollars over three years for the two of them. In addition, they hired an agent and a lawyer to handle contract negotiations, which was a new concept. After all, owners, like the Dodgers' Bavasi, much preferred to handle the players directly than to deal with a third party, since they wanted to maintain sole control over their team's budget. However, because he was taken aback by the joint attack from his two star players and their representation, Bavasi did raise their salaries, though not to the full million that they originally asked for, and in doing so, had to lower the salaries of other Dodger players. "I'd liked to give the other players more, but a budget is a budget, and I stuck to it."³⁰ Many players had tried to argue for raised salaries before, but not with another teammate. It is because of their collective efforts, therefore, that the Koufax/Drysdale joint holdout was the first symptom of the new post-modern episteme. It represented the first instance in which a player decided to consider his value not simply as one man, but as a part of a team.

Just after the holdout, the ineffective player's association, whose primary function was to appeal to the owners for trivial concessions, met in Miami to discuss a new approach for their committee. They decided to hire Marvin Miller, the experienced union man, a rather bold decision for a player's association that had always consisted of leadership from within the baseball realm. This decision indicated a change in the player's mindset, for the willingness to look outside of baseball's sphere of control for representation revealed a mind hungry for answers. Miller's main fight was to redefine what it meant to be a baseball player in the Major Leagues. The owners, supposedly

³⁰ Buzzy Bavasi, *Sports Illustrated*, May 15, 1967.

keeping the interest of the ‘game’ in mind, considered the players to be transient visitors, simply playing out their limited, privileged years on baseball’s glorious stage. The players, through Miller, wanted more credit than that, for their talents ensured the league’s existence, let alone success. Because Miller came from outside of baseball and had union experience, he knew how to channel this basic frustration into a sound and effective labor argument.

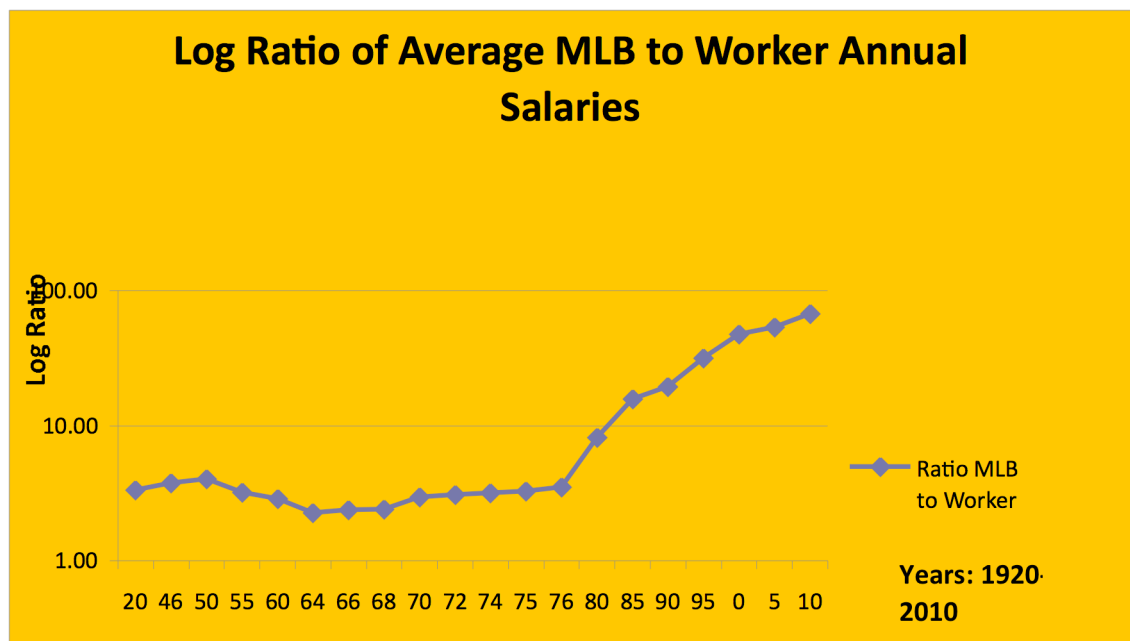
And that is exactly what he did: channel their frustrations. The significance of 1966 is not the beginning of Marvin Miller’s tenure as executive director of the player’s union. That would be a storyline for standard history. The real significance rests on the fact that in 1966, the players *decided* to hire Miller. Every step of the way, for all of the gains that the player’s association made, none of them was sparked by Miller’s own initiative. He was a polished weapon, or filter, serving to educate the players on their options and to follow their lead once they determined an approach. At every point during his tenure, Miller listened to the players, from when he was hired in the spring of 1966 to his final fight to preserve the gains of free agency in 1981. He listened in 1968, when the players decided to push for a Basic Agreement that would allow for a grievance procedure, giving them a legal avenue through which to push their complaints. He listened in 1969, when the players decided to back their fellow teammate Curt Flood, the long time Cardinal outfielder, who refused to be traded to the Phillies and took his personal case to the Supreme Court in hopes of fighting the all-powerful Reserve Clause. He listened when the players decided to stage their first strike in 1972, unsatisfied with the owners’ unwillingness to consider changes to the Reserve Clause to such an extent that they were willing to carry out the first work stoppage in professional sports history.

As proof, the membership of the union voted 663 to 10 in favor of the strike, while Miller waited on the sidelines to help orchestrate it. The months before the clause was actually abolished saw players' determination only intensify. They began to taste victory, as more instances of players desiring free agency occurred. Commentators portrayed this situation as "the inmates running the asylum," a perfectly apt description of a system that already draws remarkable comparisons to Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon.

Also significant in this period were the players' steadfast resolve and uncompromised trust in each other. During the strike of 1972 and the longer strike of 1981, players, no matter their salary or level of stardom, refused to give in. The main issue, free agency, only affected some of the players, but all were committed to winning. While this had something to do with their superior athletic mindsets (after all, they were all professional athletes), it had more to do with a bond that the players had created among themselves strong enough to withstand pressures from the whole of baseball's glorified history. No player caved. All appreciated the significance of the strike and the overall effort to swing the century-old imbalance of power away from the owners. This bond had not existed before 1966.

This is the post-modern episteme, where the docile, obedient man had become a band of actively questioning men. The strength of the union is the perfect example of a collective effort to achieve through numbers. Players began to realize that their worth should be determined not by their owner, but by their ability in relation to other players. This structural change displaced the Reserve Clause and created in the player a desire to progress himself, for his worth became self-determined. Players hired agents, who argued their value and found the highest bidders. Using the union as a springboard, they

marketed themselves as a desired commodity, and teams were willing to pay. As a result, money poured into the game, and salaries skyrocketed. The following graph reveals this trend. Notice how the average major league salary exceeded the average American worker's salary by about seven or eight times throughout the modern episteme, and then notice the epistemic rupture, as the graph begins to rise at around the year 1966.



31

The increase in player's salary as a symptom of the post-modern activity displaces some other positivities of the modern episteme. With salaries high enough to sustain players and their families through the year, baseball players generally no longer needed to work off-season jobs. Instead they spent their time exercising in the off-season, hopefully increasing their worth by maintaining and even improving their abilities.

³¹ Hauptert Michael J. "The Economic History of Major League Baseball." University of Wisconsin, La Crosse, <http://eh.net/encyclopedia/article/hauptert.mlb>

Spring training no longer stood as a time to get into shape after a long, cold off-season, but rather it was a time for players to fine-tune their craft for a self-advancing, money-earning season. The image of the blue-collar baseball player was seemingly evaporating, as his quest for self-betterment led him away from his closeness and relatability with the average fan.

With the post-modern arose new media, specifically television, which diminished the necessity of radio. Naturally, then, football and basketball, being more suited for the screen with their fast paced action, gained popularity. “The NFL sort of exploded on the American consciousness in December 1958 with the Giants/Colts playoff game, at the end of the decade in which America became a television nation,” stated Will, who emphasized the absolutely perfect marriage of television and football. “I say television sustains baseball fans; television makes football fans.” Post-modern baseball had to compete for the attention of the country, since with only six weeks between the last NBA championship game and first NFL preseason game; it starred on the American stage for a significantly shorter time. After all, modern baseball was used to enjoying the attention of the country “from the first of April until Ohio State played Michigan”³²

Another displaced positivity of the modern episteme was the intimacy of the baseball field. The modern period saw ballparks such as Ebbets Field, Shibe Park, and Forbes Field give the fan a uniquely intimate, unmistakably baseball experience, and one that no other sport could duplicate. But the post-modern notion of new money efficiency and value measurement found no room for such small, cost-inefficient parks. Instead, owners had dual-purpose ballparks built, incorporating both baseball and football. To

³² My Interview with George Will, December 2, 2010.

accommodate a rectangular gridiron and a baseball field in one, these dual-purpose, donut-shaped ballparks were large and distant. “You could plop a fan down in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Cincinnati, and you wouldn’t know where you are,” explained Will, who used his personal experience to explain this further. “I was on a commission called ‘The Commissioners Blue Ribbon Panel on Baseball in the 21st Century,’ and we did some research, and one of the things we found was that 98 percent of self-described NFL fans had never been to an NFL game. This is not an important part of their fanship.”³³ Baseball fans cannot say the same. The ballpark is part of the team, and going to it is part of being a fan. After all, the Brooklyn Dodgers without the Ebbets Field experience would lose their intimacy and uniqueness. And that is exactly what baseball once had.

³³ My Interview with George Will, December 2, 2010.

Chapter 3- Where Baseball Deviates

Baseball has resembled the modern and exhibited the post-modern episteme, both archaeologically and genealogically. And as such, its power-knowledge union has given us the means to analyze its epistemology and determine a post-modern structure that not only applies for baseball, but also for all of Foucault's subjects of study. So using the power-knowledge vehicle, let us recount our findings.

In the post-modern episteme, the representation that had threaded through the classical and modern episteme is eliminated. Essentially, in Foucauldian terms, the modern period finds the tension between thought and unthought to be a primary conflict, for it doubles man and blurs his transcendence. So when modern man opens his unconscious to search for his origin, appealing to the underlying structures that create him, he leads himself away from his subject at the heart of the episteme and towards his double, or the unthought, which is represented in baseball by uneven player/owner relationships of the modern episteme. This kills man because it kills his original structure: representation. It is when man finds himself removed from this structure that created him that he can acknowledge his demise while appreciating his newfound freedom no longer bound to the ties of representation. Koufax and Drysdale are symptoms of this development in the new period, as well as the secret Miami meeting in 1966. Basking in this freedom, though absent of his former means of identity, man can turn the kaleidoscope, viewing his former structure with a gaze from afar. This gaze turns from himself to the structure of representation that once controlled him, and then to his fellow man, who lies beside him. Such a discovery, which for baseball is the player's

association, gives man a sense of identity and worth, one for which he had been desperately searching, and arms him with a means of reclaiming his power. He finds his strength in his neighbor, who too realizes his powerlessness, and uses his unbound freedom to bond with that neighbor. Therefore, just as the structure of representation sees man chase himself away from it, no sooner does it find him again, united with his fellow man and strengthened by his new vantage point.

Baseball versus the Post-Modern

With baseball's epistemic composition determined, we can look to its relationship with the larger post-modern episteme that encloses it. In *The Birth of the Clinic*, Foucault justifies a specific epistemic change by describing two doctors, one from the 18th century and one from the 19th. The two doctors, standing on two different sides of an epistemic rupture, would look at a patient and see two entirely different things, the latter doctor obviously seeing more sophisticated internal organs than the earlier doctor, who is blind to 19th century anatomical discoveries. Therefore, the two doctors cannot be compared, for their respective epistemes dictate their knowledge and control their vision. This scenario is true for all of Foucault's subjects of study: knowledge, power, the prison, the clinic; all of these arenas produce the same conclusion about structural limitations and the difficulty of cross-episteme comparison. Foucault, in *The Order of Things*, even admits that his own analysis of the modern episteme may be skewed, since he is himself in it and therefore cannot objectively analyze it. The modern episteme may be still forming, or becoming, and his conclusions about it may be unfounded. This admission leads him to state, "[The modern rupture], probably because we are still caught inside it, is largely beyond our comprehension"(OT, 221). Clearly, the danger of Foucault's epistemic study

is the difficulty of exploring it with prior knowledge of its existence. Either that, or attempting to label an existing episteme that, because of its entirely foreign composition, may be indefinable.

Baseball does not have that problem. There is no threat of inaccurate epistemic comparison, or the faulty labeling of the present. George Will explains this, baseball's most unique feature:

If your grandfather sat down in front of a basketball game from his year and a basketball game today he wouldn't recognize the game. The dimensions of the free throw, what they call the paint have changed. Everything has changed about the way the game is played. But not so in baseball. As the great Civil War historian Bruce Catton said, 'you can take someone from the McKinley era, put them down in today's ballpark, and they'd know exactly what was going on.'³⁴

Here lies the distinction. In baseball, it is safe to compare epistemes, both archaeologically and genealogically. The game is consistent, no matter the temporal or spatial epistemic structure that encloses it. A .300 batting average in 1900 holds the same significance as it does today, and players from the 1950s can be, and often are, safely compared to current ones. No major American sport, or any of Foucault's subjects of study can claim this ability, to seamlessly navigate through time and space without revealing epistemic differences. There is no instance in baseball of two players from different epistemes seeing or playing two completely different games like the doctors in Foucault's example. The players, regardless of their position in space or time, play the game that has enjoyed a century and a half of steady continuity.

So how can baseball accomplish this feat while no other sport can? What about baseball allows it to make cross-epistemic comparisons, even if those comparisons occur

³⁴ My Interview with George Will, December 2, 2010.

on two sides of an epistemic rupture? The answer lies not in the structures below, but in something else above the surface that can tie them together. This other force must be strong enough to counter the cracking of underlying ruptures and neutralize its potency. It must hold baseball steady while epistemic tendencies attempt to rupture it. This other force is baseball's game itself. While the business of baseball was subject to the same modern/post-modern rupture that displaced knowledge and power in the mid 1960s, the game of baseball was immune. This means that every time the post-modern rupture rippled to the surface and tried to erupt onto baseball's standard history, the game was there to suppress it.

Foucault is not foreign to threading commonalities between ruptured epistemes. In *The Order of Things*, each rupture finds a thread of consistency that bridges its gap. Resemblance, the art of signs and signatures, provided the link from the Renaissance to the classical episteme. And between the classical and the modern episteme was representation, serving a role in both. In the process of these epistemic transitions, however, the common threads, resemblance and representation, were morphed into something different and less significant. Resemblance, the essence of the Renaissance period, became a peripheral supplement to representation and natural history, having only a fraction of the importance that it once held in the Renaissance episteme. Then, with the transition from the classical to the modern, it was representation that significantly faded, moving to the margins of the vast tapestry of organic structures that drove the efficiency of the modern episteme. Additionally, a study of discourse reveals that the use of language within the modern no longer was intertwined with knowledge as it was in the classical, but rather became its own subject of study, sectioned off and scrutinized. So

clearly, Foucault's archaeology allows for overlaps, but significantly alters that which crosses over.

Not so in baseball. There is no threat of the disfigurement, or changing function of the game's role in the modern or post-modern episteme. Baseball's commonality survives its epistemic rupture and remains unchanged on the other side, serving the same role in the post-modern as it did in modernity. In doing so, the game proves a suppressing strength fit to counter any signs of the post-modern rupture.

This proved true in 1969, when union negotiations and grievances became more public and controversial, and disillusioned Brooklyn Dodgers and New York Giants fans threatened to lose interest in the sport that had taken their teams away from them. Then came the "Miracle Mets." Famous for their years of futility in last place, the '69 Mets somehow found themselves behind the first place Cubs in August, and then managed to win 38 of their last 49 games, pulling them ahead of Chicago for the division title. They then shocked a superior Baltimore Orioles team, and the baseball world, by winning the World Series, causing a frenzy in New York and renewing the sense of pride and victory that had been commonplace in the city for decades. In many ways, the "Miracle Mets" ignited a culture weary from union talks and business decisions, and brought New York baseball back to the pride it had always enjoyed.

The strike in 1972 and the removal of the century-long Reserve Clause in 1975, combined with the growing popularity of football and its perfect vehicle, television, threatened the game's status. But the game was there to suppress these symptoms of rupturing, symbolized by game six of the 1975 World Series. In it, the Boston Red Sox defeated the Cincinnati Reds in twelve innings, with catcher Carlton Fisk's walk-off

home run determining the outcome. The game, and the series, were so encapsulating that 75 million people tuned in to watch game seven, more than had watched any other sporting event in history. Historian and writer Daniel Okrent remembered the series; “[It] gave baseball a galvanic moment that I believe changed much of the nation’s attitude toward baseball...it’s from that moment that I date the resurgence of interest in baseball that came to establish all sorts of new records in attendance and viewership.”³⁵ Here, the game proved resilient again, restoring interest and enthusiasm with the attractiveness of its spectacle.

Owners’ collusion in the 1980s, during which all twenty-six teams agreed not to bid for free agents, proved that the struggle between player and owner was not yet dissolved. Pete Rose’s gambling problems, and the drug problems plaguing the entire league tainted the game’s honesty. But then another moment reminded fans about the beauty of their pastime. When an injured slugger for the Dodgers hobbled to the plate in the bottom of the ninth inning, trailing 4-3 to the Oakland A’s, no one thought Kirk Gibson would be able to swing the bat, let alone run the bases. After all, a knee injury had made him nearly immobile. But he had enough for one swing and he made it count, launching a 3-2 pitch into the right field bleachers off of the game’s best closer, Dennis Eckersley. Gibson’s home run has been accepted as one of the greatest moments in the game’s history.

The strike in 1994 represented a culmination of the post-free agency disputes between ownership and the union. Its length, lasting through the post-season and into the

³⁵ Ward, Geoffrey C., and Ken Burns. *Baseball: an Illustrated History*. New York: A.A. Knopf, 1994. p. 443

'95 season, outraged fans. Attendance plummeted, and television ratings declined. The players' greed that sportswriters and many others had diagnosed never was more evident. Fans needed a reason to watch the game again, and found it in Cal Ripken Jr., who was nearing Lou Gehrig's record of 2130 consecutive games played. The '95 season, though plagued by the post-strike scarring, buzzed in anticipation of Ripken's pursuit. He did in on September 6th, 1995 to a crowd of over 50,000 adoring fans and a television audience of millions around the country. When the game became official in the middle of the 5th inning, and Ripken had therefore played his 2131st game, baseball fans everywhere cheered for the man who reminded them of the part of the game that had been temporarily overshadowed, that they had forgotten. From this and the other examples comes clear proof in the game's ability to smooth over the ruptures in its history, a testament to its power and influence over the business of baseball.

The Person or the Player

A better way to appreciate the significance of baseball's game and its resistant force against epistemic rupture may be to take another look at Descartes' *cogito*³⁶. Applying it to baseball's modern episteme, the *cogito* would become the following: "I play, therefore I am". After all, the baseball player, like a prisoner in the Panopticon, serves as a subject to his owner. His personal volitions are stifled and even nullified, as his primary function is to play. It is through his playing, and his unquestioning commitment to it, that he is, or exists.

The post-modern episteme finds itself a new applied *cogito*: "I am, therefore I play". The active questioning within this episteme that turned man into men, and that

³⁶ Referred to on p. 6

allowed for a union, considers his worth. Essentially, he transcends the simplicity of the modern player and becomes a more dynamic figure. His personal desires become a factor, and he becomes a negotiator and ultimate decider of his own fate. Therefore, post-modern freedom makes the baseball player a man first, and a player second.

But with an understanding of the complexities of the archaeological method, we must remove the primacy of the individual. We must remember that the player is a function of the game, and that he exists as a symptom of it. Therefore, with this in mind, Bertrand Russell's reworded *cogito*, "I think therefore, there is thought", is of particular importance. With the focus inward on its own structure and away from symptoms of it, let us use this reworked *cogito* and apply it to modern and post-modern baseball. The modern, "I play, therefore I am" becomes, "I play, therefore there is the game played". And for the post-modern episteme, using Russell's archaeological *cogito* transforms, "I am, therefore I play" into, "I am, therefore there is the game played".

We can clearly see through this procedure that each reworked *cogito* shares an ending, "therefore there is the game played." Despite the shift in epistemic focus between the modern and the post-modern, represented by the switch from "I play" to "I am," this result, or function, is the same. This means that an epistemic rupture is not strong enough to affect this unwavering function, that despite the change in baseball's positivities, its consistent game is still played. Never before has the effectiveness of the archaeological method been so evident. To play versus to be, man versus men; neither of these distinctions changes the functionality of the concluding phrase in the *cogito*, for in the end these distinctions cannot waver the strength of the game, baseball's overpowering feature.

So baseball endures, despite signs of an emerging rupture, saved again and again by its timeless game. Free agency certainly challenged its normalizing ability, and affected the subjects of standard history, but was not able to disrupt the national heirloom that is baseball's game. Nothing could prove this more accurately than the archaeological and genealogical methods, both of which let us derive the power-knowledge that served as our vehicle for inspection. And whether athletes exist in baseball as players or people, whether they exist in isolation or as a union, is not a significant threat to the game's core structure. After all, the game's statistics, game, situations, terminology, essentially the game's discourse will always remain the same, constantly becoming and reworking itself, all the while maintaining its place in the forefront of the American consciousness.

Conclusion

Recall the following quotation from Foucault: "I write to be a kind of tool-box others can rummage through to find a tool they can use however they wish in their own area... I don't write for an audience, I write for users, not readers."

This has been our aim. We have approached baseball's history using Foucault's set of tools, allowing us to see the game differently than would a student of standard history. And though it is true that some of the changes on the epistemic level have materialized on the surface of history, for the most part our new vantage point has allowed us to turn the kaleidoscope and discover new positivities and relationships within the knowledge and power of Major League Baseball.

But what is the significance of this new perspective? What can a Foucauldian analysis of baseball offer to the game that contributes to its already rich history?

Current issues in post-modern baseball compromise its future stability. Having dealt with such compromise as commissioner, Fay Vincent fears baseball's demise: "There are three enormous threats to today's game. Corruption, and that comes in two forms: corruption with performance enhancing drugs, and the economics of the development of young players who have all the incentive in the world to take those drugs. And the third is gambling. It will be very difficult to keep the sport from being polluted."³⁷

Robin Roberts, the man who suggested Marvin Miller's name for hire in 1966 and, in doing so, revealed a structural rupture, shared Vincent's views. He was

³⁷ My Interview with Fay Vincent, December 17, 2010.

concerned that the drastic changes in baseball over a short amount of time had made modern baseball unrecognizable, and that the player's strike in 1981 was an extremely dangerous weapon used too freely. Roberts, whose career lay on both sides of the epistemic break, knew that change was necessary but feared the instability of baseball without support from the ownership and fans. He wrote a letter to Miller on September 3, 1981 expressing these views, concluding with the statement: "You showed how tough you could be and nobody won."³⁸

For Roberts, and many sportswriters, owners, and fans, players enjoyed their new freedom too much. The sense of worth in men, a product of post-modernism, perhaps alienated the very people that created its value and livelihood. Essentially, what worried Roberts and others was that as players began to determine their own worth, they made the game more dangerous. In his introduction to *We Played the Game: 65 Players Remember Baseball's Greatest Era, 1947-1964*, Lawrence Ritter voices these complaints, calling post-modern men, "spoiled millionaires with .240 batting averages."³⁹ He, like so many sportswriters and fans, wonders why the once docile player has turned to "quarrelsome players strikes" to drive the nail even further into the heart of baseball's history. The players would say it's a matter of principle; he would call it pure greed. After all, when referring to the isolated modern baseball man, "almost every player interviewed admit[ted] he felt grossly underpaid and underappreciated by management, yet felt incredibly lucky just the same."

³⁸ Letter from Robin Roberts to Marvin Miller, September 3, 1981.

³⁹ Peary, Danny. *We Played the Game: 65 Players Remember Baseball's Greatest Era, 1947-1964*. New York: Hyperion, 1994. Print. p.ix

Ritter may have a point. A constant post-modern baseball storyline is the rise of the selfish player. He is assisted in obtaining multimillion-dollar contracts by the very union he and his teammates made, and then backed by it while arguing grievance procedures and disciplinary violations. Such a trend did not sit well with a fan base that had grown accustomed to idolizing their hometown heroes. And when this trend coincided with another feature of the post-modern, the growth of media coverage, it was only more vastly articulated. After all, extensive media relayed game-related content, leaving beat writers to discuss subplots of individual players' desires. A 1962 column in *The Sporting News* expressed this disgust with players' greed and a longing for the past, concluding, "our opinion has always been that ball players ought to pay to get into the park, and pay double to get into the game. Some of the old timers have told us they secretly agree with that."⁴⁰

So let our study of Foucault and application of his tool-box contribute to this conversation. Let our new epistemic perspective shed light on this tired, but still potent issue in a way that reflects its findings.

We have discovered drastic power changes at the structural level that have been complemented and developed by archaeological knowledge. So powerful is the rift that it has even managed to surface onto standard history, only to be suppressed time and time again by baseball's game. Therefore, rather than materialize, these symptoms of epistemic rupture, where the ripples of post-modern rupture burst onto the surface, smooth into small bumps that are only minor glitches in a mostly steady history. And we

⁴⁰ "Pity Poor Ball Players," *The Sporting News*, April 19, 1962.

must conclude, therefore, that the game will continue to smooth over these bumps throughout the post-modern and beyond.

But only if we let it. Remember that a game is played according to rules that ensure competition is fair, and that we reward a winner based on the assumption that the win was fairly earned. The critical feature of the game, then, is its inherent fairness, without which it cannot exist. Also remember that baseball is always saved by its overlying game that counters underlying rifts. Therefore, we can conclude that the baseball game is safe, if and only if it is a game. If drugs or money truly compromise the fairness of the game by providing incentive to break its rules, then baseball ceases to be a game. And without the security of baseball's game, we can only assume that it would fall subject to the surface changes of epistemic ruptures from which it had historically enjoyed immunity.

This, then, is our Foucauldian task. We must always be our own guards, our own surveillance, self-policing and self-regulating our actions and decisions. At no point should we look at baseball's long and storied history and become complacent, lulled by its impressive years of steady prominence. Just because baseball historically resists symptoms of epistemic rupture does not mean that these symptoms do not constantly show their faces on the sand of baseball's spatial structure. These symptoms do in fact exist, and their faces do appear on baseball's shores. To wash them away, therefore, requires a certain sense of action to ensure the fairness of baseball's special game, one that Foucault certainly advocates: "My point is not that everything is bad, but that everything is dangerous, which is not exactly the same as bad. If everything is

dangerous, then we always have something to do. So my position leads not to apathy but to hyper- and pessimistic activism."⁴¹

⁴¹ Foucault, "On the Genealogy of Ethics," 1983.

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