



# Masculinity in American Baseball Films

*Uwe Mehlbaum*

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Seminar paper from the year 2010 in the subject American Studies - Culture and Applied Geography, grade: 1,7, University of Bayreuth (Nordamerikastudien), course: HS Field of Dreams - Baseball in American Literature and Popular Culture , language: English, abstract: In the United States of the mid-19th century, the game of Baseball became popular to such an extent that it was from then on closely associated with American national culture as such. The “National Pastime”, the “American Game” or even the “National Religion” as the sport also soon was called, represented not only American values like teamwork and meritocracy, but also to a certain degree symbolized the expansion, industrialization and the economic boom in the United States of the 19th century. Baseball has therefore been an important topic in many works of American literature and films ever since. Hence, among many other points of view, American baseball fiction has also shaped the perception of American masculinity. The concept of masculinity is important in the academic field of gender studies which came up only as recent as the 1970s. In its first part, this paper is going to explain the concepts of gender and masculinity and the complexity which surrounds them in some detail. Secondly, this paper is going to approach some works of baseball fiction from the 1980s and early 1990s from the gender studies-perspective, namely the films Bull Durham (1988), The Natural (1984), Mr. Baseball (1992) and A League of Their Own (1992). It will try to answer the question what conclusions can be drawn concerning the representation of masculinity in American baseball films of the 1980s and early 1990s.

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