

【연구논문】

# In the Log Cabin with My Favorite Player: Appreciating Traditional American Masculinity Through Homoerotic Language in Baseball Fandom

*Hyerin Shin · Sue Hyun Jie*

(Yonsei University)

## I. Introduction

The connection between baseball, the “America’s pastime,” and sexuality comes across as little surprise. After all, baseball terminologies have contributed much to expressions for sex euphemisms in American slang. It would be more unexpected, however, if we were to link baseball almost exclusively to homosexual language. On the website *r/NYYankees* (<https://www.reddit.com/r/NYYankees/>), a sub-board (“subreddit,” or “sub”) of the popular website *Reddit* devoted to the fans of the 27-time World Series Champions New York Yankees, its users openly express their homosexual desires—and arousals—at seeing the players’ performance. For instance, when the user “jonginator” posted the team pitcher Luis Severino’s stats, he titled

his baseball stats post, “Get Your Lube and Whip Out Your Dicks Kids, Here is a New *Fangraphs* Article about Severino.” To a picture of Aaron Judge taking batting practices, the sub’s users comment, “Porn,” “Yo label this NSFW,” and “It’s indecent to be a half mast in the library yet . . . ”

The demographic of r/NYYankees, one of the most active baseball team subreddits with nearly thirty-five thousand users in April 2019, is predominantly male. In the “r/NYYankees: Survey 2018” conducted in August 2018, 93.5% of the respondents (591 people) identified themselves as male, 5.7% (36 people) as female, and 0.8% as other (5 people). The survey also shows that most of the users are in their twenties or thirties, with 84.9% of the respondents (511 people) in the age between 25 to 44. These results allow us to safely exclude the possibility that the language of the subreddit which expresses sexual desires for the players, as being the result of female fans showing their heterosexual attraction for the players. We can also exclude the possibility of the subreddit as being a gathering of homosexual Yankees fans, if the sub’s reaction to the real-world homosexuality is of any indication: while the subreddit’s rules forbid bigoted speech, some of the most visible replies to the issue of the team’s involvement in Pride Day celebrations were less than welcoming. Indeed, while the users of r/NYYankees do not outright identify themselves as homophobes, their reactions toward real-world homosexuality issues are ambivalent when looking at the comments on several news articles published in 2018 about the Yankees being the only major league team not celebrating a “Pride Night.” The top comments to the *outsports.com* article on the matter reposted to the

subreddit with the title, “Guys, the New York Yankees Are One of Only TWO Teams in All of Baseball to Not Have a Pride Night or Similar Event. Time to Talk About It,” were: “I mean I’d like if they had one, but teams use Pride night as a marketing tool to sell tickets, for the most part. The Yankees aren’t desperate to sell tickets”; “Never had a Game of Thrones night either. Fuckers”; “Send a letter to the organization or get some signatures if you want them to get something going”; and “Makes no difference to me if they have one or not.” Their tones suggest that some people are uncomfortable at the prospect of discussing real-life homosexuality issues on the subreddit, and some are coldly uncaring. Some, like the second comment above, are even antagonistic to and disparaging the issue. The reactions to a repost of a later news article, titled “Yankees Finally Planning to Hold Pride Events in Honor of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Stonewall Riots Next Year,” are mostly positive in contrast to the earlier reactions, but several comments here still suggest the presence of a group of users who refuse to accept the decision, such as “Why does this sub seem to be completely against this? Anytime anyone voices support for it, the downvotes pour in. I’m legitimately curious why this sub is against an LGBT night” and “For a fanbase that gives Boston shit for being racist, the comments here suggest we have a long way to go with regard to LGBT awareness.” Why, then, are the posts on r/NYYankees, so full of homoerotic language, confessing homosexual attraction to the players, essentially depicting themselves as gay lovers of baseball players, despite a visible part of the community having an ambivalent attitude when it comes to issues of homosexuality in the real world?

This paper is an attempt to understand reasons behind using homoerotic language to express player appreciation that have stemmed from a desire to find the paragon traditional masculinity that appears to be declining in modern day America. To the users of the subreddit, their favorite players represent an image of dominant males who are not only physically strong, but also in control of their desires and emotions, and these qualities appear to be sexually desirable. Several scholars have already documented the relationship between hegemonic masculinity and America's pastime. For instance, Nick Trujilo documents how the media portrayed Nolan Ryan, a Hall of Famer whose number has been retired by the Angels, Astros, and the Rangers, as a living legend and "the embodiment of male athletic power . . . an ideal image of the capitalistic worker . . . a phallic symbol" (290). MacArthur and Shields, in their paper titled, "There's No Crying in Baseball, or Is There? Male Athletes, Tears, and Masculinity in North America," explore how the male emotional expression in professional sports is constructed as "doing" emotion in a way that avoids appearing feminine (39-40). This paper expands the discussion of baseball and American masculinity to the language of the baseball fandom by examining the homoerotic language use on r/NYYankees. Borrowing the notion of performativity, we resolve the conflict between the two identities of a subreddit user: that of the "real-life self," who may not react positively to homosexuality, and that of the "fan self," who regularly utilizes homoerotic language as the ultimate, most extreme form of player appreciation. The fan's real-life self is aware that their fantasies of making love to their favorite players would be frequently regarded as less-than-acceptable

to those outside the website, while the fan-self delights in expressing their extreme devotion to the team and the players through breaking these boundaries of the forbidden desire. The website becomes a digital space that is a new society in which homoerotic language becomes the convention, allowing users to shift from their “real-life self” to performing as “fan-self” when they are logged on. This study of the subreddit r/NYYankees is a case study of how a certain group of baseball fans adopts and performs fan identity as homosexual lovers of baseball players, whom the fans perceive as displaying traits of traditional masculinity.

## II. The Homoerotic Appreciation: An Overview

As an overview to the language of the subreddit, we have collected every comment from 40 post-game threads from the 2018 regular season into a single text document. This collection is made up of 175,963 word count in total, with 9712 word types, and it was analysed using *AntConc*, a freeware corpus toolkit.<sup>1)</sup>

---

1) To ensure the accuracy of the analysis, we have also run the document through *Wordsmith*, another corpus software. *Wordsmith* performs essentially similar functions regarding the functions used in this section, word frequency list, concordance, and collocates, albeit with more quality-of-life features. The results were also mostly similar, except for slight differences in the word frequency ranks (“dong” ranked 415<sup>th</sup>, “dick” 513<sup>th</sup>, “sexy” 1,019<sup>th</sup>, and “gay” 1,054<sup>th</sup>) which we attribute to the difference in the way the “words” involving symbols and numbers are handled between the two software.

Word	Frequency Rank (out of 9712)	Concordance Examples
“dong”	395	“JUDGE: DONG, TORRES: DONG, HIGGY: DONG, HICKS DONG DONG DONG” “Soon enough there’s a Stanton dong for everyone and boy oh boy am I excited” “Whipping out of your dong in front of both the Rangers players and fans.” “I wonder how Lynn fits his massive dong in his pants everyday”
“dick”	497	“Sir Didi has a big dick. Also, no errors!” “don’t know of Hicks really has a big dick and I’m too afraid to ask.” “You don’t get it. That’s Big Dick Hicks!”
“sexy”	981	“let me start off by saying you are one very hot, sexy, gorgeous first baseman.” “SEVY: SEXY” “But I doubt it. Sevy was sexy today except for the walks.”
“gay”	1011	“‘Yankees, we never give up’-Gleyber Torres, I AM GAY FOR GLEYBER HE IS MINE FIGHT ME!” “Things are getting pretty serious I guess I am gay for Gleyber.” “Voit filled the void in my heart, I am not gay, but I want to live in a log cabin with Luke Voit . . . .”

Looking at the word list sorted by frequency, several words referring to sexuality, and in particular the male penis appear with a high frequency among the 9712 word types.<sup>2)</sup> The table above shows four most frequently occurring sexual terms from the post-game

---

2) The most frequently appearing words in total were articles (the, a), pronouns (I, he, you, we), baseball terms (Yankees, team, Sox, ball), and other common everyday words (good, where, home). Considering this, the placement of various sexual terms within around top 10% of the frequency list is certainly noticeable.

thread comments and examples of the context in which they are used.<sup>3)</sup> “Dong” and “dick,” both being slangs for a (large) penis, are used interchangeably with the word “home run.” The “JUDGE: DONG . . . HICKS DONG DONG DONG” sentence comes from the game against the Red Sox on July 1st where the Yankees hit six home runs combined: Judge, Torres, and Higashioka (“Higgy”) with one each and Aaron Hicks with three, matching the number of “dongs” in the comment. Dongs and dicks are also used to indicate a good performance in general, as seen in the following comments: committing no errors is described as “Sir Didi has a big dick”; the pitcher Lance Lynn’s respectable performance is described as having a “massive dong”; and the team’s victory against the Rangers is described as “whipping out of your dong in front of both the Rangers players and fans.” In addition, the commenters feeling of homosexual attraction to the players is yet another way to describe the players’ feats, as seen in the uses of the words “sexy” and “gay.” Luis Severino (“Sevy”), who is often associated with “sexy,” is the “ace” pitcher of the team, and Gleyber Torres, who is associated with “gay,” was one of the finalists for the American League Rookie of the Year for the 2018 seasons; their outstanding performances on the field are a source of sexual excitement for the redditors on the sub.

---

3) Two other possibly sexual words, “fuck(ing)” and “ass,” appeared even more frequently than these four words (“fuck” was the 77<sup>th</sup> most frequently occurring word among the comments, “fucking” 93<sup>rd</sup>, “ass” 375<sup>th</sup>), but the concordance list for these two revealed that they were overwhelmingly used as expletives instead of in a sensual manner (e.g. “fuck the Red Sox,” “we played some ugly ass baseball tonight”).

Player Name	Frequency Rank (out of 9712)	Collocates
“Judge”	88	“rammed” (collocate rank 27 out of 1006) “dongnificent” (65) “erect” (118)
“Stanton”	102	“nuttet” (collocate rank 27 out of 913) “dongcarlos” (47) “dildo” (48)
“Gleyber”	173	“sexuality” (collocate rank 5 out of 608) “dongnificent” (23)

The collocation analysis of the names of the three most frequently mentioned players—Aaron Judge, Giancarlo Stanton, and Gleyber Torres—from the 40 post-game threads further supports the idea of the subreddit using sexuality as their admiration for the players, by showing that their names are closely associated with sexual terms (indicated by the high-ranked collocations; the higher the rank, the more likely the words co-occur). The three most frequent players on the word list were also those with arguably highest expectations and matching degree of baseball performance during the 2018 season: Judge was the unanimous 2017 Rookie of the Year, Home Run Derby Winner, and an All-Star player for both 2017 and 2018, Stanton was the 2017 NL MVP, traded before the beginning of the 2018 season, and Gleyber was the aforementioned 2018 Rookie of the Year finalist.

While it is easy to pass off the abundance of sexual language and their co-occurrence with the players’ names on this baseball internet community as a bunch of childish sex jokes easily found on the Internet, looking further into the individual posts on the sub shows



that its users are expressing serious and intimate desires. The redditors' sexual description of the team's players transcends superficial barriers such as the positions they play in the game, their appearance, and even the players' actual sexuality and religion; many players are married, and many of them are also known as devout Christians. Nevertheless, such factors seem to fail in deterring these fans from posting about their large penis. In a lengthy post titled, "I Am Genuinely In Love With Aaron Judge," one of the redditors confesses his passionate desire to "deflower that sweet boy" and impregnate Judge—the player, who is not only an excellent slugger but is also six feet seven inches tall, identifies himself as black, has a Bible verse as his Twitter cover picture, and says that his priorities are "Christian, Faith, Family, then Baseball." The Yankees pitchers get much love, too. During the 2018 offseason, the video of the Japanese starting pitcher Masahiro Tanaka throwing in the bullpen was posted on the subreddit with the title, "Tanaka Is a Sexy Man, Full Homo," and the comments ranged from a joke on him tearing his muscles during the season to "Sexy," "Tan Tanaka will be the be of my heterosexuality," and "Tanaka low key hottest Yankee." In some cases, a player may gain the sub's passionate admiration even when he is yet to perform any visible action as a member of the Yankees, as the reactions to the multiple posts about the signing of the free agent James Paxton during November 2018 demonstrate. One of the Paxton signing posts, titled "Welcome to New York, Big Maple," includes a video of him striking out sixteen batters in one game. The second top comment to this post was "Nut," a slang for ejaculation. Beneath "Nut" are multiple innuendoes using maple syrup, playing on

the fact that Paxton is from Canada, such as “It might get a little sticky . . . ” and “Has anyone ever had a big apple covered in big maple? Asking for a friend.” The mere expectations about this married, 30-year-old Canadian joining as a new member of the team and putting up a good performance excite the redditors so much that they are ejaculating, according to their words. The subreddit is where the users can express their admiration for the pinstriped boys by inserting themselves into the position of the player’s lovers and write as if they, as fans, are in a most intimate sexual relationship with the players they adore. Their most flattering praise for the favorite athletes is the expression of sexual desire for them, to have the ultimate bodily contact in having gay sex with their baseball heroes.

### **III. In Search of the Masculinity Past**

In this section, we attempt to explain the use of homoerotic language as a form of player admiration on the subreddit in terms of the idealized image of masculinity. In the first part of this paper, we have established, through the corpus analysis of the r/NYYankees post-game threads, that the perceived level of a player’s sexual attraction corresponds to their level of baseball performance in addition to their physical attractiveness; the better the players are at baseball, the sexier they are. Therefore, it goes without saying that batters who hit monster home runs and pitchers who artistically paint corners—players who bring their team one step closer to victory with their masterful performances—please the fans. The fans on the subreddit

goes a step further, however, beyond merely finding the players' baseball skills good or pleasing—winning is sexy. We argue that this sexual attraction to performance comes from the idealization of traditional masculinity that is increasingly difficult to find in the modern society. By dominating the other team on the baseball stadium field performance-wise, the players show what being a true man used to mean. The American traditional hegemonic masculinity is associated with traits of achievement, success, and restrained emotions: the notion of the true manly man to be in control of what he does, to rise successfully above others, and to keep one's self in check (Borgenson 47). These images of responsible, strong, and capable men and the admiration towards them go all the way back to classical antiquity. Craig Williams argues that the Roman concept of masculinity can be summarized as “domination,” encompassing both control and power over others and over oneself: praiseworthy masculine men are expected to dominate those who are effeminate and therefore inferior, and also to control one's own emotions (Williams 145). However, this traditional model of masculinity—a dominant and capable man—has largely collapsed in the modern days as the crisis of masculinity, documented by multiple scholars since the late 20th century. “Men themselves have found it difficult to fulfil the expectations of the traditional model, and felt they were losing their control over the feminine population they had traditionally dominated” (Thompson et al. 599; Joseph 110). Now that it has become nigh impossible for men to dominate as they used to in the past, they cling to the feeble remnants of the ideals of traditional masculinity. These modern “male” fans are fulfilling their

fantasies of past traditional control and domination—what they used to see as practiced by their fathers and grandfathers—by watching baseball games, in which the team they are rooting for is expected to be triumphant over their lesser enemies. The subreddit provides that precise channel where these fantasies can be shared. “The confused modern men with neither power nor the responsibility of their fathers merely cling to the past shadow of domination” (MacCannell 24).

After the collapse of traditional masculinity in the real world, the redditors have found its shadows in the ballpark, the illusion of its survival in the context of the entertainment show known as ballgame. Michael Klein suggests that the insufficient theoretical discussion of masculinity in sport corresponds to the uncertainty of the male role in modern society, and that sports can serve as a “retreat” from the murky, uncertain notion of masculinity in the real life (1990). To the fans on r/NYYankees, their retreat, the only place where such dominant masculine men may be found in today’s America, is the ballpark, where their desire for the traditional masculinity that existed before the crisis can be realized in the greatest of the players. We also suspect that the fact that this subreddit is rooting for the New York Yankees, the single most successful baseball franchise—whose identity is so firmly rooted in its past success symbolized by 27 World Series championships and historical figures such as Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig—plays a significant role in encouraging its fans to reach for the past model of masculinity. In other words, fans are reaching out to the images of dominant masculine men at the height of Yankees glory. Furthermore, in a baseball game, the baseball heroes’ ability to dominate others is most clearly quantified in scores

and stats. If the players as a team score more runs than the opponent, they are the superior team; they win the game! If a player has high batting average, more runs scored, more bases stolen, (in the case of pitchers) lower ERA, higher velocity, that is, they stand above other players. They are superior. These numbers constantly shown during baseball broadcasts and easily accessible in various websites make it easier than ever to see the superiority over others by quantifying the power of control. The ability to control oneself is yet another essential aspect of domination. The players' constant exposure to various media—including numerous interviews and the players' own social media accounts—makes it easy for the fans to judge whether they have this quality or not. The players that are most beloved and showered with homoerotic admiration are the ones who best fit the model of traditional masculinity, both in their performance and personality. See the subreddit's love for Aaron Judge, the most frequently mentioned player in our analysis of the post-game threads in the first part. Alongside various awards he has received, his monstrous batting stats (.284 BA, .627 SLG, 1.049 OPS in 2017) allows him to metaphorically “fuck” his opponents. In a ballgame, Judge, with his dominant performance, is the one who metaphorically penetrates the hapless opposing pitcher with his monster home runs. In addition, Judge's humble, responsible character makes him all the more desirable as a paragon of traditional masculinity. Despite his success as a star player, Judge hardly brags about his success in interviews, and is shown to shoulder the team's destiny on his broad shoulders; for instance, after the team's loss to the Orioles (a shocking result considering that the Orioles are often

regarded as the worst team in baseball) at the third game of the 2019 season, Hoch Aaron Judge commented in an interview that the Yankees “need to play like their backs are against the wall.” A man like Judge who has the power to dominate and control not only others but himself as well is the type of man considered most attractive in the subreddit. The traditional masculine man may be long gone from the real world, but he is alive and well in the ballpark, and it is this kind of traditional masculinity that the r/NYYankees desires when they express their love for Judge.

Along with its idealization of the traditional vision of masculinity, the subreddit has also inherited the concept of femininity as the opposition of masculinity. Although the subreddit does not condone overt derogatory remarks directed towards women, femininity is used as a negative symbol to encapsulate negative qualities that oppose the positive qualities of domination which make up their ideal masculine vision. Negative qualities such as weakness and cowardice—the inability to control others as well as oneself—were viewed as feminine and inferior in the context of traditional masculinity/femininity pair (Williams 151). In the same manner with how the traditional masculinity has been translated into the context of the ballgame, femininity, its opposing pair, makes its way onto the fandom of r/NYYankees. In the subreddit’s framing of the players, the much desirable, heroic, masculine pinstriped boys are good at baseball as well as classy in character, whereas the hateable ones (often players from the opposing team, in particular, the long-time rival Boston Red Sox) play badly as well as being a huge disappointment as a human being. On the unofficial subreddit survey

to which 636 users of the sub answered, one of the questions was, “Who is your least favorite Red Sox player, and why?” One of the most hated Red Sock was Joe Kelly, a Red Sox reliever who beamed the Yankees first baseman Tyler Austin in April 2018. As for the reasons the sub users gave for hating Kelly, twelve were some variations of the sentence “Joe Kelly because he’s a bitch.” Some other answers were “Joe Kelly—he thinks he’s tough but it the farthest thing from it”; “Joe Kelly because he acts like hot shit but all he does is eat hot shit. I could fist his ass without asking and he’d ask for more. Hope he gets hit by a comebacker and loses both testicles.” Apart from throwing at a Yankee, we see that Kelly’s other actions following the brawl, including posting on his Instagram, a picture of himself covered in scratches with a dog ears filter on his face after the fight, and complaining about his suspension following the incident, did little to make his image positive among the Yankees fans, and the subreddit’s choice of insult for such a whiny, cowardly (according to the comments) man is none other than “bitch.” The subreddit mocked another Red Sock, Brock Holt, for being “a little bitch” at the April brawl when Holt said in an interview, “As soon as I saw Judge and Stanton coming, I started backing up. I grabbed Ronald Torreyes”: “As soon as I saw [Aaron] Judge and [Giancarlo] Stanton coming, I started backing up. I grabbed (flyweight) Ronald Torreyes.’-Brock ‘Little Bitch’ Holt.” Judge and Stanton stood up for their teammates and tried to protect them once the fight broke out. They tried to take control of the situation. Holt did the opposite. He tried to back up when he saw men larger than himself, and in a further act of cowardice, he

grabbed a smaller player. In the eyes of the subreddit, the ideas of responsibility and helping the teammates were not on Holt's mind and for this he deserves to be called "a little bitch," a showcase of various effeminate traits and therefore an undesirable man. The hated rivals of the Yankees complete the feminine—and inferior—pair of the traditional notion of masculinity/femininity dichotomy. The chants of "Fuck the Red Sox" are further justified by framing them as effeminate and the cowardly rivals as despicable because they display qualities that are opposite to the desirable boys in pinstripes. The relationship between the Yankees and their opponents recreates the notion of traditional masculinity of dominance and control vis-à-vis traditional femininity of effeminacy and subservience in the context of baseball. The subreddit wishes nothing more than the opposing team to lose for them—to be dominated by the 27-time World Series champions; at the same time, it relentlessly depicts the opponents as being weak and whiny men who deserve to lose and to be dominated by those who are more masculine and therefore better.

#### **IV. Performing Homosexuality**

The homoerotic language of the subreddit that is used to appreciate their heroes' traditional masculinity is paradoxical in that the traditional masculinity is also associated with homophobia (Borgenson 47). This holds at least partially true in the subreddit, as we have explored in the introduction of this paper that some of the users are not comfortable discussing the issues of real-world homosexuality. The



redditors are also aware that their language and fantasies would be often considered highly inappropriate to the outsiders. When the official account of Fanatics (a retailer of licensed MLB merchandises) announced on r/baseball (a larger subreddit for the general baseball discussion separate from individual team subs) that Aaron Judge will hold an online Q&A session in which he would answer various questions from the redditors in March 2019, the immediate reaction from a r/NYYankees user was, “good god I hope he doesn’t go over to r/NYYankees and reads our stupid pasta . . . thank god I’ve NEVER said anything weird or gross about him ever.” Yet, in the cyberspace of r/NYYankees, it is completely acceptable to express one’s appreciation of good Yankees players in terms of homoerotic language. We attempt to explain this paradox through the concept of “performative fandom” suggested by Osborne and Coombs in their 2013 paper, “Performative Sport Fandom: An Approach to Rethorizing Sport Fans.” Borrowing the notion of performativity from gender studies, Osborne and Coombs focus on the distinction of what it means to be a fan, exploring the interactivity between the role in the “real world” and the fandom: “the flexibility and fluidity of our roles and how they are performed. Roles are neither permanent nor fixed; rather, they constantly shift and reshape over time and across situations” (678). Their theory of performative sport fandom argues that the identity as a sport fan is constructed through the performance of fandom, the performance that is socially constructed and varies depending on context and audience (677). Sports fandoms have been traditionally based on group gatherings and activities with stadiums and bars providing a space for them. Performativity is not “a singular

act,” but rather “a repetition and ritual” (Butler xv). When they gather at the stadium or at the bar with their fellow fans, they shift from their everyday self into the fan self while bonding over the common support for a sports franchise with other fans present, following the specific rules, code of conducts, and linguistic practices, or even sharing memes specific to the fandom (Cottingham 171; Pegoraro 249). When the fan-group disbands and leaves the place of gathering after the event, the fans would revert into their everyday selves—fathers, housewives, students, factory workers, and so on. The same process happens in r/NYYankees digitally, with the online board serving as the place of gathering. We argue that when the users log on to the subreddit, they shift from real-life selves into the fan selves, and then back into the real-life selves when they log off. No one knows who started it, but the defining convention of this particular subreddit that sets itself apart from other baseball Twitters, blogs, and websites is the homoerotic language. To be a fan on r/NYYankees, the users must forget their real-life selves when they log on, put behind their perception of real-life homosexuality, and then accept, embrace, and eventually practice the language of the sub, “performing” the new “homosexual” identity. The two selves are not necessarily incompatible; they both exist inside the body of a fan, but the fan shifts through two identities and performs one over the other depending on whether they are in the fandom space or not. Upon this transformation, the online fan-self now begins to break what the real-life self considers as taboo—their perception of homosexuality. The fans online find the homoerotic language so effective in their praise of the athletes precisely because of this

breaking of boundaries, transcending what they would often consider acceptable in real life. The homoerotic fantasies are the most extreme, and therefore greatest form of the praise; the masculine boys in pinstripes are worthy of stepping outside the forbidden boundaries of sexuality.

Among the homoerotic language practice of the sub, the widespread usage of a form of internet meme known as “copy-pasta” plays a central role in constructing the conventions of the community.<sup>4)</sup> For one, copy-pasta takes the concept of repetition in a most literal sense; it is a meme in which a block of text is copied and pasted by multiple people, sometimes with small variations, hence the name. Furthermore, the most popular of copy-pastas find their way into everyday language of the sub; when the copy-pasta is repeated enough, it evolves from the mere acts of copying and pasting into an expression, a symbol of its own. Even without needing the full text to be repeated (although it still happens from time to time), the users

---

4) To illustrate how common the use of pasta is in the subreddit’s language, we looked up several key words from the popular “Me and the Boys” pasta from the early-mid 2018 season: “cora,” “sale,” and “price.” They ranked 408<sup>th</sup>, 299<sup>th</sup>, and 213<sup>th</sup> respectively (out of 9712 words), ranking noticeably high (all three of the being within the top 5% of the most common words appearing in postgame thread comments) even considering the Yankees fans’ obsession with the rival Red Sox players. The full “Me and the Boys” pasta reads: “Yankee season is already over. Me and the boys had an AL East clinch party last night. 11-2 record and the Sox aren’t even trying yet. *Cora’s* gonna rest *Sale* and *Price* for the rest of the season. Conserve energy for the playoffs. I mean, you just hate to see a reigning MVP set records for being bad. Just historically bad. Bad for the Yankees. Bad for the game. Not what you wanna see.” This pasta eventually died out towards the end of the season when the Red Sox did win the division and the championship, and the pasta unfortunately became a reality.

are expected to know what the partial expressions from popular pastas mean, as if these were everyday vocabulary words in the language. Copy pasta is a linguistic rule everyone on this specific website—everyone who identifies as a fan there—is expected to recognize, understand, and follow by being encouraged to repeatedly paste the same pasta expressions over and over again.

A pasta that has been enjoying lasting popularity since the 2017 season—and arguably the most widespread pasta that epitomizes the formation process of the homoerotic language convention in the subreddit—is the “Log Cabin” pasta. The full text of the “Log Cabin” pasta is:

I’m not gay but I want to live in a log cabin in the woods with Aaron Judge. We won’t ever have sex, but there will be a simmering erotic undercurrent as I stand in the kitchen window watching him tighten his ass as he chops wood, shirtless, sweat pouring off his body. I’ll run upstairs and masturbate, the entire time forcing myself to think of women while my thoughts drift back to Aaron. I won’t be able to climax and I’ll eventually go back downstairs, angry. Sometimes we will look across the table and catch each other’s eyes, and in that second, anything is possible, but we both deny ourselves and go back to what we were doing. One day one of us will die, and the other will bury him outside the log cabin. Then he’ll go inside, pen a brief missive to his departed friend, and commit suicide, never able to deal with life without his one true platonic love.

The “Log Cabin” pasta most likely first appeared during September 2017, and ultimately evolved into a symbol of player admiration. In 2017, the players living in the cabin were the breakout rookie, Aaron Judge, and Greg Bird who was invaluable in the team’s 2017

postseason run. Then in 2018, as the former resident of log cabin Greg Bird missed a chunk of season due to injuries and showed a dismal performance when he was healthy, he was eventually replaced by Luke Voit. The pasta clearly reflects the cabin resident player's performance, a central characteristic connected to their perceived sexual attractiveness: Voit, who won the AL Player of the Week award in September and replaced Bird as the starting first baseman, also replaced Bird in the log cabin. In the comments section of the post of Voit's interview, a redditor writes, "This breaks my heart. Greg puts his blood, sweat and tears building that cabin." In another example, in the comments to a repost of the article that Luke Voit posted on the *Player's Tribune*, a redditor says, "Somewhere Greg Bird is thinking to himself, 'I want to live in a log cabin in the woods with Luke Voit'"; to this, another replies, "He is in the parking lot holding his spot. He's afraid if he leaves, he will lose [the log cabin] forever." The pasta does not need to be used in full, but the mere mention of "log cabin" is enough to remind the subreddit users of the whole pasta and what it symbolizes: player performance and therefore their desirability. When someone uses the Log Cabin pasta, the person identifies themselves as not just any baseball fan, but specifically the baseball fan of r/NYYankees, whose convention is to use homoerotic language to appreciate players. The "log cabin" functions like a space of its own; by posting the pasta, the user "enters" the log cabin and performs the role of the log cabin dweller, the lover of their favorite baseball player, his number one fan, and the admirer whose degree of appreciation is exponential to the intimacy between the player and the fan in the log cabin pasta.

## V. Conclusion

Behind the fiery, passionate confessions for love and the desire to be most intimate with their favorite baseball players on r/NYYankees, there is a looming uncertainty regarding the notion of traditional masculinity in modern day America. Using Bakhtin's carnival theory, Chanseon Park suggests in his study of baseball fandoms that sports fandom becomes an opportunity to find solutions to contradictions and problems within the existing society (93). For r/NYYankees, the existing problem is the uncertain idea of masculinity, and they find their solution by travelling back in time, idealizing the model of traditional masculinity in the form of the pinstriped gentlemen who delight the fans with their dominant performance and ever classy characters. At the same time, however, we believe that the inherited notion of femininity as the oppositional and inferior side of masculinity that has accompanied the subreddit's acceptance of traditional masculinity is a limitation that must be addressed. Linking negative qualities to femininity is off-putting to the female participants of fandom, and this problematic link is something that manifests itself not only on this subreddit but in a sizeable part of the sports fandom as a whole. When this notion of "feminine = inferior" seeps into the real life, female sports fans are automatically viewed as being not as knowledgeable or serious about sports. The term "pink hat fan" is used as a term in baseball fandom to refer to the stereotype of a casual "bandwagon" female fan who follows the latest successful franchise and buys pink apparels of the team only because she finds them cute. Such view forces women to behave like men, become

manly like “a tomboy,” or otherwise face the consequences of being ostracized by keeping their femininity (Borer 3). Surely it should now be possible to abandon such linking of negative qualities of femininity and praise the positive qualities of traditional masculinity without disparaging those with traits that are considered effeminate in nature. We can conclude that the qualities expressed in the subreddit as most desirable and sexually attractive in their players are not only strength and skills, but also the desire to control and dominate as respected fans. It is easy to dismiss the homoerotic appreciation happening on the subreddit as merely another curious phenomenon on the Internet, but the desire to return to the past model of masculinity expressed here in the context of baseball is one solution to the modern problem of uncertainty regarding the notion of masculinity. We believe it will be worthy to look into the ways in which the positive aspects of traditional masculinity worshipped by the subreddit can contribute to the discussion following the fall of masculinity.

## Works Cited

- “As Soon as I Saw [Aaron] Judge and [Giancarlo] Stanton Coming, I Started Backing Up. I Grabbed (Flyweight) Ronald Torreyes.’-Brock ‘Little Bitch’ Holt.” *r/NYYankees*. 13 Apr. 2018. Web. 21 Dec. 2018. <[www.reddit.com/r/NYYankees/comments/8bu79a/as\\_soon\\_as\\_i\\_saw\\_aaron\\_judge\\_and\\_giancarlo](http://www.reddit.com/r/NYYankees/comments/8bu79a/as_soon_as_i_saw_aaron_judge_and_giancarlo)>.
- Borer, Michael. “Negotiating the Symbols of Gendered Sports Fandom.” *Social Psychology Quarterly* 72 (2009): 1-4.
- Borgenson, Kevin. “Gay Skinheads: Negotiating a Gay Identity in a Culture of Traditional Masculinity.” *The Journal of Men’s Studies* 23 (2015): 44-62.
- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble*. New York: Routledge, 1990.
- “Copypasta Dictionary.” *r/NYYankees*. 20 Jan 2019. Web. <[www.reddit.com/r/NYYankees/wiki/copypasta](http://www.reddit.com/r/NYYankees/wiki/copypasta)>.
- Cottingham, Marci. “Interaction Ritual Theory and Sports Fans: Emotion, Symbols, and Solidarity.” *Sociology of Sport Journal* 29 (2012): 168-85.
- “[Fanatics AMA Series] ALL RISE: Aaron Judge Will Be Joining Us For an AMA THIS WEDNESDAY EVENING (EST).” *r/baseball*. 5 Mar. 2019. Web. 30 May 2019. <[www.reddit.com/r/baseball/comments/axci1q/fanatics\\_ama\\_series\\_all\\_rise\\_aaron\\_judge\\_will\\_be](http://www.reddit.com/r/baseball/comments/axci1q/fanatics_ama_series_all_rise_aaron_judge_will_be)>.
- “Get Your Lube and Whip Out Your Dicks Kids, Here is a New Fangraphs Article About Severino.” *r/NYYankees*. 28 June 2018. Web. 28 Jan. 2019. <[www.reddit.com/r/NYYankees/comments/8udbkj/get\\_your\\_lube\\_and\\_whip\\_out\\_your\\_dicks\\_kids\\_here](http://www.reddit.com/r/NYYankees/comments/8udbkj/get_your_lube_and_whip_out_your_dicks_kids_here)>.
- “Guys, the New York Yankees Are One of the Only TWO Teams in All of Baseball to Not Have a Pride Night or Similar Event. Time to Talk About It.” *r/NYYankees*. 9 June 2018. Web. 1 Feb. 2019. <[www.reddit.com/r/NYYankees/comments/8po8vr/guys\\_the\\_new\\_york\\_yankees\\_are\\_one\\_of\\_only\\_two](http://www.reddit.com/r/NYYankees/comments/8po8vr/guys_the_new_york_yankees_are_one_of_only_two)>.



- “[Hoch] Aaron Judge Comments that the Yankees ‘Need to Play Like Their Backs are Against the Wall.’” *r/NYYankees*. 31 Mar. 2019. Web. 1 Apr. 2019.  
<[www.reddit.com/r/NYYankees/comments/b7hrn6/hoch\\_aaron\\_judge\\_comments\\_that\\_the\\_yankees\\_need](http://www.reddit.com/r/NYYankees/comments/b7hrn6/hoch_aaron_judge_comments_that_the_yankees_need)>.
- “I Am Genuinely in Love With Aaron Judge.” *r/NYYankees*. 31 Jan. 2018. Web. 31 Nov. 2018.  
<[www.reddit.com/r/NYYankees/comments/7u5xak/i\\_am\\_genuinely\\_in\\_love\\_with\\_aaron\\_judge](http://www.reddit.com/r/NYYankees/comments/7u5xak/i_am_genuinely_in_love_with_aaron_judge)>.
- Joseph, Harry. “Sports Ideology, Attitudes Toward Women, and Anti-Homosexual Attitudes.” *Sex Roles* 32 (1995): 109-16.
- Klein, Michael. “The Macho World of Sport-A Forgotten Realm? Some Introductory Remakes.” *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 25 (1990): 175-84.
- “Luke Voit Has Embraced Every Part of Becoming a Yankee.” *r/NYYankees*, 23 Sept. 2018. Web. 20 Dec. 2018.  
<[www.reddit.com/r/NYYankees/comments/9i21hb/luke\\_voit\\_has\\_embraced\\_every\\_part\\_of\\_becoming\\_a](http://www.reddit.com/r/NYYankees/comments/9i21hb/luke_voit_has_embraced_every_part_of_becoming_a)>.
- MacArthur, Heather, and Stephanie Shields. “There’s No Crying in Baseball, or Is There? Male Athletes, Tears, and Masculinity in North America.” *Emotion Review* 7 (2015): 39-46.
- Osborne, Anne, and Danielle Coombs. “Performative Sport Fandom: An Approach to Rethorizing Sport Fans.” *Sport in Society* 16 (2013): 672-81.
- Park, Chanseon. “The Cultural Implications of Fandom for Professional Sports: Focusing on Korea Baseball League.” MA Thesis, Donguk University, 2013.
- Pegoraro, Ann. “Sport Fandom in the Digital World.” *Routledge Handbook of Sport Communication*. Ed. Paul Pederson. New York: Routledge, 2017. 248-58.
- “r/NYYankees Survey Results!!.” *r/NYYankees*. 18 Aug. 2018. Web. 10 Dec. 2018.  
<[www.reddit.com/r/NYYankees/comments/986jse/mnyyankees\\_survey\\_results](http://www.reddit.com/r/NYYankees/comments/986jse/mnyyankees_survey_results)>.

“Tanaka is a Sexy Man, Full Homo.” *r/NYYankees*. 17 Jan. 2019. Web. 18 Jan. 2019.

<[www.reddit.com/r/NYYankees/comments/agskp0/tanaka\\_is\\_aSexy\\_man\\_full\\_homo](http://www.reddit.com/r/NYYankees/comments/agskp0/tanaka_is_aSexy_man_full_homo)>.

Thompson, Edward, Jr., et al. “Men and Masculinities: Scales for Masculinity Ideology and Masculinity-Related Constructs.” *Sex Roles* 27 (1992): 537-607.

Trujillo, Nick. “Hegemonic Masculinity on the Mound: Media Representations of Nolan Ryan and American Sports Culture.” *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 8 (1991): 290-308.

“Welcome to New York, Big Maple.” *r/NYYankees*. 20 Nov. 2018. Web. 10 Dec. 2018.

<[www.reddit.com/r/NYYankees/comments/9ym08j/welcome\\_to\\_new\\_york\\_big\\_maple](http://www.reddit.com/r/NYYankees/comments/9ym08j/welcome_to_new_york_big_maple)>.

Williams, Craig. *Roman Homosexuality: Ideologies of Masculinity in Classical Antiquity*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2010.

“Yankees Finally Planning to Hold Pride Events in Honor of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Stonewall Riots Next Year.” *r/NYYankees*. 10 Aug. 2018. Web. 11 Aug. 2018.

<[www.reddit.com/r/NYYankees/comments/966r6x/yankees\\_finally\\_planning\\_to\\_hold\\_pride\\_events\\_in](http://www.reddit.com/r/NYYankees/comments/966r6x/yankees_finally_planning_to_hold_pride_events_in)>.

“You Gotta Step It Up Now, Kid . . . This Is New York By Luke Voit.” *r/NYYankees*. 9 Oct. 2018. Web. 9 Oct. 2018.

<[www.reddit.com/r/NYYankees/comments/9mh8t4/players\\_tribune\\_you\\_gotta\\_step\\_it\\_up\\_now\\_kid\\_this](http://www.reddit.com/r/NYYankees/comments/9mh8t4/players_tribune_you_gotta_step_it_up_now_kid_this)>.

- 논문 투고일자: 2019. 05. 03
- 심사 완료일자: 2019. 05. 27
- 게재 확정일자: 2019. 06. 07

**Abstract**

**In the Log Cabin with My Favorite Player:  
Appreciating Traditional American Masculinity  
through Homoerotic Language in Baseball Fandom**

Hyerin Shin • Sue Hyun Jie

(Yonsei University)

On the website *r/NYYankees*, a sub-forum (“subreddit”) of *Reddit* is devoted to the Major League Baseball team New York Yankees, with its predominantly male users showing their appreciation for baseball heroes by expressing erotic desires towards the players. When a player performs well, the subreddit is filled with admiration of desires to become the player’s intimate lover—explicitly expressed by “male” fans. This paper explains the phenomenon of young male fans’ desire for the now-lost model of traditional masculinity of domination and control, displayed in the context of baseball players’ dominant performances. The discrepancy between a fan’s non-homosexual real-world self and his homoerotic language on the subreddit is explained using the “performative fandom” theory, developed by Osborne and Coombs borrowing Butler’s notion of performativity. This paper suggests how this desire for traditional masculinity serves as recognition to the collapse of masculinity in the modern American society.

**Key Words**

masculinity, *Reddit*, baseball, performativity, fandom