Raceball: How the Major Leagues Colonized the Black and Latin Game. By Rob Ruck. Boston: Beacon Press, 2010. Pp. xv, 288. Epilogue. Notes. Index.

Jackie Robinson's appearance in a Brooklyn Dodgers uniform in the starting lineup on opening day at Ebbets Field on April 15, 1947, was a seminal event, not merely in the history of major league baseball but in the history of all baseball, all American sports, and the larger American society. Not only did it offer Afro-American baseball players who had labored for decades in rigidly segregated Negro baseball leagues the hope of enjoying the status and rewards of playing at the highest professional level, but it also gave dark-skinned Latinos the same prospect. And, as journalist Leonard Koppett observed, Robinson made "decent" white people aware of what they had been able to ignore and drew their attention to the inequities of a system in which lily-white baseball was only one small symptom.

But for all its positive benefits, both on and off the field, Robinson's success eventually carried, in Ruck's view, several negative consequences. While a select number of superior black players endured the racist resistance, barbs, and threats to reach the majors and earn appropriate wages, the majority of black players faced declining opportunities, as black fans rushed to see their brothers in the major leagues and abandoned teams in the Negro Leagues. Consequently, the latter quickly collapsed and with them employment for players, coaches, managers, and reporters—all part of one of the limited areas of black business. In the long run, with alternative athletic careers, Afro-American youth lost interest in baseball, and their numbers in the majors have reached a low point. In non-player areas of the game, the black presence remains equally low. Still, as Jules Tygiel has explained, integration contributed to a change in the on-field style of play.

A few light-skinned Latinos, mainly Cubans, had reached the majors before 1947, but the darker ones suffered the same discriminatory exclusion as American blacks and often played in the Negro Leagues. After 1947, scouting in the Caribbean intensified in Cuba and Puerto Rico, but the Cuban connection ended in 1959–1960 and attention shifted to the Dominican Republic, where the major leagues' draft system does not apply. American scouts were soon joined by controversial locals (*buscones),* together signing increasing numbers of young boys seeking an escape from poverty. Most received very little money and never made the majors. To facilitate the process, major league teams founded academies to both train and socialize players. To protect their investments, they pressured the best Dominican players to abstain from the Caribbean winter leagues, thus depriving islanders of the opportunity to see their countrymen play. Ruck joins Alan Klein in concluding that, thanks to the economic power of major league baseball, the Dominican Republic has become a colonial exporter and exploiter of raw materials for the profit of metropolitan North America, a parallel process to what has happened to mainland black communities.

In Venezuela, where the system has partially spread, the situation is similar. In Puerto Rico, weakened winter leagues and competition from basketball have reduced baseball's appeal. Mexico, where contract law is different, has retained most of its players

and the vitality of its recently reorganized leagues. Colombia, Nicaragua, and Panama have sent players to the U.S. major leagues, but their ascent is only marginal to what Ruck analyzes. Next? Scout Andres Reiner, who opened the Houston Astro academy in Venezuela, is now building a similar facility for the Tampa Bay team in Brazil.

Ruck repeats much of the previously outlined history of black and Caribbean baseball, focusing most on two places he covered in his earlier work: Pittsburgh, home of the Crawfords and the Homestead Grays, and the Dominican Republic, where the immigrant *cocolos* laid the foundation, later expanded by U.S. marines, for a long-term love of baseball and the export of highly skilled talent. Here, players, unlike black Americans, remain an integral part of their communities.

Ruck is more optimistic, perhaps unrealistically so, about the chances of Latinos, especially Dominicans, in retaining control over the business and style of their game than he is about black Americans playing a significantly larger role in the game: "Black Americans resurrected baseball's spirit and remade the way the game was played, but their turn center-stage is over. It's Latino time now" (p. 235). If the information is not totally new for students of baseball, the interpretive slant is challenging. In sum, the book provides a substantive and provocative introduction to an important aspect of the American national pastime and its social, economic, and international implications.

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ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY

The Deepest Wounds: A Labor and Environmental History of Sugar in Northeast Brazil. By Thomas D. Rogers. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010. Pp. xvi, 302. Illustrations. Tables. Maps. Notes. Bibliography. Index.

The global search for alternative energy sources to oil has led over the last decade to a boom in ethanol production based on feedstocks, including sugarcane. Investors worldwide are looking to profit from this expanding industry. Profit-centered views of agriculture have become increasingly pervasive during the neo-liberal epoch, and the supporting discourse does much to obscure the broader socioeconomic conditions under which such production occurs. Luckily, Thomas D. Rogers has produced a fascinating account of sugarcane production in northeastern Brazil, based on the perspectives of labor and the environment rather than investor profit. From this angle we get a very different picture of what a booming agro-industry looks like.

Deepest Wounds documents the changing fortunes of the sugarcane industry in northeastern Brazil from the emancipation from slavery in 1888 to the late twentieth century—an extremely broad historical narrative informed by Braudel's understanding of history as combining a *longue durèe*—the evolution of the sugarcane sector—and a his-