THOMAS W. ZEILER. *Ambassadors in Pinstripes: The Spalding World Baseball Tour and the Birth of the American Empire*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield. 2006. Pp. xiv, 217. Cloth $75.00, paper $24.95.

Over the last few years, Major League Baseball marketing strategists and general managers have been obsessed with the idea of "spreading" the game of baseball to China: namely, selling a billion caps and China Central Television (CCTV) broadcast rights and finding the Chinese version of Ichiro Suzuki or Chien-Ming Wang. Boston Red Sox president Larry Lucchino was even dubbed by the Associated Press "a Marco Polo of the major leagues" for his commitment to this national mission.

One hundred and nineteen years ago, when Americans were far less convinced of their nation's place in globalizing hierarchies of culture, Albert Spalding organized a world baseball tour designed similarly to "extend an American presence in the world" (p. xiii). Between October 1888 and April 1889, the Chicago White Stockings and an "All-America" team of professionals played fifty-four games across the United States and in New Zealand, Australia, Ceylon, Egypt, Italy, France, England, Scotland, and Ireland, covering 32,000 miles in their travels.

It is hard to overstate Spalding's importance to the history of American baseball, not least for his 1907 role in creating the absurd myth of Abner Doubleday's 1839 "invention" of baseball—pure and unstained, the official investigative commission protested too much, by any "traceable connection whatever with 'Rounders' or any other foreign game" (p. 159). Spalding seems to have been intimately acquainted with, and profitably engaged in, the peculiar American combination of insecurity and bravado that marked the Gilded Age. In this book, Thomas W. Zeiler is interested most in Spalding's and baseball's roles in the "expression of empire through globalization's instruments of free enterprise, webs of modern communications and transport, [and] cultural ordering of races and societies" (p. ix) of that moment.

Zeiler uses terminology of globalization in his narrative of the tour, although there are several points when he could have elaborated on the precise model of globalization he is using. Is this Fredric Jameson's "tolerant contact" between peoples and "immense cultural pluralism"? George Ritzer's "globalization of nothing" (on homogenization and standardization of cultures and tastes)? "Glocalization" with Wayne Gabardi's "overlapping fields of global-local linkages"? A book as impressively researched and richly textured as this deserves more attention in this regard. And are there any implications for these models of "globalization" when we see that Spalding's precocious marketing schemes (staging games at the Colosseum [p. 124] and on the sands alongside the Pyramids [p. 108]) were set against the background of almost unanimous and consistent racism, ignorance, and boorishness on the part of the players themselves?

Perhaps the most interesting element of the narrative is the role played by the White Stockings' "mascot," a

young African American performer named Clarence Duval. The reader's curiosity is piqued several times by this young man's appearances with the team, "plantation dancing," leading parades, and such, before Zeiler engages in an interesting discussion (pp. 82–84) of what it meant to Duval's tour mates to have him around. Zeiler gives a convincing explanation of the white players' assumptions that Duval's public clowning and vulnerability would somehow buttress their dreams of racial superiority at every stop around the globe.

The book suffers from a handful of careless or unsophisticated phrasings. For example, the touring baseball teams somehow manage in 1888 to have "challenged historian Frederick Jackson Turner's thesis of 1893" (p. 41). When future Hall of Famer Cap Anson ponders throwing his "mascot" Duval into the Indian Ocean to distract a menacing shark, Zeiler regrets that players "gave hardly a thought to such prejudice" (p. 102). (This was not simply prejudice; it would have been cold-blooded murder.) And Zeiler gives in on his project far too early and easily when he concedes that "the baseball tourists cannot be linearly connected to the eventual American empire" (p. ix). Why not? The book, whose subtitle connects the two pretty closely, actually proves very well that the players' assumptions, behaviors, desires, and insecurities—here (and this is what made the tour so important) performed corporeally, publicly and globally—adhered quite closely to what we already know about early U.S. imperialism.

Still, the book provides a very accessible, vivid, and fascinating—if often disturbing—account of "the greatest trip in the annals of sport" (p. 187), the mysterious journeys of present-day baseball Marco Polos included.

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