Batting for Power:
1960s Latino Baseball Players and their Challenge
To the Cold War American Ethos

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Abstract:

Baseball in its history and tradition has become ingrained within the identity of the United States. Dubbed the ‘National Pastime,’ the game of baseball is emblematic of the traditional American values of democracy and capitalism through the value on individual accomplishment in a team-oriented competition. Currently, Major League Baseball features an enormous Latino population excelling in the sport synonymous with the American Dream. These foreign players partake in this summer tradition that inherently values the past and creates myths out of the all-American players such as Bob Feller, Mickey Mantle and Ted Williams. In this thesis I examine the early stages of Latino integration into a game that was enveloped within traditional American rhetoric prior to their entrance. I found that the inclusion of Latino players into Major League Baseball and the American cultural dialogue coincided with one of the most politically uncertain eras in United States history—the 1960s.

The defining feature of this era was the Cold War, a conflict that pervaded the American politics and culture within American borders and internationally as well. In response to the growing Soviet threat, white Americans subscribed to an American ethos of exceptionalism as an integral facet of the Cold War. Furthermore, the Civil Rights movement overshadowed the first half of the decade, while the responses to the Vietnam War featured prominently in the second half. In both the Civil Rights movement and the political unrest of the latter half of the decade the validity of the new American ethos of exceptionalism was constantly up to debate; thus, baseball, as the ‘American’ sport, was a key arena in which this discourse took place.

Throughout the conflict-ridden decade, baseball and politics would create a tacit yet powerful dialogue, each influencing the other in recondite manners in an environment rife with cultural and political uncertainly.

When Latinos brought their home-grown passion for the game to the North American public sphere, the white American media attempted to exclude the Latinos by attempting to disassociate their character with that of the Cold War American ethos. At the start of the 60s the media’s portrayal of Latinos garnered public support, but as the decade progressed and socio-political frustrations grew within the American public, the Latino players eventually forged a place for themselves within the American cultural narrative. A clear transformation took place within both the players and their reception on the American stage by the end of the decade. This transformation of the players and their public representation was framed by an era of immense cultural changes throughout the United States. These players were certainly products of the era in which they played; yet, they also contributed to the changing attitudes as well.

Though these players lacked American citizenship, it became increasingly clear that they embodied the values of the Cold War American ethos. Thus, their persistent skill paved the way for Latinos to express their heritage within the American public sphere.
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INTRODUCTION:

On July 15, 1960 a young American in a tight electoral competition calls upon his countrymen and colleagues to face the future, the New Frontier. In this moment, John F. Kennedy’s speech at the Democratic National Convention foresees a change in American expectation and reality. At this time, America’s reality is one framed by the new Cold War, straddling a perceived precipice between a global superpower and ruin. He stated: “Today our concern must be with the future. For the world is changing. The old era is ending. The old ways will not do.”¹ Kennedy prepares to lead the nation towards a future full of uncertain progress, complicated by the impending peril of a Cold War abroad and a Civil Rights movement at home.

On that very same evening, a separate competition continues, as it does perennially throughout the American summer. The competition was perhaps less pivotal to American history than Kennedy’s political campaign, yet one certainly closer to American daily life—that of midsummer baseball. The Pittsburgh Pirates, having lost 7 of their past 9 games, face the Cincinnati Reds in the heat of a midsummer pennant race. In this particular game, a young player named Roberto Clemente attempts to ignite his team with a long drive towards the right field pole. The ball appears to land in the crowd for a game-tying home run, yet the umpires call the ball as foul. Just as Kennedy had pleaded with his audience to rethink their future, Clemente and the crowd implore the umpire to rethink a home run call—only to have the suited judge stifle their request.²

Though the long foul could not prevent the Pirates from losing the game, Clemente and a team of underdogs eventually lead the city of Pittsburgh to a stunning World Series victory in

seven games over the enormously favored New York Yankees. Their victory, in mid-October of 1960, precedes Kennedy’s victory over Nixon by a mere four weeks.

Clemente and Kennedy, two minority underdogs (Clemente from Puerto Rico, Kennedy an Irish Catholic) fighting for progress in their respective arenas—and tragically, both would die before the end of their careers. Roberto Clemente and John F. Kennedy came into the decade beneath the shadow of the Cold War, striving to overcome the status quo of previous generations and open their people’s future to the growing possibilities of the 1960s. Clemente’s career in baseball essentially embodied the struggle of his entire Puerto Rican nation and their decades of resistance against the occupying United States. Kennedy alternatively sought to lead the entire United States into ‘The New Frontier’ and through the Cold War with confidence and strength. Throughout the conflict-ridden decade, baseball and politics would create a tacit yet powerful dialogue, each influencing the other in recondite manners in an environment rife with cultural and political uncertainty.

The way in which white America and the Latinos interacted reflected a much larger change in perspective within both populations. Prior to integration, white American society held a strong connection between baseball and their American identity. The source of this connection lies in baseball’s emphasis on hard work and intelligence as well as a tendency to value the past. The integration of baseball brought a new population of black and Latino players who embodied these values into America’s pastime. The white media, though, proved stubborn in allowing minorities to insert their identity within the American game, persistently employing racialized and ethnicized descriptions to mark their entry into the “national pastime.”

This thesis seeks to show how Latino players navigated America’s Cold War attitudes of the 1960s in which the American identity relied upon fierce nationalist exceptionalism. In
coming to the American fields Latino players were not acting out of relationship of colonial export; rather, they brought with them a powerful history of Caribbean pride that they transferred to the American pastime. In the meeting of these two powerful cultural mindsets, the white American media reinforced the American values of grit and effort while the Latino players utilized the American values of success within a system of fair competition. At the start of the 60s the media’s portrayal garnered public support, but as the decade wore on and socio-political frustrations grew within baseball and the American public, the Latino players eventually forged a place for themselves within the American cultural narrative. They had the ability to create this space due to the shifting of American culture in the era, while they simultaneously added to the weakening of the Cold War status quo with their skill and character.

**DiMaggio, Robinson, and America’s Game**

While the 1960s saw clear interaction between sport and politics, the two arenas had previously shared a deep-seated relationship, stemming from nearly a century before. From baseball’s inception in the late 19th century Walt Whitman predicted that, "Baseball will take our people out-of-doors, fill them with oxygen, give them a larger physical stoicism. Tend to relieve us from being a nervous, dyspeptic set. Repair these losses, and be a blessing to us."³ Baseball, from its foundation, was conceptualized as a vehicle through which to advance the American notions of democracy, competition and success. Though its origins are a subject of contention, there is a mythic narrative of baseball as originating from the fields of New York State and reuniting the country after the Civil War. This idyllic retelling of baseball history resonates with the cultural image of the sport. Furthermore, baseball’s format and field speak to American

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values, as “the sport fosters...a set of attitudes, indeed an outlook on life and on the world, that was common in rural, agrarian, traditional society.” Though never truly explicit, yet tacitly understood, baseball in its origins became a political tool for the propagation of the American ideal of hard work yielding results, just as in the farms of the early Republic.

As this message progressed into the future, though, a new dimension became associated with baseball’s American values—nostalgia. American democracy spread internationally and became more complex, and many sought respite in a fictive past of racial and cultural homogeneity. White Americans from the start of the 20th century looked to baseball as a constant reminder of their shared national history. They found this in their national pastime, as “baseball returns the spectator, for a few hours, to an earlier, simpler, happier time. It offers a brief sojourn to a lost paradise, a sip from the fountain of youth.” Specifically, baseball’s wooden bat, lack of a clock and old-fashioned attire lent itself to past eras. Beyond the game’s format, the characters of baseball history evoke an image of American values. As late as 1968, Simon and Garfunkel would hopelessly ask, “Where have you gone, Joe DiMaggio? A nation turns its lonely eyes to you.” In an effort to address America’s deviation from its traditional values, Paul Simon utilized the image of Joltin’ Joe to represent the panacea of hope for the lonely American spirit.

Not coincidentally, Joe DiMaggio’s life and story function as the archetypical American baseball character to accompany the quintessentially American game. DiMaggio’s upbringing as the son of an Italian immigrant fisherman spoke to the traditional perceptions of the foundation for the American Dream. Characterized by his speed, hustle and skill, Joe DiMaggio became an American hero during the 1930s and 40s. Furthermore, at the peak of his stardom, DiMaggio

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5 Mandelbaum, 52.
enlisted in the Navy during World War II. DiMaggio essentially embodied the possibilities of American skill, passion and honesty as he worked his way up to legendary status. Yet, he was not the only player to rise from the working class, or even to fight in the military, as he shares these characteristics with Ted Williams, Bob Feller and a myriad of other baseball legends. Baseball was thus entwined with white American patriotism throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.

While the concept of American values in white players fit comfortably within the narrative of baseball, the American mainstream struggled to accept the validity of minority populations on and off the field. As white America had paraded the values of working-class upbringing and hustle, the exclusion of working-class blacks and dark-skinned Latino immigrants from the traditional baseball narrative lack consistency. During this era, why were these minority players, who had working-class families and the same ability to succeed as white players, withheld from the same treatment as the glorified DiMaggio, Ty Cobb and Hank Greenberg? Jackie Robinson—who worked to support his family, served in the military during World War II and excelled in three sports—could have, and in theory did, fit the same American mold as DiMaggio. Robinson’s background was not unique among black players, either, as future Latino star Roberto Clemente practiced baseball in Caribbean sugar fields and served in the United States Marine Corps prior to his entrance in baseball. Throughout the 1960s, early Latino Major Leaguers faced a white media unwilling to include dark-skinned players in the baseball narrative that housed such names as Ted Williams and Bob Feller.

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The gradual process of incorporating Latinos into this American narrative began with Jackie Robinson’s integration in 1947 by Dodgers general manager Branch Rickey. The inclusion of an entire American minority population into America’s pastime met enormous opposition from owners, players and fans. In order to disguise the racial emotions pulsing through the country, the opposition hid behind a falsified rhetoric of reason. The principal objections for opposing integration focused on the flimsy logic that black players could not physically compete with white players and that white fans would cease to purchase tickets with the presence of black athletes. Though the newspaper The Sporting News continued to object to integration in baseball, racist reasoning could no longer withstand the entrance of black players into the league. Team by team, black players eventually integrated with every club in the league, culminating with Pumpsie Green’s donning of the Red Sox uniform in 1959.

Within the integration of black players into the Major Leagues occurred the entrance of dark-skinned Latinos, who had previously been unable to participate in professional baseball in the United States. While light-skinned Latinos played as early as 1911, the first black Latino, Orestes ‘Minnie’ Miñoso debuted for the Chicago White Sox in 1951 as the third black player to integrate into the Major Leagues. Coming up through the minor leagues throughout the United States, black Latinos received little assistance navigating through charged racial terrain and also lacking comprehension of the culture and language. While such treatment persisted for decades after integration, Miñoso received especially harsh treatment, for the reason that “as a black Latino who was an integration pioneer, Miñoso endured the double impact of race and

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10 Swaine, 29.
11 Swaine, 223.
The way in which Múñoz successfully broke the color and language barrier later opened the door for subsequent Latino stars. With the help of scouts such as ‘Papa’ Joe Cambria in Cuba and Alex Pompez in the Dominican Republic, the second generation of Latino players received increased guidance on their path to the major leagues.

**Historiography**

The retelling of the Latino narrative in Major Leagues Baseball has changed greatly since the beginning of integration. One field of baseball history, that of the traditionalist baseball historian, generally limits the lore and fate of baseball solely within United States borders. Typically referring to the game as exclusively American, these historians generally fail to include the recent trend of Latino players, instead choosing to focus on white and African-American players, the expansion to the west, and the recent evolution of Fantasy leagues. In a work entitled *Past Time: Baseball as History*, the respected baseball historian Jules Tygiel omits any presence whatsoever of the Latin players and their contributions to the game. Furthermore, he states that, “what remains to be seen is not whether the game will survive, but how Americans in a rapidly changing world will again reinterpret and reinvent their national pastime.” This statement displays Tygiel’s belief that baseball exists as a reflection of American identity, only capable of change through American effort. Evidently the integration of an entire minority population weakens this argument, thus he omits the Latino contribution. This perspective considers true American citizenship to be implicit within participation in the American game.

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14 Burgos Jr., 188.

The attempt to separate foreign entities from the game resonates throughout the conventional history of the American game. David Voigt, another traditional baseball historian does insert the Latino presence in his accounts, yet he does so under the section heading of “Conquistadors.” Beyond the problematic comparison of Latino players to their historical Iberian conquerors, this history characterizes the Americans and Latinos in a revealing manner. Voigt’s vivid illustration of the Cuban pitcher Luis Tiant Jr. does little to incorporate the player into the American culture, describing him as a “burly, mustachioed, cigar-smoking right-hander.” Essentially, the initial descriptions of early Latinos functioned as caricatures, rather than honest portrayals. These highly embellished descriptions of early Latino players worked to construct their careers as ‘other’ to the traditional baseball star and align their descriptions with the mold of popular American expectation of Latinos. While such narratives fall short in capturing the Latino experience, they provide an example of the historical mentality into which the Latinos entered the game of baseball.

In the wake of such histories, a growing consciousness of the Latino contribution to baseball emerged and became historicized during the 1990s until the present. Authors such as Peter Bjarkman, Adrian Burgos Jr., Alan Klein, Rob Ruck and Samuel Regalado have fully addressed the working relationship between baseball players in the Caribbean and the Major Leagues to the north. Their narratives describe in detail the transformation from the pre-integration presence of Latino baseball in America to the present day abundance of the Latino population in the Major Leagues, attempting to draw out how this racio-ethnic integration occurred. Samuel Regalado’s work *Viva Baseball!: Latin Major Leaguers and Their Special Hunger* presents an abstract trait of ‘special hunger’ inherent to Latinos as their driving force—

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something observed in Cincinnati Reds baseball star Tony Perez and Latino activist César Chávez. His work primarily discussed “the most crucial stage of the Latin baseball saga, namely, players’ physical and cultural transitions from homeland to a new country.”\(^{17}\) He intimately addresses the struggles of Latinos in the early stages of their careers, yet his work fails to explore the struggle of the United States attempting to reimagine the appearance and origin of the American baseball legend. The initial study of Latino baseball effectively describes how Latinos adjusted throughout their integration into baseball, yet omits thorough discussion as to the events behind the United States reconsidering their cultural contradictions in order to include Latinos and their rising presence in the American sphere.

A more specific examination within this field features the prolific Latino baseball historians Alan Klein and Rob Ruck, whose narratives posit the Latino emergence in the Major Leagues as a reflection of the neo-colonial dominance of the United States in the Caribbean. Klein views the current state of baseball as a battle between modern U.S. hegemony and Dominican resistance within the sport. He states, “Caribbean baseball is rooted in colonialism.”\(^ {18}\) This reference to Spanish and United States colonialism, while possibly relevant presently and in the pre-integration eras, fails to account fully for the agency displayed by Latin American players in the 1960s. Latino baseball players were not simply another string of exports from the Caribbean to the United States. These players sought to play in the United States under their own volition, in spite of their conditions. Klein does go on to remark that “each title won by a Dominican in the major leagues has been...a coup for his compatriots at home, struggling to


get by.\textsuperscript{19} His observation regarding the pride that Latinos gain from baseball problematically relies upon a colonial rhetoric. Such a statement allows the reader to perceive any form of Latino resistance as a form of revolutionary ‘coup’. Rob Ruck, a Latin American sociologist, reinforces this sentiment when he asserts that “Baseball’s integration itself was predatory as well as salutatory.”\textsuperscript{20} The most disconcerting aspect of such statements is the implication that blacks and Latinos were ‘prey’ in post integration baseball. Such reasoning strips the minority populations of their agency to make their own choices. While their treatment and experience was undeniably demeaning, it was certainly not completely hegemonic or ‘predatory.’

Though there exists a wide array of literature regarding Latino baseball players in the United States, there lacks a complete discussion as to how this integration fit into the larger Cold War political atmosphere. As the cultural interaction took place between the United States media and the Caribbean entities, an understanding of Cold War politics and Caribbean traditions is integral into comprehending the struggles and achievements of 1960s Latino baseball players. I will show how the Latino entrance into the Major Leagues was framed by the Cold War and the ways in early Latino baseball players were able to withstand and overcome this political atmosphere with a unforgiving sense of pride and passion stemming from their own culture.

\textbf{Terms and Outline}

Throughout this thesis, the term Latino will define any foreign player born in a Caribbean nation. While Puerto Rico remains an American commonwealth, Clemente along with other Puerto Ricans had to withstand the same politicized American atmosphere as his fellow Dominican and Cuban ballplayers. Furthermore, the mainstream media and most of the

\textsuperscript{19} Alan Klein, “Culture, Politics, and Baseball in the Dominican Republic” (\textit{Latin American Perspectives}; Vol 22, no. 3, 1995), 128
\textsuperscript{20} Ruck, 101.
white population of the United States perceived the players discussed in this thesis as distinct from the Anglo-American identity.

The first section of this thesis will discuss the creation of Cold War vernacular within the American population and media. This will show how the media took part in the creation of a fictive ‘American spirit’ as the intangible factor in the Cold War. It was believed that the USSR matched the United States in military power; hence, an American identity of exceptionalism emerged as primary weapon in winning the Cold War. Features of this ‘American Ethos’ were effort, creativity and resourcefulness. Furthermore, this chapter will discuss the role of the Civil Rights movement in framing the Latino entrance into baseball, as the Civil Rights movement eventually became entrenched in Cold War rhetoric as well. Section one will finally discuss the role of sport, and specifically baseball, in the American Cold War mentality.

The second section addresses the history of sport as a means for rebellion in the Caribbean. The section will show that the extraordinary achievements of these early Latino baseball players fulfilled the aspirations of their fellow countrymen and ancestors from Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico, ironically strengthening the invisible hand of cultural hegemony by successfully challenging white supremacy.

The third and fourth chapters seek to show the meeting of these two mindsets, of American Cold War values and Caribbean resistance, through case studies of the San Francisco Giants and Roberto Clemente, respectively. These chapters will show the ways in which the media undertook the Cold War rhetoric of an ‘American ethos’ in order to exclude Latinos from incorporation into the narrative of the ‘national pastime.’ These chapters will also show through a collection of newspaper articles, player memoirs and game tapes the ways in which players such as Orlando Cepeda, Juan Marichal and Roberto Clemente persevered through the media’s
use of racialized labeling and the degradation of their talent through their unrelenting success on
the baseball diamond.

As Kennedy delivered his "New Frontiers" speech, his American audience watched as
their interpretation of freedom was challenged from abroad and within. The powerful Soviet
Union acted as a constant threat, and the Cuban adoption of Soviet support did little to curb the
fear percolating throughout the country. Meanwhile, the Civil Rights movements began to
protest for black freedom throughout the country; a new youth population began to define their
own culture in San Francisco and New York through the rise of the Beat Movement; and the
New Right began to assert their traditional sense of freedom with the rise of Reagan in
California. Through skill and determination, Latino baseball players participated in this era of
American transition as they challenged the limits of the American identity within their sport, and
forced their American audience to reconsider the boundaries of American ideals. By decades
end these players augmented the traditional baseball narrative, creating space for players such as
Roberto Clemente and Juan Marichal to truly participate in the American pastime.

I: "Ask Not":
The Manufacture and Impact of the Cold War American Ethos

While featured in a speech for political motives, the New Frontier to which Kennedy
referred was a tangible reality for the citizens of the United States in 1960. Kennedy took the
stage that night between a precipice of abundance and destruction, with no certainty regarding
the outcome of the Cold War for the American people. America was leaving behind a world of
perceived innocence and heading toward a future full of challenges and fear. Kennedy expressed
this reality simply, stating: "For the harsh facts of the matter are that we stand at this frontier at a
turning point of history.”21

Yet, the New Frontier was not unique to the American people, as the entire world was positioned in an era of transition dominated by two global powers. For the black and foreign populations of the world, this era was equally as daunting, as the United States and Soviet Union struggled for international dominance.

As the 1960s approached, fears over the Soviet Union caused the United States media and politicians to rely upon the image of a politicized American ethos in order to quell white, mainstream preoccupation. As a result of the politicized language of the era, Americans developed a Cold War vernacular of American exceptionalism. Rather than representing a true faith in the ‘American Way’, this new rhetorical ‘exceptionalism’ spoke more of a growing insecurity within the American population regarding its identity and place on the world stage. This language pervaded the public narrative, becoming entangled within the Civil Rights movement in an attempt to convince the Third World of the power of democracy. Sport fell victim to the Cold War vernacular as well, as sport filled the role of strengthening the American male. Specifically, the role of baseball in developing the physical body and putting traditional American values on display for an American audience created a difficult environment for Latino players to enter. However, as the decade progressed and foreign relations became more complex, a growing portion of the mainstream population rebelled against the status quo, resulting in the dissolution of the American ethos of exceptionalism.

In sum, the communist threat permitted a Cold War rhetoric of exceptionalism to develop within white America. This language was ubiquitous within the American experience leading up to the 1960s, as it found its way into discussions over the Civil Rights movement and the role of sport in society. However, as the decade progressed, this vernacular disintegrated with the

21 Kennedy, “Speech to the Democratic National Convention.”
swelling and vocal discontent of a growing counterculture. Such was the highly politicized American landscape into which Clemente and others inserted their Latino voice, eventually taking part in the social upheavals within the confines of the baseball field.

Soviet Fears, American Exceptionalism

Prior to the sentiment of fear and anxiety over the future, the white middle classes experienced a post World War II era of truly unprecedented possibilities. With a class of veterans returning home from defeating the Germans, tax breaks and subsidized housing led to a rising middle class and culture of true prosperity. Todd Gitlin, a 1960s historian, described this era by saying, "'Affluence' sounds general, and in the Fifties it was assumed to be a national condition...The idea of America had long been shaped by the promise of opportunity in a land of plenty, but at long last, the dream seemed to be coming true."22 While an era of sitcom housing developments and a growing consumer culture signaled immense economic wealth, this soon seeped into the American mindset through the expectation of affluence in subsequent generations.

However, as this national right to affluence developed in the white Baby Boom generation, the mounting power of the Soviets created a swell of trepidation for the population one generation removed from World War II. The looming Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States brought about a global nuclear age without precedent. Gitlin describes this sentiment, stating: "The Bomb threatened [the] future, and therefore undermined the ground on which affluence was built."23 America could not enjoy complete agency atop the world stage while the Soviets were constructing an army and weapons of seemingly unlimited power. Such

23 Ibid., 23.
fears created doubt in the United States as it entered the 1960s, which became evident throughout the news media in the years directly preceding the decade.

As a national voice, the New York Times functions as a reliable lens to observe the Cold War mentalities that pervaded the United States cultural conversation at the time. Upon ringing in the year 1958, the New York Times expressed an appreciation of opportunity present in the new calendar, yet not without its far share of warning and worry. An opinion piece from New Year’s Day of 1958 offered such a perspective. The article, entitled ‘Year of Opportunity,’ states:

We have reached probably the greatest pinnacle of material prosperity we have ever known; but we have suddenly come to realize that accompanying this prosperity there has been a paradoxical weakening in our relative position of physical strength and of moral and political influence...Our democratic world has so much more to offer in moral as well as material values than the other kind of world...This is no time to panic, to lose hope or to give way to our fears and disappointments.  

The juxtaposition of American hopes and American fears for the reader on the first day of a New Year could not be ignored, even on a day typically reserved for celebration. The audience maintained a deep-seated belief that the American people entering the decade had already achieved greatness and that the freedom of the world was in their hands. The key to ensuring the world’s liberty rested in a mixture of American physical strength and moral standing. Thus, the American ethos of exceptionalism began to influence the mainstream dialogue. Yet, the last phrase of reassurance speaks directly to the concurrent fear pervading the American life and mindset of the era—it is certainly rare to find the phrase ‘this is no time to panic’ in times of peace and tranquility. Americans entered into the decade with tangible and competing feelings of pride and insecurity.

As the media constantly portrayed the world in apocryphal terms, it is no wonder that the

American people permitted this sentiment of fear to enter into the collective dialogue. Throughout the news media in the Cold War era, warnings of Soviet violence were commonplace, and disaster was eminent. One doctor warned that, “the world has never faced a problem so grave as the one posed by a fully armed Soviet Union and a fully armed United States.”

Such statements were the impetus for a large part of the population deeming it necessary to construct personal bomb shelters. This media and political message entering the sixties truly did little to alter the tide of growing dissidence in the American people. The growing fearful response of white Americans to these threats framed both the American mindset entering the decade and the entrance of Latinos into the American cultural atmosphere.

While the United States was certainly finding success in an era of unprecedented affluence, its national identity lacked confidence. One late fifties article demonstrates this insecurity from within the era, stating, “We Americans are a people in quest of ourselves. Ever since our birth as a nation we have been trying to find a mirror in which to see our true image. And this anxious uncertainty about the kind of people we are still distinguishes us among the nations of the world.” In order to pacify an American giant suffering from an identity crisis, the media and political rhetoric of the day molded the American Ethos into one of an exceptional character. In the years leading up to the 1960s, articles called for a revamping of the education system, stressed the American character, and even sought to rid the country of the antiquated Uncle Sam. A language developed in order to justify America’s role in the world as a peace keeper and proponent of freedom and opportunity. Throughout the early part of the decade, political language and news coverage exemplify such coded rhetoric in order to calm American social anxiety.

26 Farber, 58.
27 *New York Times*, “We, the People, In Quest of Ourselves,” April 26, 1959.
In the political realm, the American ethos was reinforced from the top down, as Kennedy constantly referenced the concept in his political speeches. This apprehension is evident through Kennedy’s New Frontier speech, in which he states:

But I believe that the times require imagination and courage and perseverance. I’m asking each of you to be pioneers towards that New Frontier. My call is to the young in heart, regardless of age to the stout in spirit, regardless of Party, to all who respond to the scriptural call: "Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be [thou] dismayed." For courage, not complacency, is our need today.²⁹

This speech reinforces several of the qualities that became tied into the model American personality throughout the first half of the decade. That this imagery of a strong and brave America came at the start of a political campaign signifies that such sentiments would appeal to the wider American population. The imagery of the American pioneer and citation of scripture both serve to bring about a sense of American historical accomplishment, and American faith against a godless Soviet Union. Imagination, courage and perseverance became the focus of the American citizen in the face of the Soviet military threat. These characteristics would quell American fears and allow Americans to ‘be not afraid.’

While this speech expressed the American ideals of strength, courage and determination, the American people looked to the media for a fine-tuning of the powerfully American identity. With growing awareness of Soviet strength in education, and fueled by a sense of crisis caused by the “Sputnik” satellite launch, lawmakers entered the decade with schooling on the forefront of their minds.³⁰ A 1958 Washington Post article states that “neglect of education is not only a neglect of the individual potentialities to the development of which the United States is historically devoted; it is also a neglect of the national security.”³¹ To such critics, a renovation of American education and character was a project not solely of American intelligence, but of

²⁹ Kennedy, “Speech to the Democratic National Convention.”
³⁰ Gitlin, 24.
national defense as well. Thus, the stress on education demonstrates the projection of intelligence onto the ideal American citizen.

In sum, the Soviet threat led to the creation of an American ethos representing such idealized qualities of determination, creativity, intelligence, and strength. Latino baseball players entered the 1960s playing against the world’s best competition, and simultaneously competing against the image of a new American ethos celebrated on the baseball field.

Civil Rights Exceptionalism

While this “Cold War” redefinition of American nationalism stressed exceptionalism and implicitly defined “whiteness” as the norm within American borders, internationally the Civil Rights battle was a stain on the newly renovated American identity seeking to impose itself onto a “Third World” defined as a critical and undecided arena in the battle between capitalism and communism. The new challenge facing the United States was to address the Civil Rights movement that had accelerated throughout the forties and fifties and forced its way into daily conversation throughout the country and internationally. While presidents had traditionally abstained from direct intervention in this conflict, the growing domestic frustration with inequality and the need to expel the myth of American bigotry abroad forced a Civil Rights discussion in the political sphere. One foreign newspaper predicted the following:

If the United States merely wants to ‘dominate’ the world, the atomic bomb and the U.S. dollar will be sufficient to achieve this purpose. However, the world cannot be ‘dominated’ for a long period of time. If the United States wants to ‘lead’ the world, it must have a kind of moral superiority.\(^{32}\)

As the United States attempted to consolidate its power in countries full of dark-skinned populations, a reassessment of race on the home front was necessary. Again, the American sense

of morality became tied into its right to dominate the world. The issue of earning international respect was central to quelling American fears, as Americans believed that more democracy abroad signaled less of a communist threat within American borders. After the Cuban Revolution in 1959, Latin America became an increasingly important region in which all of these struggles would be played out.

In order to reconcile the clear inconsistency of the American desire for global influence internationally and the white Southern reluctance for integration nationally, the southern Civil Rights movement became an integral facet of the American Cold War dialogue. While many Americans valued Civil Rights on moral grounds, international Cold War fears forced many politicians out of indifference to the Civil Rights cause. This was part of the belief that “if race discrimination could not go away, at the very least it must be handled with more foresight and tact.” If the politicians and media could not completely eradicate racism in the country, it was important to provide the appearance of progress regarding the issue. This is further exemplified due to the fact that the United States flouted their Civil Rights legislation as a testament to the ‘American Way.’ Historian Mary Dudziak points out that, “because American democracy was the site for this progress, it was argued that democracy was a model of government that enabled peaceful social change,” and that “Civil Rights activists reinforced the idea that their struggle was a quintessentially American struggle.” Even something as domestic as the Civil Rights movement was utilized by American politicians as a tool for demonstrating the power of this perpetually redefined ‘American Ethos’.

Baseball fit into this Civil Rights struggle earlier than the growing Civil Rights movement of the 1950s with the entrance of Jackie Robinson into the Major Leagues in 1947,

33 Ibid, 42.
34 Ibid, 63.
36 Ibid, 233.
and it continued to fit snugly into the newly defined narrative of American Civil Rights by including the Black population into the great American pastime. Yet, in the context of an American nation attempting to prove to the Third World the capacity for inclusiveness within democracy, where would Latino baseball players fit? Under the advancement of Civil Rights in a Cold War context, players such as Clemente, Marichal, and Vic Power should have received a welcome reception. However, their entrance into the Major Leagues proved to be a divisive event within the narrative of Cold War America. To better understand this, the role of sport, and specifically baseball, will be examined within the Cold War context.

**Sport in the Cold War**

Traditionally, sport served as a means for establishing dominant cultural values, and the Cold War conflict between democracy and communism was no exception. During this era specifically, sport became a potent tool for the Cold War powers due to its inherent ability to transcend politics narrowly understood; even one who may have little interest in the foreign relations of the time can become wrapped up in nationalism via the means of international competition.

Furthermore, while the arts and education served to demonstrate the American or Soviet power developing within their system, sport held the capacity to demonstrate either power’s physical might on an equal and quantifiable field. As both nations could flaunt atomic bombs in an increasing amount, sport became a way to exhibit physical toughness and individual skill. A display of the physical found added importance, as these two world powers never fought directly against one another in battle. Beyond the physical, one sports theorist observes that, “in the developed West, sport is popularly regarded as having a role in character-building, instilling the
virtues of self-control, discipline and fair play.”

Not only did sport assist in the development of the American physical condition, it also contributed to the sense of American morality and virtue. Thus, sport found a niche in Cold War culture as propagating the value of democracy.

Yet, the white American population lacked confidence in their physical identity as well, lending to a new facet to the Cold War American identity. Jeffrey Montez de Oca describes the stress the American people placed on their physical improvement entering the 1960s. A generation removed from the hardened veterans that defeated the Nazis, many Americans believed that the newly established affluence created a society of “softened masculinity.” Once elected, Kennedy publicly reinforced this sentiment in the national magazine, *Sports Illustrated*.

In an article entitled, “The Vigor We Need,” Kennedy stated:

> Technology and automation have eliminated many of those physical exertions which were once a normal part of the working day...We cannot permit the loss of that physical vigor which has helped to nourish our growth and which is essential if we are to carry forward the complex and demanding tasks which are vital to our strength and progress.

Kennedy proffers the American physical condition as central towards the goals of progress, meaning the propagation of freedom. Furthermore, he points to the ‘softening’ of the male body as a result of the advancements of technology demanding less from day to day activity. That Kennedy wrote for *Sports Illustrated* to project such observations and advice speaks to the politicized nature of the American white male body during this era.

In order to resolve this ‘muscle gap,’ as it is presently termed, politicians and communities alike took to reshaping, both physically and metaphorically, the American male body. Montez describes this by saying, “the scientifically built white body provided the surface...

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upon which Cold War masculinity was written into citizenship.” The manner for following through with such a task took the form of organizations such as the NCAA and emphasis on physical education at a young age. In addition to the previously suggested American characteristics of exceptionalism, the ‘muscle gap’ resulted in a newly found focus on the well-built male body.

As important as the ‘muscle gap’ was in the grand scheme of the Cold War, the game of baseball featured a more intense psychological need for American success. Throughout the history of the American pastime, baseball epitomized the American values of hard work and success in fair competition. During the Cold War, these values were an essential part of the growing sense of American exceptionalism. In the face of growing international tension within sport itself, baseball was to remain an American domain. Baseball historian Bryan Price states that during this era specifically, “whether it was behind the Iron Curtain or the Great Wall, baseball symbolized American values and democratic freedom...In the 1940s and 1950s, baseball symbolized America, even to its enemies.” America watched baseball during the Cold War not to experience the thrill of international competition, but to watch their own American spirit on display, demonstrating the traditional American ideals.

With an increasing emphasis on the American physique and the understanding that baseball exemplified the American character, a foreign body succeeding on United States “national pastime” posed a challenge to the very core of the American self-conception. Thus, Latinos in the sixties entered into a field that hoped to put American ideals on display. Though these players were dark-skinned and fit into the Civil Rights discourse, their foreign identity and language proved difficult for the white American audience to reconcile with their ‘American’

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40 Ibid, 131
pastime. With the American identity under constant debate and redefinition, many looked to the Ole' Ballgame in order to rekindle a sense of nostalgia for a simple time, not to watch foreigners dominate the sport. Yet, as the years progressed, this sentiment would loosen—as did many dogmas of the early decade.

**Disintegration of Exceptionalism**

Challenges to the status quo grew throughout the decade, inside and outside of sport, as United States citizens began to reflect upon their national identity and their national influence abroad. After the relative success of the Civil Rights movement, the American youth population watched as their country and their neighbors flew to Vietnam in order to safeguard the American way at home via intervention abroad. This, along with failed action in the Caribbean led to a new set of social upheavals and frustrations in the second half of the decade.

An examination into the media and music of the era displays a growing disillusionment with an idealized image of American exceptionalism. Halfway through the decade a counterculture emerged voicing frustration, and in many ways overshadowed the mainstream culture. Buffalo Springfield in 1966 spoke of the frustration in the popular song, “For What It’s Worth,” which says: “Paranoia strikes deep. Into your life it will creep. It starts when you're always afraid. You step out of line, the man come and take you away. We better stop, hey, what's that sound. Everybody look what's going down.”42 This concept of questioning the power that had once dictated the ‘American way’ spoke to a new rising consciousness of the Cold War—not one of fear, but one of disillusionment.

In film and media, this counter-culture struck back against the sitcom America, with films such as *Easy Rider* and music festivals such as Woodstock and Monterrey Pop Festival.

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Essentially, throughout the American landscape a new, countercultural sense of individualism emerged, unique to the proposed individualism of the Cold War American ethos. Feeding off of the disillusionment from a Vietnam War draft, a lack of cultural expression and growing conflicts with police, a new youth movement attempted to overthrow the American ethos that pervaded American society at the start of the decade.

It was this growing frustration that Roberto Clemente and Juan Marichal both augmented and utilized. Though they arrived under the veil of American exceptionalism, the mounting cultural movements in favor of the Civil Rights movement and the counterculture dissolved the monopoly that the American media once held over national identity. At the start of the 1960s, the Civil Rights movement allowed dark-skinned Latinos to gain more rights; however, their role in sport met a challenge due to the Cold War influence on the meaning of sport, fitness, and character, specifically in the American pastime of baseball. Entering into a decade full of constraint and redefinition of American citizenship, the white American mainstream attempted to limit Latinos from full acceptance into the American pastime by denying them access to the same coded language that defined the American ethos of exceptionalism. Yet, as the decade progressed and a larger portion of the population rebelled against this idyllic American identity, these players found a space for themselves within the American pastime and the larger American narrative.

The next sections will show how these players fit into the social movements of the 1960s through a representation of their race and nationality on the baseball field. While American baseball had a symbolism far exceeding simple sport, Caribbean baseball brought an equally strong emotional attachment with the game to the American stage. The meeting of these two powerful mentalities essentially serves as the foundation for the nationalistic identity contests within 1960s baseball.
Section 2: Diamond Politics: Baseball in Latin America

While the United States media and population engendered a language of American exceptionalism in the face of the Cold War, their Caribbean neighbors utilized their own language in contrast to American neo-colonialism. In 1898, after nearly four hundred years under Spanish control, the Caribbean nations of Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico were under the growing international power of the United States of America. While these three nations were subject to different types of United States control, they all voiced a frustration with the American political influence. Leading up to the 1960s, an American fear of communism led to a political strategy of international containment dictating American foreign policies. As a result, the politically vulnerable nations in the Caribbean became the subject of American international policy. Each nation found a unique manner to respond to American dominance through political or cultural means. Though varying in the severity of their political responses, sport—especially baseball—became a common thread that each country utilized in order to retain a sense of identity and pride.

The history of baseball in the region indicates the changing relationship between the Caribbean and the United States throughout the 20th century. Baseball entered Caribbean life in the late 1800s. As American military personnel in the region grew eager to separate themselves from the Spanish colonizers, Caribbean leaders viewed the growing American sport of baseball as a means to establish a newfound independence and appreciation for democracy. Upon independence from the Spanish, the cultural influence of America matured into political domination only a few years after the turn of the twentieth century. In the century that followed,

the United States installed dictators in Cuba and the Dominican Republic, while claiming Puerto Rico as a territory. Though facing a global power, the Caribbean countries found means to express their frustration through sport and pride.

While the United States exerted its military force, these three Caribbean nations did not shy away from the American pastime. Rather, the overall reaction was to appropriate the North American sport within the Caribbean as a regional sport. Politicians, athletes and citizens came to view baseball as a means of rebellion in response to the political domination they experienced after 1900. This mentality grew and became espoused within the Caribbean cultural experience; hence, upon entrance into the Major Leagues, the Latino baseball players brought with them a similar type of pride and culturally charged motivation to succeed on the American stage.

Against a long history of colonial oppression, the Caribbean nations of Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico utilized sport as a means for maintaining a sense of agency and pride. The Latino players in MLB in the 1960s brought this attitude with them to the United States throughout their careers. As opposed to an extension of American political control, such players used their cultural tradition and acted under their own volition in order to reinforce a sense of pride and worth to their countrymen at home.

A National Pastime in Cuba

Cuba’s 1959 Revolution, the most radical rebellion against the United States in the Caribbean elucidates the drastic utility of baseball as a political tool. Prior to the Revolution, the Cuban people had for nearly a century learned baseball, mastered the game, and utilized baseball as a foundation for cultural agency in response to the United States’ political dominance.44 The

The political history between the United States and Cuba functions as a basis for understanding the meaning of pride and agency in the Caribbean. Following the Spanish American War’s end in 1898, America asserted its newfound influence by using military means to obtain financial gains. By 1917, the United States had already utilized its army in Cuba on four different occasions. While Cuba struggled economically prior to 1898, the situation grew so desperate that by the 1930s the growing number of unemployed workers regularly engaged in strikes and uprisings. After a rising rebel force led by Ramon Grau San Martin gained control of the government in 1933, the United States intervened and supported a coup by General Fulgencia Batista. Batista subsequently allowed Cuba to become completely dependant on United States power. After decades of poverty and repression, the Twenty-Sixth of July Movement led by Fidel Castro gained control of the Cuban government in 1959. 45

While Castro’s political dominance solidified baseball’s place in Cuban politics, he was merely maintaining a previously established relationship between baseball and the larger Cuban society. A history of Cuban baseball published in Havana in 1949 discusses the role of baseball upon Cuban life and Cuba’s influence on the progression of baseball. A chapter entitled “El Fe: La Misión de Base Ball,” or “The Faith: The Mission of Baseball,” by a Cuban sports writer describes the advantages baseball lends to its society. He states:

Jóvenes analfabetos, ociosos se mezclaban con los más cultos y la transformación se realizaba por manera prodigiosa, de elementos inútiles, malsanos, en buenos elementos. El club de Base-Ball era la fragua en que templaban su caracteres, refinaban sus costumbres, aprendían a mantener la independencia personal, a acatar la ley, a respetar las autoridades que ‘por su voluntad’ se daban; al mismo tiempo que ejercitaban y educaban sus facultades y su destreza manual.46

46 Aurelio Granador, “El Fe: La Mision de Base Ball,” in Historica del Base Ball Profesional de Cuba, by Raúl Diez Muro, (Liga de Base Ball Profesional Cubana: Habana 1947), 27.
Illiterate and idle youth mixed in with the more cultivated, and the transformation occurred in a marvelous way, with the sick and useless elements joining the beneficial. The Baseball club was the forge by which they tuned their character, they refined their behavior, the youth learned to maintain their personal independence, to abide by the law and to respect the authority that, ‘by their own desire’ was given to them: at the same time, they exercised and informed their powers and manual dexterity.

This work, published by a Cuban professional baseball league, applauds baseball in a similar manner as those in the United States did throughout the late nineteenth and twentieth century. The author offers baseball as a cultural panacea for the physical, mental, and even moral blights upon their post World War II society when he posits baseball as a means for transforming the sick into versatile citizens. This passage comes from a larger work of Cuban baseball history that aggrandizes the past, similar to the American reverence for nostalgia within the game.

Published in 1949, this veneration for baseball led to a shared pastime with the Americans leading up to the 1960s. In fact, Havana became the home of the AAA Minor League team for the Cincinnati Reds, the Cuban Sugar Kings.47 And prior to the termination of the Negro Leagues, a team from New York played under the moniker of The New York Cubans.48 However, this cooperative passion for and participation in baseball soon came to an end upon the dissolution of relations between the United States and Cuba in the 1960s.

After establishing Cuban independence from the United States in 1959, the newly empowered Fidel Castro set out to reinvigorate Cuban pride and culture with government enforced programs. With a nationwide love for the game, baseball became an integral tool in Castro’s new rhetoric of revolution. In fact, Castro was reported to have been scouted by the Americans prior to his assent to power, yet this legend is certainly up for debate. The Cuban

48 Echevarría, 141.
scholar, Roberto Gonzalez Echevarría vehemently denies any validity to such stories, and claims that they strictly stem from Cuban propaganda.\(^\text{49}\) Castro further reinforced baseball’s position in Cuban via political legislation. In one of many new organizations, Castro’s revolutionary government founded the Institute for Sports, Physical Education and Recreation (INDER). This new organization published works hoping to sustain the role of the Cuban people as balanced and fundamentally skilled. On a superficial level, INDER published works on the fundamentals of baseball while on a deeper level they published propaganda histories of the game in order to denounce the United States. Funded and supported by the government, these works maintained the tradition of viewing baseball as an avenue for the creation of well-rounded citizens. One of these works published in 1961, entitled *Fundamentos de Beisbol*, describes the qualities necessary of a future baseball star as: “a) coraje, b) vista c) poder y d) tiempo.”\(^\text{50}\) These four qualities translate to courage, vision, power and timing. Of note is the fact that all four of these qualities signify utility on the baseball field and off as well. The government continued to use baseball as a tool for ensuring the development of a well-rounded and unified people.

While such works do little to directly differentiate Cuban baseball from the United States tradition, later works discussed baseball in order to definitively display Cuban superiority. After the revolution, Castro decided to break off all ties with Major League Baseball, and went so far as to ban professionalism in Cuba altogether. Looking back on this decision, one Cuban history states:

Así encontraremos por mucho tiempo a una minoría privilegiada “matando” los interminables ratos de ocio en los mejores terrenos y la mayoría discriminad “disfrutando” el juego, a veces sin zapatos, en placeres llenos de piedras o inmundicias y bajo la persecución de las autoridades. Esa, y no otra fue la terrible realidad que acentuó la división del juego de pelota hasta el triunfo de la Revolución, en enero de 1959.\(^\text{51}\)

\(^\text{49}\) Echevarría, 144.

\(^\text{50}\) Augusto Pita Teleño, *Fundamentos de Beisbol* (Havana: Imprento Nacional de Cuba, 1961), 211.

So we often see a privileged minority wasting their endless leisure time on the best fields, and the discriminated minority truly enjoying the game; sometimes without shoes, in games full of stones or filth and under the watch of the authorities. This, and nothing else, was the terrible reality that accented the division within the game of baseball until the victory of the Revolution in January in 1959.

The infiltration of baseball into Cuba's rhetoric of revolution was intended to demonstrate several levels of Cuban superiority. This passage reflects a resentment of Capitalist inequality via a description of the wealthy as 'wasting leisure time' while the poor were able to enjoy their modest means of recreation. This author utilizes baseball as a means of displaying such a dichotomy and as a reason for perpetuating the societal equality advertised in Castro's Socialism. As Cubans excelled in the game, baseball simultaneously functioned as a tool for exhibiting the advanced Cuban physical strength.

Although Castro banned professionalism in Cuba, he could not stop the emigration of many Cuban players to the United States. This emigration created a sensitive situation for both the players themselves and Castro. Castro responded by disavowing the players and claiming that they took part in treason and these players were unable to return to their families and country. Those who stayed in the United States after the embargo and those who left during the embargo provided their people with the chance to truly assess Cuban nationalism on the most competitive stage. The Cuban people entered the 1960s with baseball as their own national pastime, and the government revoked their option to play in the United States. Echevarría points out that, "there is always the feeling that no matter how great their feats, they cannot possibly compare with those of professionals." Those Cubans, such as Minnie Miñoso and Tony Oliva, who chose to brave the politically and racially charged America, carried an immense cultural infatuation for

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52 Echevarría, 368.
53 Echevarría, 366.
baseball to the American sporting environment. The Cuban ‘coraje’ helped them succeed and persevere in order to bring the palpable Cuban passion onto the international stage.

While the Cuban influence in Major League Baseball certainly declined after the start of the embargo, the Cuban example demonstrates the utility of baseball as a political tool outside of the United States. While Anglo-Americans assumed baseball to be synonymous with American democracy, the Cuban persona explicitly tied baseball into its own identity and government as well, demonstrating the flexible nature of the game for political purpose, regardless of the culture.

_Béisbol Romántico in the Dominican Republic_

At the same time that the Cuban government staged a revolution and attempted to define their unique brand of baseball, the Dominican Republic also struggled with their own national identity. The Dominican Republic fell victim to United States imperialism, yet still used the ‘American pastime’ as a means of gaining pride and a national identity. Just as the Dominican Republic did not stage a successful political rebellion against the United States, their political stance on baseball was less drastic than that of the Cubans. Notwithstanding, the Dominican players in the 1960s carried with them immense expectations from their countrymen as they fought to create a space for their game in the American landscape.

The Dominican historical relationship with the United States resembled that of the Cubans. Situated in the era of United States expansion, and in possession of a land fertile for sugar while facing an enormous debt, the Dominican Republic became a United States territory under the presidency of Teddy Roosevelt in 1906. A decade later, after years of violence and instability, Woodrow Wilson instituted a United States governed martial law; nine years after
that, twelve United States companies owned eighty percent of the country's crop lands.\textsuperscript{54} The United States used fiscal war and a privately trained police force in order to effectively dominate the Dominican economy. Unfortunately for the people of the Dominican Republic, the American influence directly allowed Rafael Trujillo, a U.S. trained general, to take the presidency in 1930. His 30-year rule featured vast oppression, blatant corruption and an unrelenting violence that resulted in a mass-murder; yet, he shared a deep-seated respect for the game of baseball with his people.

The decades of American sponsored oppression and violence did little to diminish the love of baseball within the Dominican Republic. In fact, the Dominicans added a new aspect to baseball dubbed "beisbol romántico". This 'romantic' signified the Dominican style of unconventional fielding, smart base running, and an overall charisma on the field—"the qualities of an artist rather than a behemoth."\textsuperscript{55} It was this style, unique to the Dominican Republic, that the American media later criticized as laziness, disrespect and arrogance upon the Dominican arrival into the American game. Despite the criticisms from the American media, the Dominican players persevered and continued a national tradition of baseball excellence in the United States.

Though the undeniable victim of United States political imperialism in the 1960s, the Dominican people showed little resentment upon the integration of their best players into the "Gran Carpa," or the "Big Show." One work of Dominican baseball history published in the 1960s glowingly describes the contributions of one of the earliest Dominican players, Guayubin Olivo. It states that his "proezas conquistaron los corazones Latinos y sajones" [feats conquered the hearts of Latinos and whites].\textsuperscript{56} The concept of conquering the hearts of the white American population brought a sense of pride among the Dominican people, as they could concretely

\textsuperscript{54} Gonzalez, 69, 71.
\textsuperscript{55} Gerald Gems, The Athletic Crusade: Sport and American Cultural Imperialism. (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 119.
\textsuperscript{56} Fernando A. Viciouso and Mario Alvarez, Beisbol Dominico (Santo Domingo, 1967), 41.
dominate little else at this time on the American landscape. The historical account goes on to lament: “Lástima que nuestro béisbol entrara en relaciones con el norteño en 1955!” Translated, this means: “Such a shame that our baseball would only enter into a relationship with the north in 1955.” It was not a shame that the Dominican players exhibited their skill on a foreign land; rather, the author points out the wasted opportunities to play internationally prior to 1955.

A look at the Dominican newspapers published at the time exemplifies the defiant political attitudes towards the United States in the era. The popular Santa Domingo newspaper, *El Caribe*, provided the Dominican Republic capital with the news and politics that displayed a resentful attitude towards the United States. Typical articles and political cartoons viewed the United States as domineering and manipulative. One headline entitled, “La Intolerancia de los Protestantes Norteamericanos,” (or “The Intolerance of American Protestants”) featured prominently next to a cartoon displaying displeasure towards the economic restrictions on the Dominican Republic. Furthermore, when providing the date of the newspaper, the headline reports, “Año 31 en la Era de Trujillo,” demonstrating the amount of political weight invested into the magazine’s contents. A look into the first month of the 1961 season, though, shows that politics and baseball served completely distinct functions for the Dominican people.

In the month of April 1961, the headlines reinforced the pride derived from a Dominican’s success in American baseball. That month’s sports section discussed baseball on 29 days. Of those 29 days, Felipe Alou and Juan Marichal were the subject of the headline on 15 occasions. In total, a Dominican player was the subject of the headline on 19 days. Often, when a Dominican player was not in the headline of the daily baseball report, only the American teams

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57 Vicioso, 42.
were mentioned without specific mention of any players. Only three times did the baseball headline feature an American player: once for Frank Lary, once for Willie Mays, and once for Warren Spahn, who happened to throw a no-hitter.\textsuperscript{59} Also featured in the month’s headlines were articles reporting that eleven Dominican players were featured on Major League rosters\textsuperscript{60} and that Felipe Rojas Alou was in fourth place on the list of Latino players in batting average.\textsuperscript{61} These daily reports seemingly ignored the rest of the league other than the players from the Dominican Republic.

That the newspapers simultaneously criticized American politics and applauded their players in the American baseball league leads to the conclusion that their players’ success served the function of standing up to American power. By beating the Americans at the game that allegedly represented democracy and equality, the people of the Dominican Republic displayed a sense of historical agency on a field in which no political meddling could have an influence. These players did not fall into the political hegemony of the United States; rather, they rebelled against it. As the Dominican players saw these newspapers and knew the passion of their people, they undoubtedly entered the American landscape entirely ready to display their nationalist \textit{`béisbol romántico’} on the American landscape for their Dominican compatriots at home.

**The Creation of Identity in Puerto Rico**

The final island to produce prolific baseball stars on the American stage was Puerto Rico. As the country was a territory of the United States, the Puerto Rican stars Roberto Clemente and Orlando Cepeda entered onto the American sports scene as American citizens; yet, as Latinos they were completely distinct from the white American mainstream and the black populations.

\textsuperscript{59} In the sub-headline was a report that Felipe Alou was one of the players he held hitless.  
\textsuperscript{60} *El Caribe*, April 20, 1961.  
\textsuperscript{61} *El Caribe*, April 31, 1961.
This identity as legally American, yet culturally foreign had deep roots in the histories of the two nations. Furthermore, their relationship with American sport was the continuation of a rich Puerto Rican tradition of interactions with the United States. Despite their lack of complete national independence, these players continued the Puerto Rican tradition of sport as a means for defining and maintaining a sense of culture and much needed national pride.

Possibly subject to the most direct form of United States political influence, the island nation of Puerto Rico found subtle ways of establishing their national identity. Immediately after the Spanish American War, the United States instituted American currency on the island, took control over their international trade, and changed the name of the territory to the anglicized Porto Rico. Furthermore, the ‘Porto Ricans’ had their works days strictly regulated in response to their reputation in American as lazy.  

Just as in Cuba and the Dominican Republic, United States businesses overworked the land and the people to the point that it became the poorest Caribbean nation by the 1930s. Following this nadir of Puerto Rican political dominance did the United States allow the island to self-rule under the title of Commonwealth in 1952. Only after this American concession did the economic conditions for the Puerto Rican people begin to improve.

While finding a semblance of political autonomy in the 1950s, the Puerto Rican people had been battling the culturally domineering United States for decades without definite resolution. This cultural conflict began at the start of the twentieth century, as the expanding United States attempted to spread its culture. The early attempts to instill English as the primary language and outlaw traditional Puerto Rican activities such as cockfights met powerful opposition among the Puerto Ricans. Baseball was the exception.

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62 Gems, 100.
63 Gonzalez, 62.
Traditionally an American sport, baseball predated American occupation of the island, and the local population appropriated the sport for themselves. They founded their own league in 1940, and it grew to become a winter hotbed of Major League talent. To further distinguish themselves from their United States Anglo-American cultural control, the country began entering into international competitions as their own nation: competing in the Olympics in 1948 and the Pan American games in 1955. It is no coincidence that Puerto Rico became a commonwealth in this same era. Thus, the association with sport and independence was firmly engrained on the Puerto Rican mentality by the mid 1950s.64

Upon Puerto Rican success in the Major Leagues, the country responded with adamant support, demonstrating the nationalism derived from baseball. The reception of Puerto Rican players in this time speaks to the sentiment of independence derived from these players' success. In 1960 and 1971, Roberto Clemente returned to his home country as a World Series champion. On both occasions, the plane arrived to a crowd of thousands, featuring government officials and fans waving Puerto Rican flags.65 Furthermore, upon his return in 1971, his mother addressed the crowd, saying: "Tengo un gran hijo que es de todo Puerto Rico y hoy se lo han demostrado,"66 or, "I have a great son that represents the entirety of Puerto Rico, and today it has been shown." This reception represented a heroic quality of a native star. The profusion of Puerto Rican flags and government officials at this event demonstrates the widespread depiction of these players as nationalist heroes. Clemente and his fellow Puerto Ricans left their home at the start of their careers with nothing, and returned with a renewed and reinforced a sense of national identity.

64 Gems, 106-8.
66 San Juan Star, October 22, 1971.
Conclusion

The Caribbean zeal for baseball preceded United States colonialism in the Caribbean by several decades and this is reflected by the unique Caribbean baseball tradition. By the time of America's rule over the Caribbean countries, the nations of Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico had all established baseball as a tool of character development and democracy. When the United States assumed control over the economies and politics of these nations, it is no wonder that baseball became a powerful means by which to assert the Caribbean right to representation and equality. However, this sense of agency was difficult to access elsewhere for these underdeveloped nations and the United States continued to dominate their land and people through the 1950s.

It is during this post-integration era that Latinos finally gained access to the American stage, with decades of frustration towards America and a national pride harbored within the game of baseball. Though participating in the game of one's oppressors strengthens the role of hegemony between the Caribbean and the United States, the Latinos of the 1960s were able to redefine their own identity and self-worth within the United States through sport. Cuba's political rebellion took the form of the 1959 Revolution, with a harsh anti-American rhetoric on and off the field. The Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico, though, utilized their chance on the American competitive field to bring a sense of pride and equality to their countrymen. They helped to raise the question: If Latinos could compete with Americans in baseball, what prevented them from succeeding elsewhere? The Latino nations utilized the historical language of baseball as a propagator of character, skill and intelligence, in order to re-instill a sense of agency into a people oppressed under U.S colonialism.

I have discussed the American attitudes of the era in section one. The way in which this tangible Latino pride met with American political insecurity will be the subject of the remainder
The 1960s saw two powerful concepts of identities meet, and despite many barriers to success, the Latinos found themselves able to challenge the way the Caribbean nations and the United States conceived of their national identity.

III: A Giant Leap: The San Francisco Giants of the Early 1960s

American baseball entered the 1960s as a clear element within the developing American identity of exceptionalism. Having established teams in the west and racially integrated, Major League Baseball expanded its audience to include an immense interracial American market from New York to California. Section one discussed how the game of baseball acted as a performance of the Cold War American values of hard work, intelligence, determination and democracy. A weary white American public looked to baseball as a symbol of democracy and nostalgia at a time in which they believed a growing foreign power threatened their way of life.

At this historical junction, though, Latino baseball players also brought with them their own sense of identity and charisma into the American game. Section two discussed the history of baseball in the Caribbean and the ways in which baseball became a means of rebellion against American imperialism. As representatives of this rich cultural connection with baseball, players from Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico entered into the Major Leagues seeking to reestablish a cultural independence that had recently been challenged by imperialism.

One case study representing an intersection between baseball’s ‘Old Guard’ and the new faces of the Latino population was the San Francisco Giants of the early half of the decade. Led by the conservative Southern manager, Alvin Dark, the Giants fielded a team with seven prominent black and Latino stars. Amongst these seven were the future hall of famers Juan
Marichal and Orlando Cepeda as well as the all-Alou outfield of Jesus, Mateo and Felipe Alou. The way in which the local and national white mainstream media discussed this team provides insight into the national attitudes of the time regarding race, nationality and the American tradition.

At the start of the decade, the San Francisco Giants and the media covering them struggled to reconcile the presence of Latino players in the American game of baseball. Though the team played together for only a few years, the main characters came to embody the changing mentality of the American people towards Latinos in the ‘American pastime.’ Latino players took part in their own movement for Civil Rights that relied upon the American values of democracy, determination and intelligence. In this sense, the San Francisco Giants of the early 1960s represented the synthesis of Caribbean and American identities on the field. While on an international scale, American political power maintained the capacity to overwhelm Caribbean independence, the game of baseball provided an outlet for Caribbean players to assert their agency as individuals and representatives of their heritage.

Alvin Dark: Managing the Mixture

Alvin Dark’s character as a southern, religious baseball player represented much of the American Cold War attitude of exceptionalism present throughout the country. Yet, the specific team he managed during the 1960s forced Dark to revoke the zeal of the American way presented by the political and cultural attitudes of the era.

Dark’s character and early career truly distinguished him as a representative of the ‘American Way.’ In his own memoir, he describes himself as “aggressively Christian,” and of
an earnest, hardworking background. Dark's career was delayed due to his military service, first in World War II and then in China, where he protected American interests during the Chinese Revolution. Upon his discharge from the military, Dark was drafted by the Philadelphia Eagles due to his prolific college football career at LSU. However, Dark’s passion for the game of baseball surpassed his interest in football, and Dark’s Major League baseball career continued until his retirement in 1960.

Dark continued his relationship with the baseball tradition, when just one year after the end of his playing career Dark came on as manager with the San Francisco Giants, an expansion team that had moved west from New York in 1957. With the team came a roster featuring the dark-skinned future Hall of Famers Willie Mays, Juan Marichal, Orlando Cepeda and Willie McCovey. Dark had a well of talent with which to succeed in the upcoming years. The New York Times sports pages commended San Francisco's choice of manager due to Dark’s experience as a player and his potential as a manager. The reporter Arthur Daley reported: “Few big leaguers can match him for character and class...Dark is case-hardened steel underneath. His aggressiveness is not flamboyant, but burns fiercely below the surface...There has always been a selflessness to Dark’s play.” This description preceded the mention of Dark’s talent in football and golf, and his sharp mind. Upon reporting Dark’s hiring, the mainstream sports media utilized the characteristics described in section one—passion, intelligence, modesty, flexibility and selflessness. As white Americans exhibited fear over the loss of American values abroad, Dark’s quintessentially American background likely served as reassurance for white Americans concerned about the leadership of a baseball team primarily made up of Black and Latino talent.

68 Dark, 35-41.  
When his managing career began, Dark ran into several issues with his team due to his rigid character. In order to rid the team of what he called ‘cliques,’ Dark forbade the speaking of Spanish in the clubhouse.

This forced the Latino population to struggle with their limited English skills, even when speaking to each other, while requiring no effort from the Americans to obtain any means of communication with Spanish-speaking players. Furthermore, when the Alou brothers were reunited on the Giants’ outfield, they were unable to talk to one another in their native tongue. This decision made the English language the status quo with no attempt to incorporate the language of five players. By limiting the expression of Latino players, Dark’s ruling severely hindered the sense of independence within the Spanish-speaking players. Without the ability to speak naturally, the Latino players lacked any ability to represent their personality or their background. They became a muted ‘other,’ only capable of physical expression on the field.

Beyond this decision, Dark’s general comportment became a source of debate among the players and media of the time. Though intensely critical of the Latinos’ manner of expressing passion, Dark’s sense of passion at times surpassed an appropriate level, reaching the point of rage. In one extreme instance, Dark lost the tip of his little finger while throwing a chair across a room after a loss.

Such forms of expression were unfamiliar to the Latino players in the context of baseball, and hence they were further separated from their manager.

The most dramatic moment of Dark’s tenure as Giants’ manager, though, came during the tumultuous 1964 season. In an article written by Stan Isaacs for New York’s *Newsday* paper, Dark was quoted as saying,

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70 *Mercury News,* “Outspoken Alou Helped Baseball Embrace Latino Players.” April 10, 2003; Though Dark never explicitly admits this charge, in his memoir he does show regret over favoring certain groups of people in an attempt to rid the team of ‘cliques.’ Dark 74

71 Dark, 18.

We have trouble because we have so many Negro and Spanish-speaking ball players on this team. They are just not able to perform up to the white ball players when it comes to mental alertness. You can’t make most Negro and Spanish players have the pride in their team that you can get from white players.\textsuperscript{73}

This quote came as part of a two day article written by Isaacs that even went on to say that Dark believed that Cepeda “is not a thinking man’s ball player,” and that “Dark talks about pride and desire and selflessness on one hand and inherent racial deficiencies on the other.”\textsuperscript{74} Dark went on to vehemently deny the accuracy of the article. He claimed that Isaacs misquoted him and blamed northern liberal media for their anti-southern beliefs. Minority players throughout the league stood up to defend Dark as well, invoking his record of fairness as evidence of the articles’ false claims.\textsuperscript{75} The controversy that the article evoked throughout the country speaks to an American population unsure of its own ever-changing identity. Dark’s firing at the end of the 1964 season demonstrates that his claims forced the organization to take a stance on their controversial manager.

The quotations from \textit{Newsday} point to the same sense of American exceptionalism that pervaded the era. That the quotation depicts Dark as questioning Latino pride, intelligence, and selflessness resonates with the very same qualities that the \textit{New York Times} valued in Dark’s character upon his hiring. That the public reaction split between condemning Dark and defending him further demonstrates that these statements did not lack credibility in the context of the speaker and the era. If the article was Isaacs’ attempt to smear Dark’s character, as Dark suggests, his awareness that Dark’s questioning of Black and Latino players would draw the most public criticism confirms that such issues were on the forefront of mainstream American

\textsuperscript{73} \textit{Newsday}, June 23, 1964.
\textsuperscript{74} \textit{Newsday}, “Cepeda Just Isn’t Dark’s Kind of Guy,” June 16, 1964.
\textsuperscript{75} Dark, 95-98. Jackie Robinson, Orlando Cepeda and Willie Mays all defended Dark’s fairness.
conversation at the time.\textsuperscript{76} Regardless of the article’s motivation or truth, the controversy points to a growing racial and nationalist tension building throughout the country.

Years later, Dark showed awareness of the problematic relationship of his own attitudes within an era of cultural insecurity. He sums up this attitude by stating in his memoir that, “You have to appreciate, too, that the country was then being swept by civil-rights fervor. Things were happening that demanded sides be taken. By not being ‘for’ something, you were automatically ‘against’ it.”\textsuperscript{77} Another reporter for the same news outlet as Stan Isaacs stated, “I felt he was a victim of these times.”\textsuperscript{78} These statements express an understanding that the conversation around Dark’s comments was framed by a period of transition in which Dark’s southern heritage became a point of contention in the face of the Civil Rights movement.

The racially charged comment remained with Dark for the remainder of his career. After Dark’s firing, he was rehired as an assistant for the Kansas City Athletics, ensuring the survival of his baseball career. Just three years after the controversy, Dark displayed a change of heart, telling the Kansas City newspaper, “There are as many dedicated players today as there were then...I think today’s players are more intelligent. Many of them are better educated and television has made baseball more accessible to them.”\textsuperscript{79} The cause for Dark relinquishing his steadfast value on his own playing days is unclear; the altered perspective, though, show that American cultural shifting during the decade forced those who subscribed to traditional American values to question the source of their beliefs and eventually to adjust during the changing era.

\textsuperscript{76} Dark claims that he had been warned that three New York writers were “out to get me.” Dark 93.
\textsuperscript{77} ibid., 97.
\textsuperscript{78} Newsday, “Where a Man Comes From,” August 5, 1964.
Orlando Cepeda: Fighting the Shadows

Orlando Cepeda’s relationship with Alvin Dark and the white media depict a career of success, yet one not lacking in conflict. He was born in 1937 in Ponce, Puerto Rico, son of one of the most famous Puerto Rican baseball players on the island, Pedro Cepeda. Cepeda’s Major League journey began in San Francisco in 1958, and ended at his Hall of Fame reception in 1999. His exuberant and emotional character was the subject of profuse discussion among the white American media throughout his career. He said of himself, “Perhaps like most Latin-American ballplayers—which means like most Latin-Americans—I will laugh a little harder and cry a little harder, and maybe sing a little louder.”

Cepeda’s self-assessment claims that Latino players generally expressed their emotions to a greater extent than the American players; yet, American nationalist rhetoric attempted to claim that Latinos lacked an acceptable display of pride.

Cepeda’s career in San Francisco was consistently shrouded by his unsteady relationship with Alvin Dark, and consequently the white American media. In his time on the Giants he received criticism from the local media for his work ethic, heart, and perseverance and the team traded him after a knee injury in 1966. After this trade, Cepeda’s career skyrocketed, earning him MVP honors in 1967. Cepeda’s career functions as an example of ways in which the American media relied upon nationalized descriptions and pointed out the distinctions of the Latino players in order to separate them from the concept of American exceptionalism.

Cepeda’s typical Puerto Rican background assured that Cepeda was imbued with Caribbean zeal for the game upon entrance into the Major Leagues. Cepeda followed a similar path to fellow Puerto Rican Roberto Clemente on his way to Major League stardom. He was

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81 Ibid, 21.
signed by the Puerto Rican owner Pedro Zorrilla to play first base for the Santurce Cangrejeros (Crabbers) in 1954. After a season playing in Puerto Rico’s winter leagues and the death of his father, Cepeda worked his way up to the Major Leagues to debut with the San Francisco Giants in 1958. 82

In his first year with the Giants, Cepeda’s struggles with the English language and his relationship with Alvin Dark were often reflected in his treatment by white media. He did not struggle, though, to win over support of the fans and to play great baseball for his team. Cepeda discusses the difficulties he faced with the media in his 1968 memoir, referring to the media as “shadows.” He states that throughout his career he was, “fighting a set of shadows in a world I never made,” 83 and that “sometimes you have to fight shadows. Sometimes the shadows themselves are mean and foolish, and then they are twice as hard to fight.” 84 Cepeda’s acknowledgment and reference to these ‘shadows’ near the end of the decade points to an awareness of his inability to act under his own capacity to represent himself within the white media, as he was attempting to fight against an intangible force only capable of diminishing light (or truth). In order to combat the ‘shadows’, Cepeda was forced to look beyond their resultant silhouette and find the source of the darkness elsewhere. Furthermore, his acknowledgment of “a world I never made” points to the fact that Cepeda believed his interactions with the media to be piece of a larger struggle, a struggle far greater than his own career.

From the start of Cepeda’s career in San Francisco, he experienced mixed successes but never truly gained acceptance on his team or in his city. Beyond his winning of the Rookie of the Year in 1959, Cepeda had few moments of unadulterated success with the Giants. Constant clashes with Alvin Dark created a scene in which the media wrote about the growing discontent

83 Ibid, 10.
84 Ibid, 13.
between the two sides. Dark regularly benched Cepeda for what he called a lack of hustle and physical endurance—qualities perpetuated by the cultural rhetoric as endemic to the American spirit. In that moment, though, the concept of American determination and toughness pervaded the discussion of athletics and value. In his own memoir Dark shows regret over one instance in 1961 in which he openly berated Cepeda on the field for not successfully completing a bunt. He writes, “I think I made an enemy out of Orlando that day. I challenged his manhood and he didn’t do anything about it.”85 The media picked up on this relationship and accentuated it in order to create a more entertaining and compelling storyline for their audience. For example, after Dark’s controversial comments in 1964, the media approached Cepeda for his opinion, seeking a retaliatory comment. Cepeda said little then, but that was due to a lack of communication between him and Dark and a lack of confidence in his speech.86

Cepeda’s lack of confidence largely stemmed from his image in the American media, as at the start of the decade Cepeda fell victim to a fair amount of slander. For instance, one newspaper described Cepeda accepting his offer prior to preseason with a stereotyped description. A New York Times article stated:

One could hear the large Spanish-speaking contingent on the team saying, “caramba, Orlando better sign queeck.” And one could visualize Cepeda picking up the phone in San Juan, Puerto Rico, calling up the management at his own expense and saying: “Ho-kay, Mr. Feeney, I take the forty-seven-five.”87

This quote displays a common trope of early reports on Latinos in baseball, that of phonetic quoting. This specific example takes the concept of phonetic to a hypothetical situation for Cepeda. Such media strategies worked to create an image of Cepeda as ‘other’ and mentally inferior, for no reason other than his struggle to speak a second language. As a foreign body

85 Dark, 91.
86 McCovey stated in 1967 that, “His English still is uncertain so there have been many times when he’s just preferred to say nothing than try to express himself and either have it come out wrong or have it misunderstood.” Sport Magazine, July 1964.
succeeding in what the media believed was an ‘American game,’ Cepeda represented a threat to American exceptionalism. Thus, phonetic quotations weakened Cepeda’s threat to American democracy as the white media portrayed him as lacking ‘American’ intelligence.

Another article from the same year used a similar type of stereotyping on Cepeda. It stated: “Orlando Cepeda. The name seems to need a Don in front of it or a cigar band around it...He is not a team man.... When things go wrong, he blames everybody but Orlando.” 88 This article, however, received a lawsuit from Cepeda seeking over one million dollars in damages. While phonetic quotes were a subtle mechanism used to alter Cepeda’s image, blatant claims regarding Cepeda’s character and fabricated associations with cigars were susceptible to action in the courts. Although the case was eventually dropped, this instance shows a time in which Cepeda successfully fought back against the ‘shadows’ in order to assert his independence and agency.

The end of Cepeda’s career points to a shift in his relationship with the media and the American public in general. In 1967, a knee injury put Cepeda’s future into question and the Giants traded him to the St. Louis Cardinals for minimal compensation. 89 This trade reignited Cepeda’s career, as he earned a unanimous Most Valuable Player honor on the way to a World Series championship in 1967. One local paper described his contributions by stating, “his exuberance, that infectious cheer that made the Cardinals El Birdos.” 90 Of note is the acceptance of a Spanglish idiomatic device in the St. Louis clubhouse that allowed Cepeda to express his individuality, rather than limiting his behavior to that of the typical American definition. Without the suppression of his language and nationality, Cepeda was free to assert his individuality and he inspired his team throughout the season to a World Series championship.

89 Cepeda, 164.
Cepeda’s career from start to finish demonstrates the ways in which traditional American rhetoric attempted to limit the contributions of Latino players. Though successful at the start of his career, Cepeda’s work ethic, attitude, and intelligence were constantly questioned in the public sphere. Yet, as his career progressed he found undeniable success. Cepeda’s actions discredited the validity of such claims and through his success he was free to represent his country, his language, and his culture in a way that was previously frowned upon. Imbued with cultural pride and a desire to overcome the Anglo-American ‘shadows,’ Cepeda took part in changing what it meant to be ‘American’ during his playing career.

**Dominican Dandees: Juan Marichal and the Brothers Alou**

The San Francisco Giants showcased several other Latino talents in the early 1960s — starting the Alou brothers, Felipe, Mateo and Jesus, and the future Hall of Famer Juan Marichal. Their careers in San Francisco featured many of the same types of conflict with the white mainstream media as other 1960s Latinos. These players understood that their status as Latinos created a unique identity for themselves within the American game. Marichal, with his unique pitching delivery and big smile, fought against the media’s representation of him as a soft player throughout his career. The Alous, though, saw much less explicit criticism from the media. Yet, Felipe and Jesus Alou took part in clear rebellion against the treatment of Latinos and Latino culture in the American atmosphere. Both humble and outspoken, the Alou brothers explicitly challenged the American perspective of Latinos. The case of the Dominican players on the team further demonstrates the ways in which Latino players faced a narrow American definition of value as espousing an American brand of hard-work and intelligence. However, these players overcame this obstacle by utilizing a growing sense of agency due to their playing abilities, pride and outspoken nature.
Juan Marichal’s life story and that of the white American baseball legends prior to his time exhibit remarkable consistency. Marichal’s story began with a farming family in the Dominican Republic. Marichal grew up on a farm, displayed endurance, and exhibited intelligence in his pitch selection, yet his nationality and language created a distinction between Marichal and other white pitchers. He began pitching around age ten and eventually dropped out of high school to pitch for the military. Throwing a variety of pitches from various deliveries, Marichal caught the eye of American scouts and his career in America began.91

Marichal’s instant success in the Major Leagues did not make him immune to poor treatment in the United States media. His career took off from the start, as he threw a one-hitter in his first start on July 19, 1960. Three years later, he memorably pitched a 16 inning complete game against Hall of Famer Warren Spahn and gave up no runs in the process.92 Marichal’s skill and attitude made him a fan favorite, yet Alvin Dark and some members of the media still questioned Marichal’s character and quoted him phonetically at the start of his career. One particularly bruising article in 1964 claims that Marichal participated in a street fight during the offseason, and sarcastically remarked that at the least this would help him remain active, as he tends to put on weight.93 Such claims pointed to a lack of character while also claiming Marichal suffered from laziness. Marichal wrote in his 1967 memoir, “Now everyone has said it: Marichal pretends to be injured...he cannot pitch in the clutch...he cannot win late in the season.”94 Though his statistics proved worthy of praise, constant comparison with the concept of the American identity prohibited Marichal from entering the cultural dialogue of the Cold War American landscape.

92 Ibid, 23
94 Juan Marichal, 38.
The white sports media’s general inability to accept Marichal grew more intense as the result of a single event that haunted Marichal’s legacy until his induction into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1983. On August 22, 1965 the Los Angeles Dodgers pitched Sandy Koufax against Juan Marichal and the San Francisco Giants in the middle of a tight pennant race. Both teams had let their tempers flare throughout the season coming into the game, with players being hit by pitches and retaliations coming from both teams. When Marichal came up to bat in the third, he claimed that a throw from the catcher Johnny Roseboro to Sandy Koufax struck him in the ear, setting off a brawl. The brawl ended with a few scrapes, Marichal’s ejection, and a large gash on Roseboro’s forehead from the bat of Marichal. 

As a result, Marichal received the most severe suspension in the history of the National League until that point, a 9-day suspension and $1,750 fine.

The public reaction varied in severity, but the extent to which Marichal’s nationality became associated with the violence is undeniable. A number of white mainstream opinions called for Marichal to receive a lifetime suspension from the game. One article goes so far to say: “Baseball in America would enjoy the statues of cockfighting if its players descended to Marichal’s style of fighting.” This claim separates Marichal due to his actions, but also clearly clarifies that American tradition is of a higher quality than that of Marichal’s native country, where cockfighting is common.

Such claims for a life suspension ironically ignore the pugilistic history of such players as Ty Cobb and condone the concept of fighting at face value. A Sporting News article features a subsection stating “Fists Yes, Bats No,” and quotes one Dodger player as stating, “I could have

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97 Ibid.  
punched Marichal silly, but I blew it.” Theses papers do little to critique the concept of violence for the traditional brawl, yet call for a lifelong ban for Marichal’s actions. Such articles seem to condone the presence of violence from white players using their fists, and condemn Marichal’s actions as if the two types of fighting represent completely distinct traditions. One white reporter defended Marichal and this hypocritical tendency of the media, saying, “There are those who are quick to make this a racial incident and toss around the classic cliché about Latins and their tempers... Juan is a decent and sensitive man, who must know by now that he performed a dastardly act.” Marichal’s record as a honest competitor prior to this incident forced many to rethink their conceptions of the Latino stereotypes, while others in the media reverted back to the American language of creating an ‘evil other’ out of a foreigner.

Despite this conflict, Marichal gradually regained his positive image in the media. Through constant production on the field, Marichal was able to find a means to act on his own behalf and shed the stereotype commonly bestowed upon Latinos. He won the most games of any pitcher in the 1960s and by the end of his career newspapers began referring to Marichal as a workhorse and lauded his durability. Taking it upon himself to write a memoir in the middle of his career, Marichal speaks to his motivation for success. In a matter resonating with the rhetoric of his countrymen and heritage, Marichal wrote: “There has to be desire, and there has to be pride too, and I hope that whatever else the books finally say about me, they will mention that I showed desire and pride.” Throughout his career, Marichal took equal pride in his skill and effort as the Americans around him, and this was eventually accepted. Though Marichal faced obstacles and created controversy through the Roseboro incident, his will to retain self-
worth in the most competitive baseball arena vaulted Marichal into the Hall of Fame, alongside the great white players of the past.

The other prominent Dominicans on the team, Felipe Alou and his brothers, experienced the same type of prejudice as Marichal. The oldest, Felipe, expressed his discontent through the media throughout his longstanding career in order to push back against the biased treatment of Latino players. Lauded in the media for his devout Christian faith, Felipe became one of the most outspoken figures for the rights of Latinos in the Major Leagues. One specific instance that sparked Alou’s outspokenness occurred in the offseason of 1962, in which several Dominican players returned home to play in a series against a Cuban all-star team. In response to their actions, the commissioner of baseball fined each involved Latino player $250. Frick claimed that their series in the Dominican violated league policy as it featured “ineligible players.” The article defines this term, stating: “Ineligible men would be islanders from other places who appeared in Santo Domingo. For instance, Cubans Camilo Pascual, Pete Ramos, and Joe Azcue were said to have been in the Dominican exhibitions without permission.” The league punished the Dominican players due to their association with Cubans in the Dominican Republic. Understandably, Alou was quite upset. In response, the same article (following the journalistic rhetoric of the day) claims that Alou was so incensed with the fine that “his Latin blood fired to the extent of 250 clams.” Alou justified his playing in the offseason series, stating, “If I had not played, it would have been a slap in the face of the people of my country, who looked forward to this series.” Alou’s countrymen and national pride were more important to him than the rules laid out by the Major Leagues. He did not respond to Frick’s fine with a simple payment; rather, he voiced his opinion to the league. It seems as though an attack

105 Ibid.
on Alou’s country and their right to participate in sport became the impetus for Alou’s entrance into the public dialogue.

Alou’s response to Frick through the American media serves as a powerful example of an outright challenge to the white Cold War stereotypes placed on Latinos. Alou wrote an article in *Sport* magazine co-authored by Arnold Hano entitled, “Latin-American Ballplayers Need a Bill of Rights.” In the article he demands that the Major Leagues appoint an bilingual representative of Latino baseball players. Alou’s means of utilizing the media to address the ills exemplified a willingness to publicly speak out against his treatment and the capacity of the white American public narrative to overlook the tradition of Latino players when addressing their actions. He does not end the discussion about himself, though, as he states in his piece: “unless something is done, unless somebody steps forward and speaks up for these players, it will not be the last hardship.” Alou used the injustice against him as a foundation by which to use the media as a tool for achieving agency for all Latinos. That this outspoken criticism only occurred after he was punished for entertaining his people demonstrates the pride Alou had in his country, and his willingness to fight for his right to represent his people regardless of the MLB regulations.

Alou’s quiet outspokenness remained throughout his career and he became a known proponent of Latino rights. After the end of his career, Alou reached yet another milestone for Latinos in baseball, becoming the first Latino manager in the major leagues for the Montreal Expos in 1992.

Felipe’s forthright posture paved the way for other Latinos, including his brothers, to defend themselves through the media. One specific and bizarre instance occurred after the unification of the Alou brothers in 1964, with the success of Jesus Alou. One local mainstream writer claimed that the name Jesus is out of place, stating: “here in the United States, where it is

107 Ibid.
sacred to Jesus Christ, the Lord Savior, one finds extreme difficulty in associating it with just plain people...We’ve been thinking that what Jesus Alou needs is a nickname.”^108 Problematically, this journalist seems to imply that Americans value the name Jesus more than Dominicans due to their superior respect for religion. Typically, writers in the early part of the decade referred to the youngest Alou as J. or Jay, to which Alou responded, “‘My name is Jesus...because my mother and father named me Jesus. I like my name and that’s what I want people to call me.’”^109 Jesus Alou did not allow the American media to dictate and anglicize his name; rather, he immediately lashed out in the public sphere and maintained his right to his Dominican identity, and the media responded positively to his requests. This instance demonstrates the growing ability of Latino players to assert their proud Latino heritage in an American sphere full of international suspicion.

The Dominican players at the start of the decade struggled to achieve agency within an American landscape full of expectation and stereotypes. The treatment of the players on the Giants in this time exemplifies the means by which the media attempted to limit Latino independence and the ways in which Latino players overcame these obstacles through persistent skill and the willingness to speak out against injustice.

Conclusion:

The San Francisco Giants of the early part of the decade brought together a range of attitudes prevalent throughout the era. Their most successful season came in 1962, in which they lost the World Series in game 7. This game ended 1-0 when Willie McCovey of the Giants hit a

smashing line drive to the Yankee’s second basemen, with men on second and third. This would be the closest this team ever came to a championship. Management dissolved the team shortly thereafter. The Giants did not rehire Alvin Dark after his comments in 1964; traded Orlando Cepeda in 1966; traded Felipe Alou in 1963; and traded Mateo Alou in 1965. Only Jesus Alou and Juan Marichal remained with the team for the majority of the decade. Yet, during their few years as a team, most figures persistently attempted to express their individuality in a time of cultural change. Alvin Dark entered into his job attempting to propagate the Cold War American values discussed in section one and met with a group of Latinos attempting to represent their countries in the face of an unwilling white United States media.

Cepeda became comfortable in St. Louis when he could represent his exuberant character and Spanish language inspired moniker. Felipe and his brothers utilized the media in order to express their discontent with the American prejudice. And while Marichal’s brawl tarnished his legacy for years, in his later years he served as a mentor to other Dominican pitchers such as Pedro Martinez. The memoirs published by Marichal, Cepeda and Felipe Alou in the middle of their careers demonstrate the apparent need for these players to assert their perspectives, as the media distorted their lives towards the start of their career. Furthermore, their ability to publicly articulate their first-hand opinion points to a shift in the capacity for Latino expression in the American public sphere.

Though all of these players suffered from comparison to, and exclusion from, the American identity due to their embodiment of a foreign threat, their capacity to succeed allowed them to assert equality in the United States. Their means of achieving Civil Rights utilized another feature of American identity—success in open competition. Through their utilization of this relatively open space, Latinos overcame the stereotyped judgments based purely on their heritage. Though the white media initially acted as an obstacle, the Latino players on this team
proved unrelenting in their skill and forced the American public to reconsider their notions regarding American exceptionalism on the baseball field and consequently in the world at large.

IV: “Gloria y Ejemplo”:
The Life and Death of Roberto Clemente

On January 1st 1973, Roberto Walker Clemente died in a plane crash just off the coast of Puerto Rico. Clemente was accompanying thousands of dollars worth of aid destined for the Nicaraguan people after a devastating earthquake. The front page of January 2nd 1973 brought the American and Puerto Rican people the tragic news of Roberto Clemente’s death. Prior to examining the implications of Clemente’s death and the impact of his life, a headline bluntly stated, “On Mercy Mission to Nicaragua Baseball Star Clemente Feared Dead in Air Crash.”

In the coming days, obituaries and articles about Clemente discussed the polarizing figure, attempting to comprehend the life of the 38-year-old Puerto Rican, and to dissect his contributions to the game of baseball and the larger community.

The public reactions overwhelmingly portrayed Clemente in a heroic manner, discussing his baseball career and his humanitarian work with equal merit. The Puerto Ricans viewed Clemente as the “gloria y ejemplo de Puerto Rico,” or the “glory and example of Puerto Rico,” and lamented that Clemente did not live to see the completion of a sports complex meant for the Puerto Rican youth. American reporter Hamilton Bims described to the American public that Clemente was “seldom understood,” admitting a failure on behalf of the white media to accurately represent the baseball star. Only three months after his death the commissioner of

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112 Hamilton Bims, “Sad End for a Troubled Man,” 1973
baseball named an award after Clemente, for “the player best exemplifying the game on and off the field.” And that summer, Clemente joined Lou Gehrig as the only player to be elected into the Baseball Hall of Fame prior to the five-year waiting period after a player’s retirement. In short, Clemente’s death incited immense praise, respect, and wistfulness for Clemente’s career and the way he conducted his life.

The American public’s reaction to Clemente’s death demonstrates the extent to which he had embodied the American ideals of baseball on the field and in his life. By the time of Clemente’s death, he had achieved legendary career achievements: 3,000 hits, 2 World Series wins, 1 Most Valuable Player, 12 Gold Gloves, 4 batting titles, and 15 All-Star games. Beyond his statistics, though, it was Clemente’s character that was the most identifying feature of his career.

Yet, as discussed in section three, representation of the Latino players in this decade created tension between the players and the white media. And at the start of his career, Clemente was no exception to such treatment. In the late 1950s and early 1960s Clemente was the subject of the Latino stereotypes, having his intelligence and grit constantly questioned by the American public.

Roberto Clemente Walker’s life and success serves as the archetype for Latino opportunity in the American game. Throughout his career on the field, Clemente exhibited great skill at the plate, exceptional speed, incredible range in his arm, immense passion to win, and an unwavering desire to please his fans. Off the field, Clemente lived for his family and his country, and devoted his life to helping the less fortunate throughout the world. Thus, it is no surprise that upon hearing of his tragic death on New Year’s Day, 1973, the American media and

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nation glorified Clemente as a model citizen and great American, a status previously unavailable to any Latinos.

This section will show that the transformation of Clemente that led to his success and acceptance in the American media was concurrently a transformation of the American cultural atmosphere. Clemente fought against the cultural barriers to establish success within the game and a commitment to charity throughout the world. He achieved recognition in both arenas to the point where, after a decade of strife, he could express his individuality and character without the fear of media interference. Clemente’s early life, career, and subsequent death embodied the characteristics of the American ethos on and off the field; thus his career forced the American public to reconsider the notion of American exceptionalism to include people of a foreign body. While clearly threatened by foreign success in the national game at the start of the decade, the white American sports media found a way to reconcile the American identity with foreign success.

Early Life and Career

Roberto Clemente’s early life would have resembled the idyllic childhood common throughout baseball lore, if only it had taken place in America. Yet, because he was Puerto Rican, his upbringing only hindered Clemente’s ability to integrate into the American cultural narrative of exceptionalism. Clemente was born in 1934 in Carolina, Puerto Rico, the seventh son of a sugar mill worker. Growing up in a large household with limited means, Clemente had to help support his family by working at odd jobs around town. Family was a huge part of his childhood, as he revered his mother and learned the game of baseball through his father and
brother. Clemente also diligently attended school, hoping to find a career in engineering if his baseball career was unsuccessful.\textsuperscript{114}

Throughout his early life, Clemente developed a passion for baseball and participated passionately in the sport most common in his Puerto Rican community. In 1952 Pedro Zorrillo signed the then 18-year-old Clemente to play for the Santurce Cangrejos (Crabbers) for forty dollars a week.\textsuperscript{115} Experiencing great success in the Puerto Rican leagues for a season and exhibiting enormous potential in hitting, running and fielding, he gained the attention of several Major League baseball scouts and ended up signing a small minor league contract with the Brooklyn Dodgers.\textsuperscript{116} Clemente was allegedly offered a more lucrative deal after he signed his agreement with the Dodgers, but his mother forced him to decline the offer, as it would have betrayed his word and been unethical.\textsuperscript{117} Thus, Clemente entered the American minor leagues, changed teams and finally debuted with the Pittsburgh Pirates in the Major Leagues in 1955.

Roberto Clemente entered a Cold War American cultural environment skeptical of foreign success that was fueled by a white mainstream media willing to manipulate and misrepresent the Latino image to the American people. The media treated Clemente in the same way as other Latinos in the era, dictating his quotes phonetically and creating for him an image distinctly separate from the American identity. In his rookie season, the local newspaper described Clemente as flashy and presented him to the local Pittsburgh population with the following quote: “Clemente, a native of Puerto Rico, had doctors examine his back last winter. The pain disappeared. Come spring training, it returned. ‘Eets like Ted Kleesuski...No one

\textsuperscript{114} Maraniss, 22.
\textsuperscript{115} Contract obtained from Baseball Hall of Fame.
\textsuperscript{116} Maraniss, 26.
\textsuperscript{117} Ruck, 123. This anecdote certainly seems romanticized, and it quite possibly is. If this is the case, though, it demonstrates that Clemente’s narrative became transformed within the cultural account of his life, something common among baseball legends.
knows what ees wrong...I study to be a ceevil engineer...Back hurts I quit.” In a matter of two sentences, this local sportswriter creates a satirical explanation for Clemente’s injuries, insinuating that they were completely contrived by the player. Immediately following this statement, the writer included a barely comprehensible quote in which Clemente appears to lack speaking and reasoning skills. In response, Clemente responded to this treatment with skepticism towards the media in his progressing career, and at the end of his career he stated “they make me talk like ‘me Tarzan you Jane.’” In this time at the outset of Clemente’s career, the media distinguished Clemente from the intelligent and tough image of the American identity. Yet Clemente shows that he was aware of such treatment and resented his representation until the end of his career. Such characterization served as the default interpretation given to Latinos during this era when they attempted to participate within the ‘American game.’

1960: A Champion Ignored

As Clemente’s career progressed, his statistical success on the field did not receive the same attention as the success of American players due to the media’s unwillingness to align the intangible characteristics of the American ethos to a foreign-bodied competitor. Despite improving his fitness by participating in boot camp and enlisting in the United States Marine Corps in 1958, Roberto Clemente’s important contributions to the Pirates’ 1960 World Series team received little recognition from the American sports media. The Pirates culminated a National League pennant season with one of the most compelling World Series of the era, ending with a game 7, bottom of the ninth, walk off home run from Bill Mazeroski to defeat the Yankees 10-9. In the series Clemente had a hit in every game, and in the decisive game seven he

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120 Clemente Marine Corps contract obtained from the Baseball Hall of Fame.
exhibited his hustle as he beat out a grounder for a crucial infield single to sustain a rally. This single drove in a run and the next batter hit a three run home run to give the Pirates a 9-7 lead.121

After the season, the vote for the National League Most Valuable Player reinforced the Cold War American values prevalent in baseball and the time. The Baseball Writers Association of America (BBWAA) awarded the MVP award to Dick Groat, a candidate lacking superb numbers on a championship team. The Associated Press article discussing the prize utilized the Cold War values prevalent at the start of the decade, as the author constantly refers to Groat’s character, rather than his skill. Throughout the article announcing Groat’s victory, only one sentence addresses any of his statistics, mentioning his league leading .325 batting average. Moreover, the article stressed his history as an “All-American basketball and baseball star” at Duke University, his season as an “inspiring leader in a quiet way”, and Groat’s off-season employment at Jessop Steel Company. Furthermore, the author comments that Groat, “had the qualities demanded of the Most Valuable Player when he insisted on playing the final two games of the season with a left wrist that had not healed” and saying of his batting title, “he won it the hard way.”122

In comparison, Roberto Clemente finished .009 points behind Groat in batting average, nearly doubled his RBIs, out homered Groat 16-2 and outslugged the MVP by seventy percentage points. Yet he received only one first place vote to Groat’s 16. The results of this MVP vote set Clemente against the media for the rest of his career.123

Clearly, for American baseball writers at the time, a large discrepancy existed between the steel working American and Roberto Clemente. Examining what these writers thought was required to win a Most Valuable Player award reveals the prevalence of character in their work.

121 Video obtained in the Baseball Hall of Fame.
123 Michael Oleksak and Mary Oleksak, Béisbol: Latin Americans and the Grand Old Game (Grand Rapids, MI: Masters Press, 1991), 221.
assessments of value. The qualities vaulting Groat to receive 16 of 22 first place votes over Clemente's 1 had to be those of intangible measure, as the numbers neither spoke for themselves or were spoken of by the writer of the story. While likely not intentionally, the BBWAA appeared to base their selection of Groat upon qualitative measure, rather than looking purely at the numbers. In a sport veiled in American rhetoric of competition, touting the holy numbers of 60, .400 and 56, Groat's award stems from causes distinct from the concepts of quantitative contribution to a team under equal conditions.

Groat's eventual victory over Clemente at the end of the season is less important than the continued disparity in public appreciation throughout their season-long performances. Clemente's numbers demonstrate enormous subjective contributions to his team, yet the writer chose to celebrate a player for holistic contributions made in a 'quiet' and 'hard-earned' way. The author described Groat's leadership in the form of modesty, as opposed to the flashy play attributed to Latino players such as Clemente. And in possibly the most bizarre addition to the article, the author felt that Groat's background as a steelworker in some way augmented his accomplishments for the year and made him increasingly valuable to the league due to his hard-working spirit. These phrases rely upon common tropes of American pride, carefully drawing upon America's baseball symbolism in an era when America's global dominance was in question.

At this moment, having achieved success in the Major Leagues without gaining sufficient recognition, Clemente began to enter the prime of his career. Emboldened to disprove the fallacies created by the white sports media of his era, Clemente used his career on the field to create space for his personality within the sphere of Cold War American life.
Recognition and MVP

A disparity in terms of the value attributed to concrete statistics and character evaluation troubled Clemente for the remainder of his career. In response to the baseball writer’s neglect of his statistical contribution, Clemente in turn neglected the opinions of the writers. He stated that he cared little for the title of Most Valuable Player, and only wanted to win the batting title, stating: “I think winning the batting championship again (he won the title in 1961) would be my biggest thrill. I put it above the Most Valuable Player award. After all, hundreds of players are trying for the title. If I win, that means I’m best.”

Clemente acknowledged the inability to garner the support of the writers in this era; in turn he focuses his attention on winning an award distinct from the writer’s opinions—the league’s best batting average. This award is independent of the BBWAA’s opinion, and thus a victory could not be denied to Clemente due to his ‘un-American’ character. Clemente restated this belief in the same interview, stating:

It seems to me they like to play up my faults. If I make a bad play, it seems to get more publicity than the good things I do. They always compare me with Paul Waner [another great Pirate outfielder] and things in the past. I didn't play ball 25 years ago. I'm playing now. I think I should be judged on this basis. I get tired of hearing that Waner was a better hitter than me. A lot of old fans tell me I field better, run faster and throw harder than Waner. Nobody says anything about that.

Clemente acknowledges the media’s tendency to place a value on the past, typical of the American nostalgia present in baseball. Clemente again attacked the media for attempting to withhold appreciation for Clemente by utilizing intangible comparisons. Furthermore, it was the Pittsburgh Courier, one of the more prominent African American newspapers in the country, which reported such an interview to the public.

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125 ibid.
The significance of Clemente's race made him a complex figure for the renowned African-American news source. Clemente denied that his race was African-American, instead qualifying himself as a race distinct from both black and white. Furthermore, Clemente stated that he was a “double-nigger” due to his skin color, nationality and language. Hank Aaron agreed with this sentiment, stating, “It was probably harder on him than it was on me.”126 Clemente received some backlash from the black news source at the start of his career, and consequently found himself subject to the same representation at the start of the decade from the African-American and white media (phonetic quotes and described as ‘fiery’).

While it is never explicitly stated, it is likely that this treatment coincides with the Civil Rights Movement. As the black population sought acceptance for themselves within the white mainstream, they may have reinforced the separation between the black population and the rising Latino presence. Of note is that this racial distinction took place in the game of baseball—the arena in which the black population achieved desegregation in 1947 and initiated a national Civil Rights conversation. However, as the Civil Rights Movement found success by the early to mid 1960s, the newspaper also found Clemente to be a proponent of minority rights, even if he did not completely align with the black population. Hence, the fear of including Clemente with the African-American population gradually dissipated. Eventually the Courier coined the term ‘tan’ to include Latino players, and included Clemente among its subjects. While at the start of the decade the Courier took part in the same stereotypes as white newspapers, towards the middle of the decade the Courier, and writers such as Bill Nunn, ceased attempting to misrepresent the sensitive Puerto Rican.

126 David C. Ogden, et al., Reconstructing Fame: Sport, Race, and Evolving Reputations (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2008), 18.
Truly the issue of Clemente’s acceptance in the white and black American media stemmed from misunderstanding, a fact noted by Clemente and the media later in his life. The sports sociologist David Ogden states the following: “Clemente was deviant but not in a moral sense. Rather, he was perceived to be a deviant in a cultural sense, and by not abiding by society’s assumptions of appropriate behavior for an athlete...his every move was heavily, if not overly scrutinized.” The author’s phrase ‘behavior for an athlete’ is relative to the era in which that athlete participates and in Clemente’s era this behavior was ideally aligned with the concept of white American exceptionalism. Notwithstanding, the African-American newspaper was the first to provide Clemente with an outlet to express his cultural differences, as Clemente could identify much more with the black community than with the white Americans after the Civil Rights successes in the middle of the decade.

As Clemente’s career continued with enormous success and the media gradually adjusted to his outspoken character, Clemente eventually won the favor of the media and fans alike. In 1966 Clemente was crowned the National League’s Most Valuable Player by a slim margin over media darling Sandy Koufax. Yet, even on a day of media praise for an indisputably successful season, Clemente looked back to 1960. He stated to the Sporting News: “I didn’t receive the recognition I felt was due me [in 1960]...it is not a matter of false vanity or anything of the kind. I felt I had a very good year and I also felt that it was overlooked.” Even at a moment of praise from the fans and media alike, Clemente took this time to remind the American public of the injustices he faced at the start of his career. By this point in his career, it was rare to find Clemente quoted phonetically and represented as separate from the American ethos.

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127 Ogden, 21.
While slow in coming, Clemente’s performance on the diamond and his character in the community received growing positive attention from the media. Assisted by a well-established black media, Clemente eventually gained a generally positive image in the white media as well. The change in Clemente’s representation, though, was framed in the general context of an America altering its definition of who could be an American, with the Civil Rights movement truly taking cultural and legislative hold of the country. The end of Clemente’s career saw his progress of the mid 1960s reach a new level, as Clemente’s inclusion into the American cultural narrative became undeniable.

Champion, Mr. 3000, Legend

By the end of his career and past the point of acceptance within the media, Clemente displayed increasing willingness to express his emotions and to communicate with the public. At decade’s end Clemente was the leader of his team and became part of the Pittsburgh baseball lore, joining legendary Hall of Famer Honus Wagner among the ranks of legendary Pirates. The 1971 and 1972 seasons served to solidify Clemente’s place among the legends of baseball. A decade earlier the media attempted to create a chasm between Clemente and the American ethos, yet by the start of the 1970s Clemente was the leader on his team due to his undeniable skill and his honest, hardworking character. The end of Clemente’s career exhibits the changes in Clemente’s patience with the American media and the American media’s departure from the strict rhetoric of American exceptionalism.

Clemente’s public figure change drastically, as evidenced by his renewed representation throughout the multi-ethnic American media. The end of 1971 saw the Pirates face off against the Baltimore Orioles in the World Series. One public dialogue in particular demonstrates the extent to which Clemente could speak freely. It took place between the stars of their respective
teams, Clemente and the Oriole’s Frank Robinson. In response to one of Robinson’s public remarks, Clemente stated, “Well, Frank Robinson is a better ballplayer than I am. He’s an American fellow. That makes him the best.”129 Clemente now sarcastically commented to the media about their capacity for prejudice towards the non-American population. Rather than providing an angry remark towards Robinson, Clemente could joke with the media, and put forth his comments without concern for misrepresentation.

Yet it was Clemente’s performance in the series that reminded the national audience of his endurance and fierce desire to succeed. The Pirates went on to win the series in seven games, and again relied heavily upon contributions from Clemente. Clemente again had a hit in all seven of these games, extending his World Series hitting streak to 14, including a tie-breaking solo home run in the deciding game 7. At the end of the series, Clemente earned the Most Valuable Player honors and provided the American and Latino populations with a moment of unfiltered expression. When asked to speak after the victory Clemente stated the following:

Before I say anything in English, I’d like to say something in Spanish to my Mother and Father in Puerto Rico...En el día más grande de mi vida, para los nenes la bendición mía y que mis padres me echen la bendición [In the most important day of my life, I give my blessing to the kids, and hope that my parents will give a blessing of their own].130

Clemente’s public statement in Spanish provided a moment of pure individual expression. As the English language had long been a challenge faced by Latinos in baseball and throughout the country, this quote was a moment of pride to the Latinos and defiance against the American media history of misrepresenting Latinos in baseball. While earlier in his career Clemente was portrayed as an outsider due to his language, at this point he spoke candidly to the people of his own culture. That he chose to acknowledge the generations before and after him speaks to the

130 Tape obtained from the Baseball Hall of Fame.
ascension of his accomplishments to all people of his heritage. His choice of words also speaks to the Anglo-American values of family using a religious rhetoric. Such rhetoric demonstrates that Clemente’s values were never misaligned with those of Cold War America; rather, the alleged deviance largely stemmed in his representation in the white media.

By the championship season of 1971, Clemente enjoyed success and the recognition that he had desired among the American media. One of the writers previously known to misrepresent the Latino population printed an article in 1972 discussing the injustices of Clemente’s early career and stated, “maybe he should go into politics. I’d vote for him if I could. He is sincere, and he tries. There is a shortage of guys like this in sports.” 131 This quote applies a positive character judgment to Clemente, something denied to him throughout his career. Furthermore in the upcoming season Clemente was quoted as giving advice to the American population on family life. The article states, “‘Respect,’ he said is the biggest thing for a boy of little league age to learn. ‘Respect your parents.’” 132 At this point Clemente’s character augmented his on-the-field accomplishments to the extent that he could give his advice to a welcome American audience. His comments regarding the intangible quality of respect represented the Cold War American character—that he could now be a propagator of such an ideal speaks volumes to his acceptance among the American media.

Clemente’s final season in 1972 brought about a sense of finality and praise among the media prior to his tragic death. In his last regular season game Clemente earned his 3,000th hit, placing him in an elite club in American baseball lore. Sadly, months later Clemente would die in a plane crash delivering humanitarian aid to Nicaraguans after an earthquake. Clemente accompanied the aid himself due to the rumors that supplies were not reaching those truly in need.

need. The response from the American public sought to explain Clemente’s life and its meaning for the American people. White sportswriter Stan Hochman wrote, “Zealots frighten us, no matter where we find them. People were stunned by Clemente’s fury, baffled by his moods, suspicious of his medical history... ‘I love the game,’ he would say. Then he would button on his uniform and go out and play it that way.”133 While his death certainly deprived the league of a baseball star, his heart and charity off the field were the common cause for mourning. After his death the American response to Clemente’s life and his legend was to welcome Clemente and his story into the American narrative of baseball and the nation as a whole.

Conclusion

Clemente’s historical journey began with the stereotypical characteristics of Latinos of the era. At that time, the black population was emboldened in a Civil Rights struggle as they attempted to gain access to the American cultural narrative. While the black form of protest utilized Freedom Rides and a March on Washington, players such as Clemente could only protest on an individual scale in the American public sphere through the game of baseball. As baseball provided Clemente with access to the public sphere, he fought against his perceived image with a prolific career characterized by versatility, perseverance and a desire to win.

Though initially the white media failed to associate a Latino player with such characteristics, Clemente forced the American audience to reconsider their closed notions of citizenship to accept Clemente’s heritage into the American cultural narrative. Furthermore, as the Civil Rights battle took place during this time, Clemente’s career coincided with an era in which the white mainstream population was in the process of rethinking their preconceived notions of race. That these two forms of protest overlapped is no coincidence. As Clemente

133 Clemente file, Baseball Hall of Fame. “It Takes an Ocean to Douse his Fire.”
challenged normative racial characteristics in baseball, the American public became conscious of a mistreatment of minority populations, thus the two forces assisted each other in challenging American racial norms.

Clemente's life as a dark-skinned, Spanish speaking Puerto Rican forced him to adjust to the American sphere; yet, just as Clemente learned to speak English and acclimate to American culture, the American public had to acclimate as well. It was evident that in 1960 the American public attributed the American Cold War values of intelligence, versatility, and hard work primarily to white players. By the end of the decade, though, Clemente's skill and his moral character forced the American public to accept Latino success in the game of baseball and even placed Clemente in the upper tier of baseball legends. The reciprocal change between the few prominent Latino players and the entire concept of the American ethos speaks to the capacity for Latino players to challenge an entire set of cultural expectations. Roberto Clemente's career serves as the archetype for such a challenge. His career was impossible to ignore and upon the news of his death, the American public responded with the enshrinement of Clemente as a Latino legend in what was considered by many to be a 'white' American game.

V: Conclusion

The death of Clemente signified more than the end of a brilliant life, it represented the end of an era. By 1975, Marichal, Cepeda and Alou had all retired and a new generation of Latino players entered into the league. The struggles of the early Latinos in the late 1950s and early 1960s were unique to their time, and set the stage for the subsequent generations of Latinos who entered an America that ultimately came to accept their language, pride and unique style.
The players of the 1960s, though not the first Latinos to play in the Major Leagues, were the first Latinos whose undeniable success merited induction into the American cultural narrative.

A clear transformation took place within both the players and their reception on the American stage by the end of the decade. This transformation of the players and their treatment was framed by an era of immense cultural changes throughout the United States. These players were certainly products of the era in which they played; yet, they also contributed to the changing attitudes as well.

At the start of the 1960s, due to fears generated by the Cold War, the American public dialogue adopted a new rhetoric of American exceptionalism. This was a departure from the traditional American ethos, which consisted of a blend between the characteristics of democracy and capitalism. In this definition, democracy signifies freedom of speech, religion, and property while the capitalist values instilled a sense of equality for all peoples. Yet, in this era of insecurity, Americans resorted to a political and cultural rhetoric distinct from traditional American values in order to quell American Cold War preoccupations. This trend was evident from the outset, evidenced by Kennedy's inauguration in the first month of the decade. During this speech, "Kennedy exhibited an inordinate concern for foreign issues, specifically his concern over the Soviet perception of his strength and determination." The political focus on reinforcing American willpower and resolve thus became integrated into the conversation surrounding the American ethos.

This integration of a new Cold War dialogue into traditional American values during a time of stress points to the true anxiety pervasive throughout the American atmosphere. A representation of the white American identity as strong, smart and determined mollified a self-


questioning of the value of the American way with a ‘discourse of therapy,’ a phrase coined by Dana Could. Just as individual therapy seeks to address insecurities through comfort, a cultural rhetoric of therapy seeks to address the insecurities of a society by adopting a language of safety—in this case, that of American exceptionalism. This discourse, “serves a broader, cultural function for mass audiences: to offer psychological ministration for the ills of society.”

This discourse also drew upon nostalgia in order to remind the American mainstream of their cultural narrative of success. The American dialogue of the 1960s that portrayed the American ethos as possessing inherent greatness and willpower certainly worked against the traditional American values of equality and competition in a free market; yet, either intentionally or not, the American political and media powers deemed a discourse of therapy necessary for the American well being. The American politics and media at the start of the decade attempted to reinforce exceptionalism and the values it held, as shown in the 1960 Most Valuable Player race in which Clemente finished far behind a player of equal statistical achievement due to his supposed lack of ‘character.’

The burgeoning Civil Rights debate occurring throughout the South caused white United States citizens to question their definition of what it meant to be an American. As Americans warmed up to Civil Rights as a means for displaying American democracy, players such as Jackie Robinson and Willie Mays became associated with the same Cold War American characteristics as the legendary Americans Lou Gehrig and Cy Young. Baseball, as an integrated sport that acted as a performance of strength and grit while simultaneously feeding into the American desire for nostalgia, fit snugly into such a ‘discourse of therapy.’ Latinos at this time, though, held no established position in the game, or in the Cold War rhetoric of exceptionalism.

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While the white mainstream media displayed a willingness to incorporate black Americans into the American cultural narrative, the media showed resistance to immediately accepting a non-English speaking, minority population lacking United States citizenship.

As the American population entered into the 1960s with their own concerns regarding the future of the United States in the Cold War, the newly arriving Latino baseball population brought with them their own ‘discourse of therapy,’ in which baseball was featured as a central aspect as well. As baseball only took a few decades to reach Cuba and the rest of the Caribbean, the symbolism and nostalgia of Caribbean baseball helped the Caribbean populations to mitigate the cultural pain of United States neo-colonialism. While Cuba’s rhetoric of baseball as exemplifying Cuban strength was highly political, the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico also integrated baseball into their own rhetoric of identity and self-worth.

When the Latino players entered the Major Leagues, they maintained a sense of heritage and pride within the game of baseball and relied upon the traditional values of the American ethos in order to gain agency in the American public sphere. The Latino pride generated from decades of independence in the game of baseball served as immense motivation for the Latino players to overcome the racialized and nationalized American cultural atmosphere.

The ability of Latino baseball players to assert their individuality on the American public speaks to the power of sport in society. Sport, unlike most other means of performance, is entirely reliant upon success in a competitive market—an integral component of the traditional American ethos. While the United States media attempted to create a distinction between Caribbean bodies and the American identity, Latino players’ skill served as an effective means to garner attention on the American public stage. American writers at the start of the decade utilized phonetic quotes and claims that Latinos lacked the toughness, tenacity, or patience corresponding to American players. At this historical moment of African-American Civil
Rights, the American media appeared unwilling to also accept a non-English speaking minority population lacking American citizenship.\textsuperscript{137} Latino presence, though, could not be denied in part because of their abilities on the field. Due to their lasting presence, the writers eventually changed their manner of Latino representation, signaling a change in the game of baseball.

By the start of the 1970s, the Latino influence in the game of baseball was impossible to ignore. By decade’s end, Juan Marichal had the most wins of any pitcher throughout the decade, and Roberto Clemente had the most hits of any player in the decade. The Latino players’ success in baseball demonstrated the capacity for minority non-Americans to be accepted for exhibiting the common tropes of American democracy and capitalism in spite of their non-American identity. In the 1960s, Orlando Cepeda and Roberto Clemente each earned MVP honors, along with the Cuban Zoilo Versailles. After his retirement, Felipe Alou became the first Major League manager from a Caribbean country. Beyond the dominant statistical contributions, the MVP honors and Alou’s opportunity to lead a team of American players in the American sphere speak to the transformation that took place within the American understanding of the Latino identity.

The change in Clemente’s image from a fragile showboat, to his unprecedented enshrinement into the baseball hall of fame functions as a microcosm for a growing white American self-awareness throughout the decade. While white Americans at the start of the decade were content to reside in Levittowns and to watch other white Americans perform on the baseball field, a general consciousness grew among the white American population in regards to the inconsistencies of American democracy in rhetoric and in practice. How could the alleged face of democracy in the globe deny equal citizenship based entirely on race? As the American

\textsuperscript{137} As stated in the introduction, while Puerto Ricans are indeed citizens of the United States, they maintain an entirely distinct culture.
political machine and cultural dialogue began to resolve this question by mid-decade, the discrepancies between politics and culture became growingly apparent as the Vietnam War waged on. The American people became frustrated, and as a result of this frustration they sought to find a new voice and a new identity.

This new capacity for expression hearkened back to the American values of liberty and equality. Latino players served as an impetus for such a change, while also benefitting from a white American population participating in a national self-reflection. While white Americans in the 1950s were hungry for a reinforcement of their American exceptionalism, a growing number of Americans in the 1970s wanted to see traditional American values of individual expression present in the political culture. Latinos in baseball took part in this widening definition of who could take part in the American public sphere. Through on-the-field contribution that could not be ignored and off-the-field passion that could not be diminished, players such as Clemente and Alou embodied the struggle for unrepressed individualism in an American public dialogue increasingly willing to reconsider its own identity.

The Latino presence in the game of baseball and the American cultural narrative is visibly evident in the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York. Prior to the 1960s, the hall of bronze statues only exhibited a history of white American baseball players, coinciding with the narrative of America up to that time. Jackie Robinson broke Cooperstown's color line in 1962 and Clemente became the first Latino to gain entrance in 1973. While the Latino experience went through vast changes throughout the decade, the bronze busts of the Latino stars show no distinction between their nationality and that of the white Americans. And there they remain, enshrined as gods in the game of baseball in the same legendary company with Babe Ruth, Cy Young and Ted Williams. The hallway full of race-less faces does not distinguish the
Latino population in any way from their white competitors, providing a true sense of equality in the narrative of baseball in America.

The present day landscape of Major League Baseball and the United States at large presents a Latino population growing in numbers and influence. Latinos now own and manage baseball teams in the Major Leagues, and in the general public the rising Latino population seeks public office and contributes heavily to the vote. During the era in which Clemente and Cepeda donned their cleats, though, the white American population viewed Latino participation in the American sphere as limited by their lack of intelligence and American grit. The way in which players such as Felipe Alou and others challenged such social norms in an era of American political transition points to a key era in defining the Latino identity in the United States. For better or for worse, baseball became the arena for Latinos to assert their individuality and self worth on the American stage. By doing so consistently, Clemente and his Latino compatriots allowed the Latino people to reconsider the value of their heritage on the world stage and forced the white American mainstream to relinquish its strict control over inclusion in the American public sphere.

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