

THE RHETORIC OF RAINES: HOW A CHANGE IN DEFINITION
AFFECTED ONE PLAYER'S HALL OF FAME CANDIDACY

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THE RHETORIC OF RAINES: HOW A CHANGE IN DEFINITION
AFFECTED ONE PLAYER'S HALL OF FAME CANDIDACY

by

EVERETT CORDER

APPROVED:

Herman Howard, Ph.D.

JongHwa Lee, Ph.D.

Leslie Rodriguez, Ph.D.

Lee Atkins, Ph.D.

July 10, 2018

APPROVED:

Dr. Susan E. Keith
Dean, College of Graduate Studies and Research

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this to my family, for teaching me about baseball and all its wonders (Dad), for showing me how to keep book at a game and appreciate its finer points (Mom), and for always supporting me in my passion, even when it meant me incessantly quizzing you about player uniform numbers at dinner (Avery and Truett). I am the person I am today thanks to each and every one of you, and you all inspire me to be better every single day.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis uses Edward Schiappa's definitional ruptures to analyze the word fame in regards to the Baseball Hall of Fame located in Cooperstown, New York. From 2008-2017, former Major League outfielder Tim Lincecum was on the ballot as a possible inductee and had a large amount of debate surrounding his candidacy due to the changing ideas about baseball, its statistics, and player abilities were worth honoring in the sport. Schiappa's definitional rupture was chosen because it allows an examination of the three main parts of any definitional process and can explain the reasoning for a definitional change. The results add to the existing body of literature on definitional rupture as well as provide an example of a case where there is never a specific, set definition. The analysis discovered that a change in definition did occur for fame in the context of baseball, with advanced statistics at the forefront of the new definition. This redefining shifted the focus of the essential values in baseball opened a new door for Tim Lincecum, who was elected to the Hall of Fame in 2017.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In 2017, former Major League Baseball (MLB) outfielder Tim Laines was elected to the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York. He received 380 votes, which was 86% of the voting body and well above the 75% threshold required for former players to gain election into the Hall of Fame. Electing players alone, however, is not particularly newsworthy in the world of baseball, as new players are elected and enshrined nearly every year (Jaffe, 2017). Laines' election was particularly newsworthy because it came in his final year on the ballot. Furthermore, when he first appeared on the ballot for the 2008 election, he received just 24.3% of the vote—a far cry from the 86% he received in 2017 when he was elected. Laines' voting total had even dropped even lower in his second year, to just 22.6%.

Because of his statistics and characteristics as a baseball player, whether or not Laines should be elected to the Hall of Fame was a large area of debate by baseball writers and analysts during his 10 years on the ballot. The debate was exacerbated as modern, advanced statistics gained a larger foothold in baseball coverage, causing baseball analysts to evaluate what skills were essential to success in baseball, what constitutes fame in the sport, and finally decipher if Laines met those requirements. His eventual election allows for a possible re-defining of the word fame within the context of baseball. Because of this, it is important to understand the rhetorical process of defining words as supported through relevant research.

Research dealing specifically with Edward Schiappa's (2003) definitional ruptures should be examined as it incorporates several important factors in both the defining process

and the effects of definitional changes. For example, Schiappa has noted that while most definitions are widely accepted as fact and do not cause a person to change their beliefs, sometimes, advocates fight for new, revised definitions that seek to alter viewpoints. This definitional process happens most often in law, where definitions have obvious consequences, and can be seen today in debates surrounding things such as rape and abortion (Schiappa, 2003). Schiappa claims that understanding the definitional process is key to solving these debates.

Baseball writers have found similar definitional debates within the sport recently related to the statistical measures used to quantify the production of players in the sport and how they relate to players deemed “famous” by way of induction into the National Baseball Hall of Fame (Forman, 2010; Kenny, 2016; Kilgore, 2017; Stark 2017;). This research suggested that a cultural shift was taking place within the game and the way it is covered, finding that although the basic statistics of player careers may stay the same, the perceived value of those abilities is different than it once was (Jaffe, 2017). Specifically, writers found this to be a reason why former MLB outfielder Tim Lincecum eventually gained induction into the Hall of Fame. Based on these realizations, I believe it is both useful and important to examine the definitional debate surrounding Tim Lincecum and his quest to earn the status of “fame” within baseball in order to better understand the process of defining, specifically within an arena where an exact definition is unlikely to ever be given.

Additionally, I believe it is valuable to explore both what statistical measures, as well as off-the-field characteristics involving Lincecum, were highlighted during his time on the Hall of Fame ballot. This research will allow rhetorical scholars to examine the persuasive entitlement process for a word in a context where it will probably never have a perfect

definition. Using Schiappa's (2003) framework for examining definitional ruptures, which involves an examination of the intent to define, power, and future definitional practice, will provide an illustration for the normative acts that make up an advocate's argument for a new definition.

Therefore, the goal of this case study is to examine the definitional debate surrounding fame in baseball during the Hall of Fame candidacy of Tim Lincecum through the lens of Schiappa's (2003) theory of definitional ruptures. Specifically, whether or not a changing definition allowed Lincecum entry in the Hall of Fame via a door that did not previously exist, as well as the specific acts used to entitle fame with a new definition. This project will first review relevant literature regarding the history of baseball, its Hall of Fame, and the career of Tim Lincecum. This information will begin at baseball's beginning in the mid-1800s and continue on up to 2017, when Lincecum was officially elected and inducted into the Hall of Fame. The literature review will provide a useful background for those unfamiliar with the changing landscape of the sport. Following the literature review, three research questions are proposed. The methods used to answer those three questions follow in Chapter 3 along with an overview of definitional ruptures and the way they have been observed in communication prior to this project. After a description of the artifacts used in this project, the analysis portion will begin, breaking down the rhetoric of those involved through the definitional rupture of fame in baseball in order to answer the three proposed research questions. Finally, the paper will conclude with a discussion of the findings and their impact on the field of communication as well socially, followed by some recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Baseball

Baseball is no longer America's most-watched sport. According to a Gallup News Poll from January 2018, American football was by far the favorite sport citizens of the United States marked as their favorite to watch, with 37% placing it in the top spot. In this same poll, just 9% of the respondents listed baseball as their favorite sport to watch, which was the lowest percentage since Gallup began asking the question in 1937 (Norman, 2018).

Still, more than 72 million people have turned out to MLB ballparks per season each of the last 10 years, and 18.9 million tuned in to watch the 2018 World Series on television (Major League Baseball: Total attendance at regular season games, 2018; Major League Baseball average TV viewership, 2018). Even without being the most-watched sport in the United States, baseball is still often referred to as the "National Pastime" with writers claiming that "there's something about baseball, something magical that will always make it America's sport" (Chen, 2011, p. 1). It is one of the country's oldest team sports, and with attendance numbers holding steady above 72 million the last 10 seasons, it does not show signs of disappearing any time soon (Major League Baseball: Total attendance at regular season games, 2018).

Developed during the 1800s as a variation of a number of other games including Rounders and Town Ball, baseball began to take its somewhat current form during the 1840s (Rader, 2008). The game spread during the Civil War and the first fully professional team appeared in 1869 in Cincinnati, playing as the Red Stockings (Rader, 2008). The first professional leagues quickly followed, and the National League that is still around today

(although expanded to 15 teams as of 2018) was founded in 1876 (James, 2001). Some other leagues have existed from time to time throughout baseball's history, but the only other one to stick was the American League, which became a major league in 1901 (Rader, 2008). These two leagues have stood the test of time for more than 100 years, while the National Football League did not begin play until 1920 and the National Basketball Association only came along in 1946.

Because of its head start in invention and professionalism, baseball also got a head start on honoring its greatest stars. At one time in baseball's history, it was thought that the game was invented by one Abner Doubleday in Cooperstown, New York (Rader, 2008). This story of the invention of baseball has since been debunked by a number of baseball researchers since (James, 1995), but was still en vogue in 1934, almost 50 years after the founding of the modern National League. That year, a resident of Cooperstown, Alexander Cleland, had an idea to create a baseball museum in the town to attract more tourists, as Cooperstown was suffering with the rest of the country in the Great Depression (James, 1995). Cleland secured a meeting with Ford Frick, then the president of baseball's National League, who was enthusiastic about the idea. In his proposal, Cleland wrote that the museum might attract "hundreds of visitors a year," (James, 1995 p. 3), drastically underestimating the more than 300,000 baseball fans who now visit the Hall of Fame yearly now. Frick, however, wanted to take the museum idea a step further by enshrining the sport's greatest players in the museum. Just two short years later, in 1936, the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum inducted its inaugural five-man class and on June 12, 1939 the building opened for good.

According to the Hall of Fame's official website, the goals of the organization are as follows:

The National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum is an independent, non-profit educational institution dedicated to fostering an appreciation of the historical development of baseball and its impact on our culture by collecting, preserving, exhibiting and interpreting its collections for a global audience as well as honoring those who have made outstanding contributions to our national pastime. The Hall of Fame's mission is to preserve the sport's history, honor excellence within the game and make a connection between the generations of people who enjoy baseball. (Hall of Fame Election Requirements, 2017)

Hall of Fame election process

From 1936 through the 2017 induction (the most recent one at the time this paper was published) exactly 317 former players, managers, and other baseball officials and pioneers have been inducted into the hall and there does not seem to be an end in sight as new players become eligible every year. There are basically two ways for election to baseball's most prestigious honor. The first and most well-known route involves another organization – the Baseball Writers' Association of America (BBWAA) – voting on players who have been retired from the game for a minimum of five years. The full voting rules of the BBWAA will be examined further later in this section. The other route has changed names often throughout the Hall of Fame's history, but is most commonly referred to as the Veteran's Committee. This committee is made up of former players, writers and baseball executives, with usually less than 20 members, and examines players who are no longer under

consideration by the BBWAA (James, 1995). For the purposes of this research project, only the BBWAA voting process will be examined for several reasons. First, the BBWAA process has changed much less frequently than the Veteran's Committee process since the hall's inception in the 1930s. Second, and most importantly in the context of this paper, the voting by the various veterans committees is not privy to the public, whereas the writers voting in the BBWAA election often share their ballots as well as their reasoning for voting for or against certain players.

Not every member of the BBWAA votes every year. According to the association, "only active and honorary members of the Baseball Writers' Association of America, who have been active for at least 10 years, shall be eligible to vote" (Hall of fame election requirements, 2017, Electors section). That means these writers are at games, watching players, and writing about their performances, as well as other news in baseball throughout the year, including offseason, when the MLB does not have games. These writings often include columns or opinion pieces about different news stories in the world of professional baseball, with baseball writers unafraid to let the world know how they feel about certain issues and events involving the game they cover. Still other writers who are constantly covering the game may not vote. Some of America's largest newspapers like the *Washington Post* and *The New York Times* do not allow their writers to vote in such election, deciding that the journalists themselves should not be the ones making the news (Kilgore, 2017). More recently, a rule was added for BBWAA voters, stating that they must have been actively covering baseball in the last 10 years as well to retain their vote, meaning a writer will only keep their vote for 10 years after retirement (Jaffe, 2017). This cut the voting pool

drastically, dropping the total number of votes from 549 in 2015 to just 440 in 2016 (Stark, 2018).

There are rules for how players become eligible for the vote as well, including being active as a player in Major League Baseball (MLB) for at least 10 seasons, and having retired five full calendar years prior to the election (Hall of fame election requirements, 2017). Any player on the MLB's ineligible list (the most famous of these being Shoeless Joe Jackson and Pete Rose) is also ineligible for election to the Hall of Fame. Players who meet these requirements first go through a small screening committee of BBWAA members to select who goes on the ballot before the ballot is mailed out to members. Electors are allowed to check up to 10 names on their ballot – a rule that has been in place since the first hall vote in 1935. Voters are given only two directions on how to vote, listed as rules five and six in the BBWAA Requirements for Election. The first states that “voting shall be based upon the player’s record, playing ability, integrity, sportsmanship, character, and contributions to the team(s) on which the player played” (Hall of fame election requirements, 2017, Voting section). The second merely advises against any kind of Hall of Fame threshold for statistics, noting “no automatic elections based on performances such as a batting average of .400 or more for one (1) year, pitching a perfect game or similar outstanding achievement shall be permitted” (Hall of fame election requirements, 2017, Automatic Elections section).

After all of these votes are tallied, those players who received more than 75% of the vote are awarded with baseball’s most prestigious honor. Players who receive less than 5% are removed from all following ballots. The writers were not required to make ballots public until the 2018 election cycle, but were able to do so voluntarily starting in 2010. For the 2017 election, however, more than 70% voluntarily published their ballot either before or

after the class was announced (Stark, 2017). The writers in the voting body have never fully agreed on inducting any one candidate into the hall. The highest percentage of the vote a player has received came just recently in 2016, when Ken Griffey Jr. was elected with 99.32% of the vote.

Ken Griffey Jr.'s historic voting percentage is important to note because it shows that while the writers can agree on what a player worthy of fame looks like, even the greatest of players in baseball history do not receive 100% agreement. The definition of fame in baseball is open for debate, and the discourse of that often revolves around statistics. Griffey himself hit more than 500 home runs and had more than 3,000 hits in his career – both numbers traditionally used as tell-tale signs that a player was Hall of Fame worthy. A further explanation of the statistics that dominated this debate for the majority of the Hall of Fame's history as well as the statistical measures that have more recently entered the conversation will follow.

Old vs. new statistical measures

Much of this the discourse involving the Hall of Fame is based on career milestones that have come to be agreed on as benchmarks for greatness in baseball. *Sports Illustrated* writer Peter Gammons is one of the voters for the Hall of Fame and remembers how he came to his decision early on in his career, stating “boxes were often checked based on traditional criteria” (Jaffe, 2017). Gammons goes on to list 300 wins for a pitcher, 500 home runs, or 3,000 hits as almost automatic qualifiers, even though the BBWAA specifically mentions a lack of automatic qualifiers in instructions to voters (Jaffe, 2017). Baseball historian Bill James has also recognized the almost guarantee some career totals bring to a player's Hall of Fame candidacy, and incorporated those numbers into his Hall of Fame Monitor statistic

(James, 1995). In this formula, the closer a player comes to 500 home runs, 3,000 hits, or other specific career totals, the more likely he is to gain Hall of Fame election.

James has also been at the forefront of a revolution in baseball statistics (Kenny, 2016). Gammons himself is adamant that James was a game-changer in baseball, simply because he asked questions about the game that nobody before had thought to ask, or that had been asked but then answered lazily (Kenny, 2016). James was at the forefront of a new way of baseball thinking, now often referred to as sabermetrics. At its core, sabermetrics is simply a quest to bring new ideas to an old game (Gregg, 2017). James actually defined the term first as “the mathematical and statistical study of baseball records,” but later changed his own definition to simply a “search for objective knowledge about baseball” (as cited in Gregg, 2017).

The ideas of James and those other researchers who were pioneers in sabermetrics did not become mainstream in the 1980s when he first wrote about them. It was not until 2003, when Michael Lewis published his bestselling book *Moneyball* that sabermetrics jumped into the public spotlight. Lewis’s book focused on the story of the 2002 Oakland Athletics, who play in MLB’s American League West. The A’s, led by General Manager Billy Beane and his assistant Paul DePodesta, implemented an approach based on the ideas of James and other sabermetricians, which placed a heavy emphasis on a player’s ability to get on base (on-base percentage). The Athletics won 103 games during the season, which included a 20-game winning streak that was the MLB record at the time, and secured the American League West Championship before losing in the playoffs (Baumer & Zimbalist, 2014). The success of the A’s while using this system and the coverage of their season in the Lewis book (which was then made into a movie in 2011) brought sabermetrics to the forefront of baseball

analysis, even if *Moneyball* was embellished with emotional touches (Baumer & Zimbalist, 2014).

Although the statistic of on-base percentage did exist prior to James and sabermetrics, a number of other statistics now common did not. As noted above, the original definition of sabermetrics was involved mainly with the statistical side of the sport, so it is no surprise that this baseball revolution came with a whole slew of new numbers used to quantify the on-field performance of baseball players. Probably the most commonly known of these statistics today is Wins Above Replacement, or WAR. WAR is actually calculated slightly differently by different baseball statistic websites, often using different defensive statistics for their calculations, but the idea is the same and the numbers usually are not far off. The basic principle of WAR is to find out how many more wins a player is worth compared to an average available replacement. Replacement players are usually defined as a cheap, available free agent or a minor league player who could be added to the MLB roster (Baseball-Reference.com WAR Explained, 2013).

There are hundreds of steps involved in calculating just this one statistic, but at its core it is intended to determine the value of everything a player does on the field—hitting, getting on base, not striking out, baserunning and fielding, among other things—to determine how valuable he is to his team. The leader in WAR for the 2017 MLB season was Houston Astro Jose Altuve, with 8.3 wins above replacement. For a career, former outfielder/pitcher Babe Ruth is the all-time MLB leader with 180.2 wins above replacement in his career.

Even with WAR as the most popular modern statistic, however, there have been a number of other measures introduced into baseball like Adjusted On-base Plus Slugging (OPS+), Defensive Runs Saved (DRS) and Batting Average on Balls in Play (BABIP). With

increasing frequency, these modern statistical measures have been used to help baseball teams evaluate free-agents as well as make decisions in games (Jaffe, 2017). The media coverage of sabermetrics and their effects on the game has also increased in recent years, as websites, such as FanGraphs, Baseball Prospectus, and The Hardball Times have hired writers and analysts to examine these statistics in the game (Jaffe, 2017).

Shortly after the A's success in 2002, James himself got in on the action and was hired as a front office member of the Boston Red Sox, who play in MLB's American League East (Kenny, 2016). The Red Sox won a World Series just a few years later in 2007, again focusing on on-base percentage and other sabermetric principles and solidifying what *Moneyball* had shown the public four years earlier. Sabermetrics were here to stay.

The development of new statistical measures to evaluate baseball players basically hit the refresh button on any and all debates about players and their Hall of Fame worthiness. Because many of the numbers can be (and have been) calculated retroactively, any person who thinks any specific player should be or even should not be enshrined in Cooperstown now has fresh ammo. New cases could be made with new evidence to be debated and included with the old numbers, giving many in the baseball community a breath of fresh air. Even when he was coming up with these new statistics, James (1995) was testing them out on former players, pointing out reasons the writers were wrong not to vote for them or scratching his head at some of the selections who had found their way into baseball's hallowed halls.

Raines

Just months after the Red Sox clinched their first World Series title in 86 years in 2007, voting members of the BBWAA received their 2008 Hall of Fame ballots in the mail.

For the first time ever, one particular name showed up on the ballot. He was a seven-time MLB All-Star who played for six different teams over a 23-year MLB career. His name is Tim Raines.

Born in Sanford, Florida in 1959, Timothy Raines was bred to be a competitor. His father was a former semipro baseball player, and Raines was one of five boys in his house growing up, with all five competing in sports early on (King, 2017). A multisport athlete in high school, Raines was impressive in football as a running back and on the track where he ran the 100-yard dash, but ultimately chose to pursue baseball after being drafted by the now defunct Montreal Expos of the National League in the fifth round of the amateur draft in 1977 (King, 2017).

During his time in the minor leagues, Raines learned how to bat from both sides of the plate instead of just one (Jaffe, 2017), and with the Double-A Memphis team in 1979 scored 104 runs with a .390 on-base percentage, leading to a call-up for his first time with the major league Expos. In 1980, however, he was again in the minor leagues with the Triple-A Denver Bears, winning the batting title as well as the *Sporting News* Minor League Player of the Year award for his performance (King, 2017). Raines was now primed and ready to start the 1981 season with the Montreal Expos. The trouble for the Expos was figuring out where he would play. Raines had played mostly second base in the minor leagues, but that position was blocked on the Expos by Rodney Scott (Jaffe, 2017). Eventually, Raines was put in left field, and he would spend his entire MLB career in one of the three outfield positions.

When the 1981 season started, Raines was ready. The season was shortened and split into two halves because of a player strike, but the Florida native still hit .304, scored 61 runs and led the league with 71 stolen bases, all in just 88 games (King, 2017). He slumped

during his sophomore season, with news eventually coming out that Raines was addicted to cocaine. Following the end of the 1982 season, he entered drug rehab and kicked the habit (King, 2017). For the next four years, Raines put together the most dominant stretch of his career (Jaffe, 2017), eventually stealing more than 70 bases, leading the league with a .334 batting average and .413 on-base percentage in 1986. In 1987, he made his last All-Star appearance count, winning the Most Valuable Player award for the game.

Injuries cut each of the final two seasons of the 1980s short for Raines, and in 1990 he was traded to the Chicago White Sox. Raines had several good years in Chicago, even as he slowed down on the base paths and stole less bases in his 30s (King, 2017). In 1993, he hit .306 with his on-base percentage again above .400 as the White Sox made the playoffs for the first time in 10 years (King, 2017). Another strike occurred in 1994, but if it had not, Chicago would have been in the playoffs again. Injuries slowed him again in 1995, and again he was traded, this time to the New York Yankees. Raines was only a part-time player for three seasons with the Yankees, but was still productive with a .299 batting average and a .395 on-base percentage. He also won his first and only World Series Championship with the Yankees in 1996 (Jaffe, 2017).

Following the 1998 season, Raines became a free agent once again and signed with the Oakland Athletics. During the middle of the season, however, Raines was diagnosed with Lupus and entered eight months of treatment for it (King, 2017). He missed half of the 1999 season and all of the 2000 season, but made an improbable comeback to the MLB with the Expos in 2001. Playing only part time again, Raines hit .308 in 47 games with the Expos and stole the 808th and final base of his career on September 25th of that year. Shortly after, Raines was traded to the Baltimore Orioles, where he was able to play with his son, Tim Jr.

(King, 2017). At age 42, Raines played his final MLB season in 2002 with the Florida Marlins. He hit only .191 in 98 games and retired at the end of his 23rd season in the MLB (King, 2017).

Even with injuries and a pair of labor strikes knocking out parts of his career, Raines finished with 2,605 hits, 980 runs batted in and 1571 runs, while posting a career batting average of .294 and an on-base percentage of .385 (Tim Raines, 2018). His 808 career stolen bases are the fifth most all time, and he swiped bags with a success rate of 84.7 percent, which is the highest success rate of any player with at least 400 stolen base attempts. His career WAR of 69.3 ranks 69th all-time among position players in baseball, and he fared well in other modern statistics like Runs Created, where he ranks 61st all-time and Win Probability Added, where he is 48th in baseball's history with his career number of 47.7 (Tim Raines, 2018).

Following the rule of a five-year waiting period before entering his Hall of Fame consideration, Raines made his debut on the 2008 induction ballot. His first year was nothing to write home about, receiving less than a quarter of the vote, and his total actually dropped to 22.6% in his second year (Tim Raines, 2018). Raines began the upward climb in 2010 though, and raised his voting percentage each of the next four years. In 2013, he made it past the 50% mark for the first time, but he dropped off again to 46.1% the next year. He moved back up to 55% in 2015 and then made a large jump in 2016 to 69.8%. Finally, in his tenth and final year of eligibility he received 86% of the vote and was inducted into the Hall of Fame.

In 1984, just two years after his battle with a cocaine addiction, *Sports Illustrated* feature Raines in an article. Written by Ron Fimrite (1984), the article speaks highly of the

outfielder, even with his drug scandal so recent. The article even makes note of Raines being on track for the 3,000 career hits mark, which would almost certainly put him in the Hall of Fame (Fimrite, 1984). Perhaps the most glowing description of Raines in the article, however, comes from then-teammate Pete Rose, who is now the all-time hits leader in baseball history. Rose is quoted as saying “Right now, he’s the best player in the National League. Mike Schmidt is a tremendous player and so are Dale Murphy and Andre Dawson, but Rock (Raines’ nickname, given because he was short and stocky) can beat you in more ways than any player in the league” (Fimrite, 1984). Just two years later in 1986, when Raines was enjoying the best run of his career, the *Sporting News* published a cover story looking way into the future. This article sought to find those in the game of baseball at the time and decipher who would eventually make it into the Hall of Fame. They polled the 26 baseball managers at the time, and Raines was tabbed as one of the five player in the National League who should make it if he were to continue playing at the level he was in 1986 (Nightengale, 1986).

Raines did not produce at quite his 1986 level for the remainder of his career because of the injury-shortened seasons, and when he began his time on the Hall of Fame ballot for the 2007 election, the fanfare surrounding him was not quite the same as hit had been in the 1980s and his starting percentage on the ballot was weak (*see Table 1*). Most articles discussing the ballot in 2008 made little mention of him other than to say he was a newcomer to the vote. Any further mention of him quickly listed off a few of his career totals like hits and stolen bases and maybe compared him to Rickey Henderson, who played roughly the same time as Raines, while hitting in the leadoff spot and stealing bases as well. A few did recognize his greatness early in his time on the ballot, including Dan Rosenheck (2008) who

boldly (and incorrectly) predicted that Raines might get in during his first year on the ballot in an article for *The New York Times*. Raines also received some in-depth looks and support from blogs like Baseball Prospectus and Hardball Times, but the discussion did not ramp up until some years later.

Table 1. *Tim Raines Hall of Fame Voting Percentages 2008-2017*

Year	Percentage of BBWAA members voting for Raines
2008	24.3%
2009	22.6%
2010	30.4%
2011	37.5%
2012	48.7%
2013	52.2%
2014	46.1%
2015	55.0%
2016	69.8%
2017	86.0%

Leading the charge when the Raines conversation did begin to take off was baseball writer Jonah Keri. Keri grew up in Montreal during Raines' best years. He was relentless on the campaign trail even writing an open letter to BBWAA voters who had not voted for Raines previously in 2016, which he also published on CBSsports.com, the company that employs him to cover baseball. As Keri began banging the drum for Raines, other writers and analysts began to take a closer look at his career and write more about it. Some were still

against voting for him, citing the short career peak or even the cocaine abuse as a reason not to vote for him, but a large number of others fell in line with Keri's thinking. Citing his impressive on-base numbers while comparing them to former outfielder Tony Gwynn, who was already in the Hall of Fame, as well as looking at the totality of his contributions quantified by WAR, a large number of other writers began arguing for Raines' inclusion as well.

With a voting percentage so low to begin his Hall of Fame candidacy, it is obvious that something changed in order to secure Raines' eventual election. Writers, led by Keri, took up the former outfielder's cause and were able to convince other voting BBWAA members that Raines did belong in Cooperstown. How they were able to sway the other voters to believe that the Raines met a new definition of fame is what is of interest in this project and I have therefore proposed three research questions to evaluate the definitional rupture surrounding fame in baseball.

RQ1: Did the definitional rupture of the word fame create a new opening for Tim Raines to earn election into the National Baseball Hall of Fame?

RQ2: As the power to define shifted, were new statistical measures introduced to the definitional rupture of the word fame to help Raines reach the Hall of Fame?

RQ3: Did the mention of non-statistical factors in articles by baseball writers and analysts about the Hall of Fame change during Raines' 10 years on the Hall of Fame ballot?

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This project analyzes United States media coverage of the Hall of Fame candidacy of Tim Raines in order to determine the intent of defining fame, the use of power within the definitional rupture, and the implications of the proposed redefinition. These are the three main components of definitional ruptures identified by Schiappa (2003), which will be further explained below. Rhetorical criticism was chosen to examine the discourse within this definitional rupture because it allows researchers to find the deeper meaning of texts as well as examine their persuasive characteristics (Carmack, 2014).

Definition

The study of how words are defined is not a new area of research, with discussions about the process dating all the way back to the Greek philosophers Socrates and Plato. Because of this, an exhaustive view of all the research involving definitions would be impossible in a paper this length, but an overview of the subject, including the more recent theory of definitional ruptures from Schiappa (2003) will follow.

Schiappa (2003) talks about definition differently than Plato and Aristotle did when the discourse began, stating “[d]efinitions put into practice a special sort of social knowledge – a shared understanding among people about themselves, the objects of their world and how they ought to use language” (p. 3). Throughout his book *Defining Reality: Definitions and the Politics of Meaning*, one of Schiappa’s main arguments is against “facts of essence” (p. 6). Facts of essence are what Plato and Aristotle were looking for when the rhetorical discussion of definition began, but they are far from the only two to consider definition with the facts of essence frame. Instead of asking how people are currently using a word, Plato’s

question is what the object or concept *really is*. Framing the question as “What is X?”, Plato wanted to know an object’s true nature instead of how humans had defined it.

Referring back to the explanation of definition given by Schiappa (2003) above, it is obvious that his idea of definition has strayed from the Plato tradition. Instead, Schiappa argues that a discussion about definition consider “facts of usage” (p. 6). This means Schiappa is arguing for a stipulative strategy for defining, which provides how a word is going to be used in a certain context (Jasinski, 2010). This shift in emphasis is important for Schiappa because it turns the definitional question into a request for proposed institutional norms. Instead of finding the essence of an object or word, Schiappa (2003) argues that deciding how the word will be defined and used in the future within a given context allows for the most beneficial conversation. There are, however, six other strategies for defining words. These include a condensed definition, which states the essential elements of a word, an authoritative definition, which references a word’s meaning for authorities on the subject, an etymological definition, which traces the word’s history, a strategy of disassociation, which defines a word opposed to its usual usage, a negation strategy that defines a word with its antithesis and finally a metaphorical definition that helps to define words by explaining what they are like (Jansinski, 2010). Regardless of the differences between the seven different definitional strategies, more often than not several are used at one time when defining a word.

The vast majority of words in any language do not have to worry about any of these definitional argument questions, and the only time a person would need to employ any one of these definitional strategies would be if they were explaining the meaning of a new word to somebody else. These instances are known by Schiappa as a “definitional gap” (p. 89). This

gap is basically just a lack of knowledge, and the easiest way to fill it is by looking in a dictionary. If I did not know what a word meant, I would either ask for or look for an explanation and accept it as true, without it changing anything about my beliefs. Dictionaries are often the most common place to look for these explanations, as they contain nearly all of the previous “facts of usage” for a word (Schiappa, p. 89). Dictionaries often even give several definitions, with the most current listed first, but other, previous usage of the word listed below for the reader to understand.

These definitions are explained by Schiappa (2003) as “mundane definitions” (p. 49). They are accepted as fact because people as a whole have reached a consensus, whether consciously or not, about how to use the word (Schiappa, 2003). Schiappa states that the majority of definitions we encounter on a daily basis are of this “mundane” variety because they are used without any problems within the discourse of a particular community (p. 29). Most definitions are mundane, with the dictionary providing an answer for what a word means without conflict. People are not required to follow the institution of the dictionary, however, and often choose not to do so because of a regional dialect or simply a decision to choose a nonstandard usage. A simple example of this would be the trend to use the word “sick” not to mean somebody was ill but instead that something was exciting or good. Eventually, if this new usage becomes common enough, it is included in the dictionary as another fact of usage for the word, becoming just another mundane definition.

Contrary to mundane definitions are “novel definitions” (Schiappa, 2003, p. 49). These definitions are new and usually at least slightly different than the old usage of the word (Schiappa, 2003). They arise when a person or group decides that new information renders the old definition obsolete or outdated, and the new method of defining should be accepted in

a quest for denotative conformity (Schiappa, 2003). These novel definitions are basically proposals for future usage by subjects within a given context, Schiappa said, and advocates for them must then persuade others to alter their future linguistic behavior, sometimes ignoring previous institutional definitions like those found in the dictionaries. Words with high intersubjective agreement are often seen as factual, unless another definitional rupture arises to confront it.

Most often, however, changes in denotative conformity take place without people even realizing they really happened (Schiappa, 2003). Changes can be slow and happen over long periods of time in small communities or change rapidly in use by large groups of users. In the example of the word “sick” used earlier, very few people argued about the usage of the word as its new usage became popular, even though it required people to change the way it was used. Schiappa used the example of the word disc as a piece of computer technology to explain the quicker process, recalling how it quickly became commonplace as computers became popular. Most importantly, however, is that most changes in denotative conformity take place without any formal discussion or argument (Schiappa, 2003). In certain realms—most often in the court system, but also appearing in academia and public policy—these discussions do take place and take place publicly. Schiappa defined these debates as definitional ruptures (Schiappa, 2003).

Instead of definitional gaps, where a person hears an unfamiliar word and learns how that word is currently being used, a definitional rupture “calls the natural attitude into question” (Schiappa, 2003, p. 9). A gap can be resolved without the definitional process becoming an issue, but that is not so with a definitional rupture (Schiappa, 2003). Both facts of essence and facts of usage can be challenged in this way, Schiappa noted, where only a

change in beliefs can resolve the confusion about the usage of a word. In essence, Schiappa says the definition is ruptured whenever an advocate defends their definition of a word as better based on their expertise and knowledge of the object (fact of essence) or by arguing that the word should be used differently by a particular group of people (fact of usage). These debates have more often developed into debates of facts of usage (Schiappa, 2003), seeking to decide on an institutional norm, even if the norm means rejecting the new definition and holding onto the new one.

Disagreements about the meanings of words still are not new to Schiappa's research in 2003, as the study of polysemy, or multiple meanings, existed in the field of rhetoric long before (Jasinski, 2010). Many rhetorical scholars brought up this idea in the 1990s, stating that the meaning of a text only emerges through a process of interpretation and argument (Jasinski, 2010). As Schiappa puts it, "the meaning of an observation statement depends on a larger, historically situated set of beliefs, or theory" (p. 64). Through the concept of polysemy, however, it would be the word itself that causes so many different interpretations, which is not usually the case (Jansinski, 2010). Instead, it is the audience and their different backgrounds and experiences that cause different interpretations of the word, which is known as polyvalence (Jansinski, 2010). This could be as simple as an American not understanding what a British friend meant when they asked for a biscuit (meaning a cookie in American English), but also more serious like the symbolism or what action was called for in a specific text. It is because of these beliefs that definitional ruptures can and do occur (Schiappa, 2003), with the advocates of different definitions taking on the attitude that their method for defining and therefore their definition is the most useful and should be the one used moving forward.

According to Schiappa (2003), there are three important parts to analyze within any given definitional rupture. These parts include the advocate's purpose or intent of defining, the use of power in the definitional process, and the consequences of the definitional practice. This three-layer approach cuts to the heart of the definitional process and will be explained further in the paragraphs below.

The first step is to consider the purpose or intent of a new definition. This part of the process places importance on examining what the shared purposes are in defining a particular word as well as the values and interests that are advanced by each of the competing definitions (Schiappa, 2003). Schiappa noted that every definition makes one point of view stand out while quieting or even silencing another, so therefore it is important to examine who or what group's interests are being served by a particular definition. There are bound to be some practical consequences when accepting or rejecting a new definition as well, and Schiappa found that it is important to examine those results.

One example used often by Schiappa (2003) in his book on definitional ruptures is that of the definition of death in the medical community. Using modern technology and advanced medicine, it is now often possible to keep a person's body alive even when their brain has stopped functioning, causing those in the medical profession to debate what constitutes the definition of death. In choosing to accept one of the proposed definitions while accepting another, understanding the consequences is simply a life or death decision. Accepting a definition that allows a human to be defined as dead when there is no brain function but still body function could mean stopping life support and forcing the person's family to deal with the death of a loved one. Obviously, not all consequences of defining are quite as dire. Still, there are at least two sides to every definitional rupture, and the interests

of those sides as well as the consequences of accepting either of their definition as true should be examined as the first step in analysis of a definitional rupture (Schiappa, 2003).

The second step is examining the use of power in the definitional process (Schiappa, 2003). This step should consider not only who has the power to define, but also who *should* have the power to define a word. Most often, facts of usage are treated as facts of essence (Schiappa, 2003), so often those who have the power to define more than likely have the power to define what is real. The lives of others can then be profoundly affected by those who have the power to define, even if those people should not be the ones deciding on definitions.

One particular illustration used by Schiappa (2003) in the explanation of the struggle for power in definition is the proposed re-definition of the word “wetlands” by President George H. W. Bush. In this case, the former president attempted to change the requirements for what constituted a wetland, allowing private businesses to then buy the land that was no longer protected and develop it while holding Bush to his promise of no net wetland loss during his presidency (Schiappa, 2003). By simply not calling them wetlands any more, no protected lands were lost. The power struggle in this definitional rupture came quickly, as ecologists throughout the nation called the new definition into question (Schiappa, 2003). Because the ecologists had the academic background and had done research and examinations of wetlands, they argued they should be the ones to define them instead of the government, with a president who was trying to keep a political promise leading it.

It is easy to see how examining the intent and purpose of definition would be an important factor in the definitional debate of wetlands, as well. President Bush obviously had different interests than the ecologists did in his re-definition of the word, wanting to keep

his campaign promise while keeping businesses who wanted to buy the land and owners who wanted to sell the land happy (Schiappa, 2003). Ecologists, on the other hand, had other interests, knowing the importance of the wetlands to the ecosystem as well as realizing the alarming rate that wetlands were already being destroyed (Schiappa, 2003). Choosing one of these definitions over the other would have important implications for a number of involved parties.

Finally, the third step in investigating definitional ruptures is considering future definitional practice. This is an important step in the process, as Schiappa (2003) states that “we need to recognize that teaching a community of language users a new definition is the same as teaching them a new way of understanding the world” (p. 179). Therefore, careful consideration should be given to the how new definitions are worded as well as examples that can be compared as similar and contrasted as different with the new definition (Schiappa, 2003). Schiappa argues that in a perfect world, all definitions would take the form often seen in law books with “X counts as Y in context C,” as the standard formula, but that is not how people usually come to understand words on their own (p. 179). Specifically, items or people that can be shown as exemplars of the new definition are important in achieving denotative conformity with the new definition.

The importance of this step can be seen in both of the examples given by Schiappa (2003). In the definition of the word death, accepting a new definition to allow for those patients who are brain dead would obviously carry with it a lawful definition with the X counts as Y in context C format for doctor to follow. To help them understand and accept the new definition, however, doctors might be given case studies of particular patients to read about the symptoms they showed before death was correctly or incorrectly decided on.

Reading over and understanding these specific examples would help them to understand the new definition better and make more educated decisions in the future. In the case of wetlands, exemplars can become even more important, as the general public likely lacks the biology and ecology background needed to be able to understand a dictionary definition of wetlands. Specifically, in this case, the commonly-used definition before the Bush administration was not a simple X is Y statement, but a manual with many different factors that could qualify an area as wetlands. Because of this, using examples and illustrations of wetlands could be better served in educating the public on their appearances as well as the importance of saving them.

Although it is a relatively new concept, some communication scholars and rhetoricians have incorporated Schiappa's (2003) theory of definitional ruptures into their studies. The topics covered and explored range all the way from the definition of freedom to Native American's during Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty (Kelly, 2014) to the definition of planet that excluded Pluto from planetary status (Walton, 2008). A review of this relevant literature will follow.

Law and governmental definition

As laws and government most often set straight definitions for words, this theory has been used several times to examine definitional ruptures related to the government. Carmack (2014) specifically analyzed news coverage in print during the integration of Asperger's into the autism spectrum in the 2010 *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*. In her research, Carmack examined the Asperger's community and the terms and monikers they identify themselves. By using descriptions and acts to entitle themselves, people with

Asperger's were able to challenge the definitions of "normal" and try to gain acceptance into mainstream society.

Carmack (2014) also incorporated identity into her research of this definitional rupture after finding that the main debate surrounding Asperger's and Autism is how the identity of the two groups is constructed. Health issues often require individuals to reconstruct their identity, but this is not the case with Asperger's because individuals are born with it instead of contracting it like an illness (Carmack, 2014). Overall, it was found that the definitional rupture surrounding Asperger's hinged on letting the individuals identify themselves, thus keeping the traditional idea of what it meant to have Asperger's or letting the medical experts define the individuals, thus altering the identity that had been formed. This definitional change could have many implications, including how individuals with Asperger's are taught, treated, and even incorporated into health care systems (Carmack, 2014). At the time of Carmack's research, the rupture had yet to be resolved, and she suggested a re-evaluation of issues of disability and identity by health practitioners would be beneficial if the rupture is to be solved.

Further study of communication strategies in definitional ruptures was done by Kelly (2014), who examined the meaning of freedom to American Indians during Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty. Because the concept of freedom is at least in the United States ideographical, Kelly finds that it invites constant redefinition and controversy. In other words, the idea of freedom, because it is abstract and dynamic, has different meanings to almost every person and is constantly open to definitional rupturing, which could hold true for other concepts as well (Kelly, 2014).

In another war in another time, Vicaro (2011) examined the definition of torture during the Global War on Terrorism. This definition is again on given by the federal government. Using a close reading, Vicaro found that the law against torture has a number of gaps within it, specifically in the legal categories of pain and personhood, and therefore offers inadequate legal protection for those being tortured. Vicaro goes as far to say that the law effectively permits many of the “no-touch” torture techniques used today instead of actually prohibiting them like it is supposed to.

Vicaro (2011) concludes by proposing that a new definition of torture be constituted, and stress the importance of examining future definitional practice, which is part three of Schiappa’s (2003) plan for examining definitional ruptures. Particularly in a matter as dire as torture, the terms and acts used to entitle a word are of massive importance (Vicaro, 2011). Good definitions, Vicaro says “should be measured not by its denotative accuracy, but by the quality of the worlds it makes possible” (p. 420).

One of the most widely discussed and debated definitional ruptures, even outside the realm it occurred in, was the word “planet,” and its effects on the former planet Pluto. Walton examined this case study in 2008, and found that the argumentation techniques used to fight for a definition of planet that did not include Pluto by scientists were relatively weak and could have been stronger with a more complete understanding of the definitional process. The advocates for the new definition took the facts of essence approach to the definitional process instead of arguing using facts of usage. Argumentation schemes were then mostly rendered useless, as the rupture boiled down to whether or not Pluto “really was” a planet or not instead of whether or not it should be called a planet within a particular context (Walton, 2008).

Non-governmental definition

Still, not all definitions come from the law, and this theory has been applied to instances outside the government as well. Back in the realm of health communication, Zoller (2012) observed participants over a four-year period to study the role that health discourse plays in environmental health disputes. This observation took place in a town in Ohio situated near a plastics plant that produced emissions (Zoller, 2012). In town at the center of the study, activists worked to define health as well as identify illness causation and risk in order to make the public aware of the emissions. The campaign was done almost exclusively through citizens who were supposed propose the new definitions to those around them (Zoller, 2012).

Zoller (2012) found that the activists relied heavily on biographical health issues of neighbors and then attributing or implying environmental factors caused them, which was met with anger by management at the plastics plant, who fought the new definitions, which is where the rupture occurred. In this case, it was important for advocates of one definition to explicitly respond to and even debunk claims made by advocates of the opposing definition. Furthermore, it showed the importance of the power component in the definitional process, as a powerful business fought with neighborly activists for credibility in the debate (Zoller, 2012).

Another case of definitional rupture outside of the law was examined by Greta Wendelin for her dissertation in 2012. Wendelin examined the changing definition of “prostitute” in England in the 19th century, tracking how it was molded and made new throughout a large number of years and with a large number of different advocates. The objects studied for this project were all printed in various newspapers of the times, as letters

to the editor, interviews, or sensationalized stories. Although other groups like the medical and religious communities had interests in defining prostitutes, Wendelin found that the best way to view public discourse about this group of people was through the journalism of the times.

Wendelin (2012) found a number of different definitions for the word throughout the 1800s, none of which are the common American definition used today. Each definition, however, served the interests of a particular group and had medical, religious and sometimes political implications. The presence of so many definitions each serving a different interest supports the importance of examining both the intent to define as well as the power to define within definitional ruptures, as those new definitions may serve some groups more than others.

Definitions are important and can end up being life or death matters in some cases. Although they often go unnoticed and the process for learning new definitions usually happens without the person even considering what they have done, when definitional ruptures occur it has been shown time and time again the importance of the three phases that Schiappa (2003) identified. Those components include the intent or purpose of defining, who has the power to define in a given context and the definitional practice that arises from choosing one definition instead of another.

Artifacts for analysis

Public texts like newspaper articles and blog posts, which were used in this project, are worthwhile for consideration because they portray the discourse within the public arena. As Schiappa (2003) noted, when someone asks what a word means, more often than not, the explanation is given using other words. This concept is especially true when inquiring about

facts of usage, as Schiappa wrote are most often at the center of definitional ruptures. Facts of usage are contrary to facts of essence, which refer to the true definitional substance of a word. When answering a question of facts of essence, one could simply point to an object or display and state “This is what X is,” and it would be correct (Schiappa, 2003). Facts of usage, however, require agreement between users of the word, which is why some researchers have found usefulness in examining definitional discourse rhetorically. People use other words to define, so why not examine those words?

The rhetorical approach was especially useful in this paper as a number of those involved in advocating for one definition or another were also the ones covering it. Often in definitional debates, writers and journalists are examining the discourse, especially in cases like those reviewed in the Supreme Court. It is impossible for journalists in those situations to know exactly what the advocates of one definition or another are thinking though, unless they are told directly. In the case of the Hall of Fame, however, those with the decision are also the ones writing about the process, and often tell readers what they are thinking.

The BBWAA voters are not the only ones participating in the discourse, but by starting with their writings, it is easier to evaluate the different steps and build out from there. Still, articles from non-voting writers were also included in this research as well. As Walton (2008) mentioned in his discussion of the definitional discourse surrounding Pluto and its planetary status, the arguments of those who do not have the power to define are still important for examination. The power element of definitional ruptures is an important part of Schiappa’s (2003) work, and leaving out those who may not have had a vote and therefore could not define would be leaving out a major part of the definitional process.

To collect these articles, search terms “Hall of Fame” and “Tim Raines” were entered into the databases or archives of a number of different news outlets, blog sites, and newspaper databases. All relevant news articles were collected. One additional discussion of the Raines Hall of Fame case from a television show on MLB’s own network was included because of its relevance. Media ranged from December 2006 to January 2017. Raines was first up for election at the 2008 induction, meaning BBWAA members first began receiving ballot with his name on it in December of 2007. Articles were sparse to start, but increased in number as Raines’ time on the ballot grew shorter, with more being written on him in 2016 and 2017. After eliminating duplicates, the discourse discovered constituted 71 pages of text along with the one video. Coverage included both news stories and feature articles, as well as opinion pieces. Articles were read and videos watched in their entirety, with special consideration paid to sections discussing Raines.

These articles ranged from coast to coast in the United States, including the *Los Angeles Times* in California and the *New York Times* in New York and many places in between. Articles analyzed were split between actual daily newspapers in the U.S. and sports blog sites. These sites included major, multi-sport entities like ESPN as well as baseball-focused writings like *Baseball Prospectus*. Circulation of the newspapers varied widely as well, ranging from as low as 26,000 (*The Anniston Star*) all the way to more than 500,000 (*The New York Times*). A portion of these articles were simply news stories, stating facts about players on each year’s Hall of Fame ballot and not attempting to sway opinion. A large number of them are what journalists refer to as columns, meaning the writer gives his or her opinion on what should or should not be happening. These were especially helpful for the premise of this project.

For the most part, articles from the earlier years focused mainly on the traditional statistical measures used to evaluate baseball players, even though the earliest pieces were written three years after *Moneyball* was released and the public became more aware of sabermetrics. The baseball blog sites were quicker to lean on modern statistics. Those writing for more traditional news sources did begin to use *Moneyball*-based statistics like on-base percentage, but did not frequently use the newer statistics like WAR. Finally, after Raines was officially elected, several articles were published examining his meteoric rise in voting totals and the causes of it.

In this chapter, the articles that were analyzed for this project were described as well as their importance. The method for analysis was also described, with the benefits attributed to it as well as the framework for Schiappa's (2003) definitional rupture concept. The three phases of this theory were explained along with the important role each part plays in examining definitional discourse. Rhetorical analysis provides an in-depth look at the words and persuasive strategies used and therefore is the best option for answering the research questions proposed in this project.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

After analyzing the 72 pieces of media compiled for this research, each of the three research questions posed in this project were able to be answered. This chapter will break down the answers to each of the three questions. It will also identify the major components of definitional ruptures identified by Schiappa (2003) in order to better understand definitional discourse as it occurs in the public sphere.

Intent to define

Debate raging about who should be in the Hall of Fame is not, by any means, a new fad. After election of the first Hall of Fame class in 1936, the *Sporting News* was already publishing columns and comments from readers in 1940 arguing that other players should be included (Wrny, 1940). Even the commissioner of baseball Ford Frick made his case in 1953, stating that he wanted all players who hit .400 for a season (there have been none since Ted Williams in 1941) and all pitchers who threw a perfect game (just 23 all-time) to be inducted automatically. Some cases of Hall of Fame snubs have become more famous over the years including those of pitcher Milt Pappas, third basemen Ron Santo, shortstop Phil Rizzuto, and most recently (besides Raines) pitcher Bert Blyleven (Jaffe, 2017). Each time one of these candidates came up for election, particularly in their later years on the ballots, journalists and baseball analysts around the country would begin writing columns about why they deserved to be in, citing different statistics or moments from their career (James, 1995; Jaffe, 2017).

For cases prior to the turn of the 21st century, these arguments could become stale. Journalists and fans alike re-hashed old statistics over and over again with the hope that

others would suddenly see the fame that they saw (James, 1995). Most of the time that did not happen. Of those listed above who had particularly noisy Hall of Fame debates surrounding them, Pappas was never inducted, and both Santo and Rizzuto were inducted via the Veteran's Committee, which is often referred to by baseball historians as the Hall of Fame's "side door" (James, 1995; Jaffe, 2017). Nobody had ever been able to change the baseball writer's minds—at least not until they brought something new to the table.

The introduction and mainstream acceptance of sabermetric statistics and ways of thinking after *Moneyball* and the Red Sox World Series title in 2007 with James in the front office changed all of that. Raines was not the first player to benefit from this new way of thinking as former MLB pitcher Bert Blyleven gained election in 2011 after a sabermetric oriented campaign led by Rich Lederer (Aficionado heavily interested in Blyleven, 2011). Blyleven had polled at less than 30 percent for his first six years on the ballot, but eventually got over the 75 percent threshold in his 14th year on the ballot, having the advantage of getting on it before the maximum stay was cut down to 10 years (Aficionado, 2011). Several famous baseball writers were adamant that he did not belong (Jaffe, 2017), citing won-loss records and lacks of All-Star appearances, but Blyleven found his way into the Hall of Fame, getting 79.7 percent of the vote. Blyleven was slightly different than Raines, however, because his traditional numbers were not all that bad. He made just two All-Star teams, but ranked in the top 10 in earned run average 10 times in his career and holds the fifth most strikeouts all-time (Aficionado, 2011). In continuing the metaphor of doors used in RQ1, Blyleven did not so much create a new door, as sneak in the one that already existed. Lederer himself used the more traditional statistics of strikeouts, wins, and shutouts to start

out his Hall of Fame pitch for Blyleven. The battle for sabermetrics still raged, in the form of Tim Raines.

While the two sides of this debate argued using different statistical methods and focusing on different numerical values, the core of the debate is something else entirely. As rhetorician Michael Sandel (2010) points out in his TED Talk on democratic debate, in most discussions and debate, there are underlying questions pertaining to moral philosophies and justice. Following the Aristotlian tradition of this concept, justice is simply giving people what they deserve. Justice within the Hall of Fame context means honoring those players who have had excellent careers in the sport of baseball. It is this function that is essential to the Hall of Fame's purpose. If they were to stop honoring those players, it would cease to be a Hall of Fame and simply be a museum and end all debate about who belonged in and who did not.

If election standards were set, this debate would also be mostly useless. Instead, the BBWAA simply lists broad categories like playing ability and sportsmanship in the voting instructions. This ambiguity leaves it up to the writers to decide which qualities and abilities in a player are most worthy of recognition. Obviously, the debate comes down to more than just a player's ability, because then known-gambler Pete Rose would be inducted and he is not. The writers, however, know it is about more. The goal of the Hall of Fame is to induct the players who best exemplify virtues that we are to admire, which is a much more serious discussion than which baseball statistics are useful. The main question baseball writers had to answer is which abilities were most worthy of recognition, but also which off-the-field qualities were important to consider throughout their time as the voting body.

The best place to start when recognizing the cultural shift that occurred regarding baseball player evaluation during the Hall of Fame candidacy of Raines is actually at the end of his Hall of Fame candidacy. After it was announced in January of 2017 that the Florida native had been elected, a number of articles came out celebrating the triumph not only for Raines, but for baseball “stat geeks everywhere” (Kilgore, 2017). Kilgore, writing for the *Washington Post*, recognized the importance of the election of Raines and its tie to sabermetrics, stating that he came along at exactly the right moment and benefitted from *Moneyball* and the subsequent widespread acceptance of modern statistics in the Hall of Fame conversation. The statistics used to get Raines in were not counting statistics that only tabulated how many hits, home runs, or steals he had. They were more advanced, looking out how often he got on base, how much more efficient he was at base-stealing, and calculating how many wins he was worth compared to a replacement player (Kilgore, 2017). Raines, Kilgore (2017) states, came along at just the right moment:

He benefitted, like perhaps no player before him, from the advancement and widespread adoption of new methods for measuring a ballplayer’s value. And his case would be pressed through ever-expanding channels, which placed new pressures on the 442 members of the Baseball Writers’ Association of America who vote. (p. 3)

Other baseball analysts noticed this trend as well, with Jayson Stark of ESPN and Ken Davidoff of the *New York Post* also published articles in January of 2017 on the changing definition of fame that included Raines. When Stark wrote his 2017 feature on Raines’ climb to the Hall of Fame, it featured a whole section about how the outfielder’s best numbers and biggest contributions were not “mainstream” (p. 3). It turned out, Stark points

out, Raines was the ultimate new-school type of player. Davidoff (2017) noted that his election would mark an important turn in one of the hall's biggest issues, stating just days before the announcement that "Raines' admittance, if it happens, would serve as a triumph of facts and statistics (p. 2). Sportswriters noticed that there was something different and more important about the discourse surrounding Raines.

It was Jonah Keri, himself a sportswriter, who started the spread this modern statistical view of Raines' career (Jaffe, 2017). In 2016, when the Montreal-native and Raines enthusiast sent out a letter to BBWAA voters who had not previously selected Raines, Keri made note of times on base (as opposed to hits), stolen base success rate and WAR, both in career totals and peak numbers. Keri again spouted off these numbers just before the induction of Raines was announced while debating with the more traditional Chris Russo on Russo's MLB Network show, *High Heat* (Russo & Keri, High Heat). Keri (2016) wrote in his open letter:

Change the currency from hits to times on base, and the conversation changes.

Raines reached base 3,977 times in his career. That's more than Hall of Famers Tony Gwynn, Lou Brock, Roberto Clemente, Mike Schmidt, Roberto Alomar, Eddie Mathews, Brooks Robinson, and Harmon Killebrew. If you evaluated no other part of his résumé, that alone makes Raines a strong Hall of Fame candidate. (p. 2)

This statement from Keri is a bold one. By "changing the currency" he is not just arguing that a new statistic is better than the one that was previously in use. As mentioned earlier, Sandel (2010) notes that all democratic debates boil down to bigger issues about justice, and in those questions of justice it is important to decipher which abilities are worthy of admiration. The times-on-base vs. hits arguments does this within the context of baseball.

Keri reasoned that the purpose of a baseball player is not *hitting the ball* but instead *getting on base*. This idea follows the *Moneyball* school of thought perfectly. When A's General Manager Billy Bean introduced the sabermetric concept to his staff, the question he was constantly asking them was "Can he get on base?" (Lewis, 2003). By the old definition and old values, Raines was a question mark for the Hall of Fame because he had just over 2,600 hits for his career. It was this number that baseball men had for so long valued. Keri (2016) argued instead that it was the times on base number that mattered and Raines was all of the sudden a no-doubt Hall of Famer. Keri was then joined in his crusade by a number of other baseball writers and his voting percentage soared (Keri, 2016; Kilgore, 2017; Stark, 2017).

The act of a batter drawing a walk during to get on base has not always been seen in the favorable light that it is now. In the early days of professional baseball, it could take up to nine balls for a hitter to reach base via the walk, and it was looked down upon for a hitter to do this because the goal of the game at the time was to put the ball in play (James, 2001). The number of balls required for a free pass to first base slowly shrunk to its current number of four in the latter half of the 19th century, but for most of baseball's history, walks were looked down upon for hitters and were more often kept track of as a negative statistic for pitchers. James (2001) himself wrote that thinking for most of baseball's history was that "walks were something the pitcher did, and the hitter, didn't, or shouldn't, have much to do with it" (p. 195). James even found a direct quote from an MLB team owner in the 1940s who said he got rid of someone on his team because the player was lazy and always trying to get on base with a walk.

This sentiment is furthered by the research of Kostya Kennedy (2012) on legendary baseball player Joe DiMaggio. "Joltin' Joe" holds a special place in baseball lore, once

recording a hit in 56 straight games during the 1941 season. While he was rattling off hit after hit, however, another American League player named Ted Williams was actually out-hitting him, as well as walking much more frequently. Williams was an on-base machine, reaching better than 48 of the time he came up to the plate and ranking first all-time with a .481 on-base percentage. According to Kennedy (2012), DiMaggio did not feel the same way about Williams' propensity for the base on balls:

DiMaggio couldn't understand why Williams took so many walks. A hitter with his talent? What, did Williams *like* giving up the chance to hit? DiMaggio himself would gladly swing at a pitch off the plate to try and drive in a run or move over a base runner. (p. 70)

The feelings about players with a propensity for walks listed above by the baseball owners and players from mid-20th century baseball stand in stark contrast to the ideas presented in *Moneyball* and especially those written in arguments for putting Raines in the Hall of Fame. Older, more traditional baseball writers and analysts valued hits, just like the heroes they grew up watching did. Walks, in their mind, are mistakes the pitcher made, and not anything earned by a batter. On the flip side are the sabermetric baseball writers like Keri (2016) who pointed out that in many cases, a walk is just as good as a hit. As those new analysts fought for a new definition of fame, they were simultaneously changing what abilities were valued within the game of baseball and therefore worth honoring with enshrinement in Cooperstown.

The comparison of Tony Gwynn that Keri makes was also used heavily as Raines saw his voting percentages climb. Playing at roughly the same time as Raines, Gwynn has been renowned as one of the greatest hitters in baseball's history (Jaffe, 2016). Gwynn passed the

3,000 hit mark, had the highest batting average in the National League eight times during his career, and was inducted the first time he appeared in 2007, one year before Raines reached the ballot (Jaffe, 2016). Obviously, hits were an essential component of baseball worth honoring, as evidenced in the Gwynn election. Using the sabermetric way of thinking and counting times on base, however, Raines was often actually more effective at the plate because he walked far more often than Gwynn (Hochman, 2016). By valuing a player's ability to reach base instead of just his ability to get base hits, Raines became a viable candidate for the enshrinement in Cooperstown.

The debate surrounding the word fame is not only about just which statistical methods are better for determining the value of a player, but which qualities are most worth honoring in baseball players, which leads to a discussion of what the essential nature of baseball is, just as Sandel (2010) said it would. Schiappa (2003) uses the term values instead of essence in his own description of this process, but the end result is the same. The question we are to answer when re-defining and the one that baseball writers fought over is "*What are the appropriate values we want to make essential to particular definitions?*" (Schiappa, p.169). The intent of the modern baseball analysts was to make the value of getting on base essential to the definition of fame as opposed to collecting base hits. If they were successful, it would then lead to the act of drawing walks being worthy of honoring and therefore lead to Tim Raines being enshrined in the Hall of Fame.

It is clear from these arguments what the purpose and intent to define was for the advocates of the new definition of fame. As noted previously, writers and fans alike had been attempting to redefine fame for the BBWAA almost since the Hall of Fame's inception, but had little luck doing so. It was not until modern statistics arrived that this was even

possible. Similar to the example Schiappa (2003) uses in the definition rupture of the word dead, which was discussed in the Chapter 2, it was the advancement of technology and ways of thinking that allowed for this definitional rupture of fame to occur. With the term dead, advancements in medicine and technology allowed doctors to keep patient bodies alive even if their brains were no long functioning (Schiappa, 2003). Even in this example, however, the argument was at its core about which values needed to be assigned to the word dead. As technology advanced, doctors were able to keep brain activity going even if other body functions stopped and therefore wanted those values made essential to the definition of dead. The same is true of the definitional rupture of fame in baseball. As new statistical methods were introduced, baseball analysts aimed to shift what was valued in the game and therefore change the definition.

Examining this part of the definitional discourse helps to answer RQ1, which asked whether a change in definition allowed Raines into the hall through a door that did not exist before. Within the debate over the word fame, we can trace to the same core problems that are at the center of every democratic debate and therefore often in the middle of the study of rhetoric. Baseball writers were not only arguing about which abilities and skills were worth honoring in the sport, but what qualities and values were essential to the game. By using newer statistical methods and demonstrating the value of thing like stealing bases successfully and drawing walks, sabermetric-minded writers were able to change what was essential in baseball and therefore what skills were worth recognizing. Once walks and stolen bases were worth recognizing, Raines was voted into the Hall of Fame with plenty of votes to spare.

Use of power

The use of power is the easiest component to see within this particular definitional rupture. In a broad sense, those in power in the Hall of Fame are the writers in the BBWAA, and specifically those with 10 years of service who have the right to vote in Hall of Fame elections. They decide who gets to vote and give the instructions, although they are simple, on how the voting process should be undertaken. A closer look, however, reveals a more interesting power struggle at hand within the game.

More accurately, those in power for the majority of the Hall of Fame's history were those writers who examined baseball using traditional statistics like the ones you would find on the back of a baseball card. Batting average, runs batted in, and home runs are the three most popular of these, and for the longest time these stats were all that was available, so it made sense to use them. That all changed in the 1980s, when men like Bill James and Pete Palmer began their pioneering work in sabermetrics, creating statistics like Runs Created and writing about their new measures in books like the *Baseball Abstract*, which James publishes yearly, and *The Hidden Game of Baseball*, which was published in 1984 (Jaffe, 2017). It was slow going at first for these statistics to gain public acceptance until they were finally thrust into the spotlight with the 2003 publication of *Moneyball*.

The introduction of the new statistics created the rift among baseball's writers. Older writers, who had already been covering the game and often already had a vote in the Hall of Fame election either chose to ignore the modern numbers or actively attacked them (Stark, 2017; Gregg, 2017; Kenny, 2016). However, Stark (2017) noted that "as the electorate got younger, Raines' support got bigger" (p. 5). He goes on to discuss the changes in the BBWAA electorate during Raines' time on the ballot, where older, newspaper journalists

made up a smaller and smaller percentage of the voters, while more “new-age writers from the web and sabermetric community” were included (Stark, 2017, p. 2). Kilgore (2017) also recognized the power being gained by the younger electorate and how that helped to redefine fame so that included Raines, finding that all 14 of the first-time voters in the 2017 election that released their ballot had voted for the former outfielder.

Baseball should have been prepared for this. The instructions to Hall of Fame voters have always been ambiguous, and with good reason. James (1995) explains why set statistical standards would be a disaster in his book on the Hall of Fame:

Statistics are a lens through which we see baseball—but baseball is a moving object. It changes. As baseball changes the lens goes out of focus, and needs to be adjusted. A fixed set of statistical standards would freeze the focus—and thus would guarantee a fuzzy vision. (pg. 183)

This statement perfectly applies to the definitional rupture of fame and really any definitional rupture, if you were to change the context from baseball. If the medical profession had frozen the definition of dead in the 19th century and not allowed for advancements in technology to change it, they would be doing people a huge disservice. Maybe it made sense not to value walks as essential to baseball in the 1800s when it took nine balls to earn the walk and players were so expected to put the ball in play that they could request where it was pitched. But the game has change drastically since that time. Kenny also made note that the writers had already been forced to re-define what greatness looked like at least once in the history of the game. When Babe Ruth first made his entrance into the spotlight by blasting home run after home run, he was the first of his kind (Kenny, 2016). Up until that point, home runs did factor in heavily when discussing the greatness of a player,

but they obviously do now (Kenny, 2016). The definition of fame had already been changed before by adding new statistics to the conversation, yet some writers did not want to do that when sabermetricians came to the forefront of the baseball conversation and proved that reaching base in general was of immense value to the game and not the sign of a lazy or weak player.

The best place to view the dichotomy of the old, traditional statistic writer and the young, sabermetric writer is back on the MLB Network show *High Heat*, with Keri and Russo specifically debating the candidacy of Raines. Russo is one of the more well-known or at least one of the louder voices in baseball media today still against modern statistics. He argues about it often on his show and others with fellow MLB Network analyst Brian Kenny, and his segment debating Raines with Keri is no different.

First off, all throughout the seven-minute debate, Raines statistics and facts are shown on the side of the screen (Russo & Keri, *High Heat*). Some of these facts are as basic as a timeline of the teams Raines played for during his career, but others are actual statistics from his career, and almost all of them are traditional, counting statistics, which are not what pro-Raines analysts used to fight for him (Russo & Keri, *High Heat*). Statistics shown include batting average, runs batted in and home runs, as well as on-base percentage, slugging percentage, All-Star selections, total stolen bases (as well as where that total ranks all-time), and where he ranks in Expos franchise history in other counting statistics like singles, triples, walks and times on base (Russo & Keri, *High Heat*). On-base statistics and slugging percentage are important parts of sabermetric thought, but nearly all of the other statistics are of much less importance to new-age writers like Keri who eventually voted Raines into the Hall of Fame.

During the debate, Russo shows more disdain for the advanced stats that seemingly support Raines. Keri uses just one actual advanced statistic, WAR, to prove that Raines' peak years are good enough to vote him in. According to WAR, which measures all of a player's contributions on the diamond, Raines was the best player in baseball's National League for nearly all of the 1980s (Russo & Keri, High Heat). Accepting this as true would mean accepting that a number of the things Raines did like taking walks, stealing bases successfully, and playing solid defense are valuable to the game of baseball and therefore worth honoring. Russo is adamant that this cannot be true because he watched and covered baseball during that decade (Russo began covering baseball in the 1970s) and he knows he saw players who were better than Raines.

The argument Russo uses is one often against sabermetrics and is commonly referred to simply as "the eye test," (Kenny, 2016). Russo resorts to it again when Keri later states that according to WAR, Raines would be the seventh best left-fielder in the hall if inducted. Because Keri did not watch all of these players compete, Russo says it impossible for him to know how great they were or were not. Realizing he has no chance of convincing Russo if he will not listen to statistics, Keri finally sums up his argument with two sentences that could be the official slogan of sabermetrics, stating "People's eyes are flawed. Numbers are correct," (Russo & Keri, High Heat).

Some writers and analysts obviously still agreed with Russo, as Raines received just over 20% of the vote early on and even when elected had a number of ballots without his name on it. Relatively few writers produce columns stating why a candidate should not be elected to the Hall of Fame, but some analysts did voice their reasoning for not checking his box during his ten years on the ballot. While a few analysts simply dismissed Raines with a

thought that it did not feel right to vote for him (Perrotto, 2013; Fletcher, 2014), others went deeper and are worth consideration in this project.

A 2012 article without a byline in *USA Today* presents the case against Raines most simply, but uses only counting stats like Russo's show did. The article also mentions awards like the Most Valuable Player, which is also voted on by the BBWAA and therefore had many of the same old-school minded voters taking part in the MVP selection during Raines' career. The *New York Daily News* published an article on Raines' hall chances in 2016 and quoted an anonymous voter who would not be electing Raines in the story and stated that while the outfielder's career was excellent, he lost some of his ability after year 30, only playing part time after that (McCaron). Russo also argued this on the *High Heat* episode with Keri. The *Daily News* anonymous source goes on to say that Raines' steal totals, one of his most important numbers when looking only at traditional, "counting" statistics, were inflated by the era he played in, when stolen bases were more common.

Many of the writers put Raines into this "Hall of Very Good" changing the wording of baseball's greatest honor to show that Raines, while a great player, does not fit their definition of fame (Slusser, 2014, p. 2). Slusser had a vote and left Raines just outside the Hall of Fame when discussing her ballot in 2014, citing his short peak as a player as the reasoning, when really as Keri found through WAR, his peak lasted nearly a full decade. Bill Madden agreed with this reasoning in the same year, and also noted the lack of runs scored despite being feared on the base paths as an answer for why Madden would not vote for Raines.

It was David Borges, however, who took an all-out, old-school approach to the voting process. Borges was an actual BBWAA voter for the first time in 2014, and used his column

in the *New Haven Register* to explain his thinking on the ballot he sent in that did not include Raines. The reasoning for not voting for Raines was basically his reasoning for any player he did not vote for—he did not think about it that much (Borges, 2014). Borges stated early on in his column he was “of the belief that, if you really have to put a lot of thought into whether a player deserves being in the Hall of Fame, he probably doesn’t belong there” (p. 2). He went on to say that he does not look at a player’s statistics for any amount of time or compare him to other players or basically any of the things pro-Raines writers asked BBWAA writers to do for the outfielder. If a player is worthy Borges said, it is because they were a guy who stood out above the rest in his mind. Borges’ argument seems almost eerily similar to Plato’s search for facts of essence. Instead of using words and statistics to help define what fame is and looks like in the context of baseball, Borges, when asked what fame is, simply points to what he thinks it is, mentioning greats like Sandy Koufax or Ricky Henderson. Raines, who he describes as on-the-fence, does not get a vote, and is left just outside the hall with some excellent players who just do not meet the requirements for fame (Borges, 2014).

Chris De Luca, a writer for the *Chicago Sun Times*, had put Raines in this almost-hall for the first eight years on the ballot as well, stating that his thinking had always been of the opinion that if a player did not qualify the first year on the ballot, he would not qualify thereafter (2016). “Statistics,” De Luca recalled thinking, “shouldn’t improve over time” (p. 1). He is right. Tim Raines did not add any hits or steals or improve his WAR total whatsoever in his 10 years on the BBWAA ballot, yet he still got in because as Sean Foreman pointed out in a *New York Times* article in 2010, a cultural shift was happening in baseball analysis. Raines had earned his way into the Hall of Fame many years before.

What changed was the power in who could define and therefore what the definition was.

Younger writers saw the value in all of the things Raines did on a baseball diamond instead of just looking at his hit and RBI totals and were changing what was valued in the game.

Then, Raines became worth of enshrinement.

Arguments written expressly in favor of Raines were almost the exact polar opposite of those written by these old-school baseball analysts, even at the beginning of his time on the ballot. The first articles published highlighting Raines as a Hall of Fame candidate found in the research for this project did not occur in newspapers, but on blog sites like *Baseball Prospectus*, *Hardball Times* and *The Rule V Baseball Blog*. These writers used metrics thought up by James like the Hall of Fame Monitor, the Black Ink Test and Similarity Scores while also citing defensive metrics and base-stealing efficiency numbers (Jayzayerli, 2006; Darowski, 2006). Darowski (2016) wrote:

Raines had a seven season peak that was quite dominant, something Hall of Fame voters like to see. The eight seasons that followed were also very solid, and allowed Rains to reach the impressive career numbers mentioned above. His blend of dominance and longevity make him a solid Hall of Fame case. (p. 3)

Jay Jaffe, one of the premier Hall of Fame historians, who has since written a book on the institution itself, began writing on Raines yearly as ballots were sent out, first for *Baseball Prospectus* and then for *Sports Illustrated* and was the first found to use WAR in his arguments for the outfielder's election (Jaffe, 2007). Increased focus was placed on Raines ability to get on base (Kepner, 2008; Salsibury 2008, Cowlshaw, 2009), and after his first snub on the 2008 ballot, more sabermetrics like Runs Produced and Fielding Runs were introduced (Jaffe, 2010; Tango, 2008). Finally, with just a few years left to get Raines into

the hall, sabermetrics began making it outside of baseball-specific blogs and in the pages of newspapers (Rosenbloom, 2015). The numbers became more common from there, especially with Keri being especially vocal in his articles and letters to BBWAA voters, which included focus on times on base and WAR numbers. Jaffe continued to write in favor of Raines as well, and used statistics like OPS+ in his later columns.

One final place to see the shift in power is simply by looking at Raines' voting percentages. Starting at 24.3% and dropping to his low point of 22.6% in his second year on the ballot, it did not look like Raines stood a chance of gaining election. It is his biggest jump, however, that tells us the most about the power to define fame in baseball. In 2015, Raines had his second year with more than half of the vote, being named on exactly 55% of the ballots (Baseball-Reference, 2018). Up until that point, the largest jump he had ever seen from one year to the next was 11.2% from 2011 to 2012. In 2016, however, Raines received 69.8% of the vote, marking a 14.8% jump, which was the largest he received up to that point. This jump is significant because, as previously, the BBWAA cut just over 100 voters from its pool, adding a rule that writers had to have covered the game in the last 10 years to continue voting (Jaffe, 2017). The new rule meant that not only were a number of older writers gone from the voting process, a larger percentage of the voting body was all of the sudden younger, even without the addition of anybody new. Raines jumped drastically again in his final year on the ballot, increasing from 69.8% to 86%. As Stark (2017) noted not long after Raines was elected, "as the electorate got younger, Raines' support got bigger" (p. 5).

Further examinations of the percentage jump of other players on the ballot go even further to show this shift in power. Two players of particular importance who spent at least a few year on the ballot with Raines are Barry Bonds and Roger Clemens. Bonds is fourth all-

time in the MLB in WAR and is also the league's all-time home run leader with 762 in his 22-year career. Clemens racked up 139.6 WAR in his career, good for eighth all-time, and won the Cy Young Award (given to the best pitcher in each league every year) seven times over the span of three decades. Other than their dominance on the field, these two players have something else in common—a cloud of performance enhancing drug use hanging over their careers (Nightengale, 2016). Although neither ever admitted to knowingly using steroids or anything like it, there is ample evidence that suggests otherwise, which has put a damper on their otherwise stellar Hall of Fame résumés (Jaffe, 2017). Both Bonds and Clemens entered the ballot for the 2013 election, right at the halfway point of Raines' candidacy, and the year in which he first received over 50% of the vote (Tim Raines, 2018).

Raines found himself included in the same conversation as Bonds and Clemens at least a couple of times after they entered the ballot, and not for reasons that would excited any of the three. In 2013, the BBWAA inducted exactly zero players in their election, and Mark Edwards commended them for the statement they made against Clemens and Bonds as well as other alleged steroid users who were on or would be on the Hall of Fame ballot. Edwards wrote that they should have gone further, however, by not voting for admitted cocaine user Tim Raines. He then goes on to list five players who finished behind Raines in the voting that year, but should have been placed ahead of him because “they appear to be about as clean as a whistle” (Edwards, 2013, p. 12).

Nightengale wrote an argument on the opposite end of the spectrum in 2016, but still made the same comparison. While writing that the Hall of Fame should be open to stars with steroid ties, the long-time baseball writer could not do so without making mention of Raines' own drug problems. “Besides,” he said, “isn't it hypocritical to cast a vote for Tim Raines

and not for Bonds and Clemens?” (Nightengale, 2016, p. C4). Nightengale’s argument is that while Raines’ cocaine habit actually hurt himself and his team’s chances at winning, at least the alleged steroid use by Bonds and Clemens made them and their teams better.

The pair polled low in their first turn on the ballot, especially for players with credentials that would normally signify first-ballot inductees (all eight of the other top 10 players in career WAR have long since been inducted). Each player got less than 40% of the vote in 2013 (Barry Bonds, 2018; Roger Clemens, 2018). Both Bonds and Clemens then dropped in the voting the next year, before seeing their percentages rise about 2% in 2015 (Barry Bonds, 2018; Roger Clemens, 2018). This trend did not seem to signify even the slightest possibility of eventual election.

In 2016, however, something changed. Both player’s voting totals jumped up about 8%, and have continued to rise since that time, with both getting over the 50% mark 2017 (Barry Bonds, 2018; Roger Clemens, 2018). While their voting increase from 2015 to 2016 was not as drastic as that of Raines, who jumped almost 15%, it is obvious that there was change – a shift in power. A large percentage of voters did not all of the sudden just stop caring about the alleged steroid use of these two players, just like a large percentage did not all of the sudden recognize the things Raines in baseball were valuable and therefore worth changing the definition of fame for. Instead, 109 voters (specifically, those who had been out of baseball at least 10 years and were therefore most likely older) were taken out of the voting pool, and suddenly a new, younger group, who may have already not cared about the steroid use in the Hall of Fame debate, had more of the power. The younger voters used that power, changing the definition of fame to recognize other abilities that were of value, and opening a new door to allow Raines into the hall.

Although a helpful example in demonstrating the power shift within the Hall of Fame electorate, the shift in voting for players who may have used drugs only goes so far. Of the 71 articles and one video compiled for this project, only two mentioned Raines' cocaine addiction in a way that attempted to sway thinking one way or another. Some others mentioned the drug use, but only in a biographical sense to tell his story. The arguments surrounding Raines, both for and against him, was almost entirely made up on the grounds of statistics and which ones should be included in the definition of fame. Therefore, in answer to research question three, the importance of non-statistical factors was not important in the change in definition that allowed Raines to reach the Hall of Fame. It is possible that the shift in power in the BBWAA voting body also made for less inclusion of non-statistical factors, but if so, it did not affect the Hall of Fame chances of Raines.

Definitional practice

The Hall of Fame debating surrounding Raines arose from a lack of intersubjective agreement and was an attempt to reach denotative conformity. Unlike other definitional ruptures, however, the definition of fame in baseball is decided by a majority preference, and eventually the definition used is the one that serves the interests of those who are in power. Those members have the power to entitle the word with whichever specific meaning they want. The Raines Hall of Fame definitional rupture re-defined fame with a new definition: advanced statistics were now to be considered in a player's Hall of Fame because they were able to help better understand values in baseball that had been added as important to the essence of the game. It was this re-entitlement of fame that allowed Raines, although nothing about his numbers had changed, into the Hall of Fame.

This vote did not necessarily end the discourse altogether or guarantee agreement on the definition from all baseball writers and analysts. In this area, the example of fame in baseball differs from the definitional rupture of death in the medical community studied by Schiappa (2003). Eventually, in that rupture, a law was made to define death that all doctors were required to use. There is still no specific rule or law governing who is worthy of fame in baseball, and it does not seem that there ever will be. The instructions given to voters by the BBWAA remains the same, stating “Voting shall be based upon the player’s record, playing ability, integrity, sportsmanship, character, and contributions to the team(s) on which the player played,” (Hall of Fame Election Requirements, 2018, Voting section).

The only attempt at using any strategies suggested by Schiappa when re-defining fame was to use exemplars. As stated earlier, 2007 Hall of Fame inductee Tony Gwynn was often cited in arguments for Raines, especially when comparing the number of times reached base, as Raines reached base more times than Gwynn in his career (Jaffe, 2012; Forman, 2010, De Luca, 2016). Another comparison often made for Raines was another Hall of Famer in outfielder Rickey Henderson. Henderson is the MLB all-time stolen base leader and played roughly the same time as Raines (Jaffe, 2017). He is mentioned in more than half of the articles compiled for this research project. Other comparisons are made between the career of Raines and that of Hall of Famers Lou Brock and Andre Dawson (Bostrom, 2007; Jaffe, 2010).

Comparing and sometimes contrasting Raines to these players already in the Hall of Fame is important for the future definition of fame. Schiappa (2003), referred to the categorizing of them together as “similarity-difference relationships” (SDRs). SDRs are most often the way a child learns the meanings of words, as they identify a set of qualities in

which items are the same to other items like it as well as different from items that are not like it (Schiappa, 2003). When implementing a new definition, Schiappa (2003) noted “[t]he more prototypical exemplars the better, because it is only through exposure to such exemplars that the newly relevant SDRs will be assimilate” (p. 179). Therefore, comparing Raines to pillars of the game of baseball like Gwynn or Henderson helps to solidify the idea that the new definition of fame is correct, even if it includes a player like Raines who did not meet the previous definition.

Still, the new definition and the SDRs used in it are not set in stone. Just five years before Raines’ election, a very similar definitional rupture had occurred in baseball in the Most Valuable Player (MVP) debate (Gregg, 2017). In this rupture, however, the lines were once again drawn based on statistical preferences, with younger, sabermetric writers advocating for Los Angeles Angels outfielder Mike Trout and older, traditional journalists stumping for Detroit Tigers infielder Miguel Cabrera. Trout had led the league in WAR, but Cabrera had a Triple Crown, leading the league batting average, home runs, and runs batted in (Gregg, 2017). The MVP is also decided by the BBWAA, meaning it was almost the exact same group of people encountered a definitional rupture five years later with Raines and fame.

In the 2012 rupture, the traditional journalists won out, and did so in dominant fashion, with Cabrera being named on 22 of 28 ballots (Gregg, 2017). Furthermore, Gregg (2016) found that every voter aged 51 and above voted for Cabrera. Two years later, however, Trout and Cabrera were again the two most popular candidates for the American League MVP award and Trout was victorious.

The battle for WAR and other statistics like it to be included in the mainstream baseball conversation has been waged for quite some time now and on several different definitional fronts, as younger analysts fight to recognized other values as important in the game. Some writers even wondered if the election of Raines could possibly be the end of the war for the sabermetric community, as Kilgore (2017) wrote “if on-base percentage, base-stealing efficiency and wins above replacement can get a deserving player into the Hall of Fame, what battles are left for the advanced-stats crowd to fight?” (p. 2).

The Oakland Athletics and the Boston Red Sox are no longer the only two baseball organizations using sabermetric principles to build their teams, as the ideas of James and others that have been around since the 1980s have infiltrated the front office of every single team (Kenny, 2016). Officials in baseball are now evaluating players with the modern tools, instead of with those traditionally used in baseball, meaning journalists who cling the old methods are ill prepared to evaluate those players they cover. Because there is no set definition, however, it is possible that the old definition may still have some life.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

When this project began, the goal was to examine the discourse surrounding Tim Raines during his 10 years on the Hall of Fame. Something changed in baseball during that decade-long wait to finally get him enshrined, and I wanted to try and figure out what it was. Chapter 1 of this paper introduce the basic premise of the project and explained why it was beneficial, not only to baseball enthusiasts, but in the field of communication. Chapter 2 provided a strong background for the baseball side of this paper, explaining the origins of the game and the importance of its Hall of Fame while also diving into the changing statistical landscape of the last 10-15 years. This chapter wrapped by giving a background of the man in question, Tim Raines.

Chapter 3 brought in the more technical side of this research project, including the methods for analysis and the artifacts that were used in the research. This paper was not attempting to determine what statistics or numbers were better, but simply evaluate the role those statistics played in the definitional rupture surrounding fame in baseball. An explanation of definitional ruptures was given in Chapter 3 before describing the units for analysis. Chapter 4 quickly moved into that analysis, uncovering the heart of the definitional dispute was more about what abilities were considered valuable in the sport than what statistics journalists were spouting off. Each Schiappa's (2003) three phases for examining definitional ruptures was used to prove the importance of this value-centered debate.

The debate about whether or not former MLB outfielder Tim Raines should be inducted into the Hall of Fame centers around the attempt to define fame and the implications that changing the definition has on the baseball community. The fight between the

traditional writers and the modern analysts of the game was often on paper about which statistics were important to look out when voting for the Hall of Fame, but really hinged on what qualities and abilities were to be valued in the game. Raines was helped by a re-definition that valued things he was good at like stealing bases efficiently and reaching base via walks and was therefore inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2017.

The older, traditional analysts focused on counting statistics like those that are found on the back of a baseball card. These more traditional measures include counting statistics like hits, home runs, and runs batted in as well as some other basic traditional statistics like batting average. These were seen as the most important statistical measures at one time in baseball, and the traditional writers continued to work under this notion. Furthermore, the traditional writers used specific benchmarks in those categories as making a player worthy of Hall of Fame induction. Modern writers chose to focus on new ideas about baseball, often referred to as sabermetrics and brought into the baseball limelight by the 2003 book *Moneyball*, when voting for the Hall of Fame. Lewis's book helped move the focus to different statistics, many that were new and much more complicated to calculate than total number of runs batted in or batting average.

RQ1 asked if the definitional rupture of the word fame created a new opening for Raines induction into the Hall of Fame. The answer is overwhelmingly yes. These new statistics were created in an attempt to evaluate all of the ways a player like Raines made an impact on the game, instead of just the impact he had in certain categories. Viewing the game through these statistics, baseball analysts began to realize the value in abilities that may not have seemed important beforehand. There was a definite change in statistical reporting

during Raines' time on the ballot which shifted the focus of what was essential and valuable in the sport, eventually helping the former outfielder into the Hall of Fame.

The second proposed research question focused on one specific part of Schiappa's (2003) definitional ruptures – the power element. The answer to this question was also, yes. As more and more younger writers were allowed to vote in the Hall of Fame election, the discourse relied more heavily on modern statistics as opposed to traditional ones. Articles citing WAR and on-base percentage were far more common with Raines in his final years on the ballot than they were in his early years.

Schiappa (2003) points out that in any context where technological advancement occurs, there is a possibility of definitional rupture. The rupture occurs when one side begins to argue that their new method for defining is better than the old definition used, and is often met with backlash because the old way has already been accepted (Schiappa, 2003). This same backlash can be found in the definitional rupture of fame in baseball. It seems almost silly to be discussing this rupture as it happened through the early 2000s when these ideas were introduced nearly 20 years earlier. But the writers in baseball opted to stick to their old definition and to the values they had always known. When the teams took hold of these ideas, the writers were no longer able to just ignore them, and a rift occurred.

It was, however, solely a definition involving statistics representing on-field values, at least in the case for Raines, answering RQ3 with a no. Although outside factors like steroid use and general character have been mentioned in other recent Hall of Fame debates (Jaffe, 2017), this was not the case for Raines. Discourse swirling around Raines was focused only on the statistics that either highlighted new values and argued he should be in or examined old values and concluded that he should not be given baseball's highest honor.

Conclusions and recommendations

Based on the results of this analysis, the first conclusion that can be made is one stated often by Schiappa (2003) throughout his book on definitional ruptures. Definitions matter. In the case specifically of Tim Raines, the definition of fame mattered because whether or not it changed decided whether or not he would earn the ultimate honor from the game he loved and devoted his life to. From now on, whenever he is introduced at functions, it will be as Hall of Famer Tim Raines, and that is meaningful.

The main reason definitions matter, however, is because they show us what is important or what is of value in any given context. The definition for fame in baseball for the longest time showed the world basically the only thing that was important in the sport was hitting. The statistics used to define fame were almost entirely hitting statistics, with little attention paid to the other impactful things a baseball player can do that were actually essential in the game, whether writers realized it or not. The addition of new statistics to the definitional discourse of fame adds those other values as important to baseball and therefore includes them when deciding which players are worthy of honoring in the sport's Hall of Fame.

The conversation is not ultimately about Tim Raines and whether or not he belongs in the baseball Hall of Fame, but instead is a debate about justice. Just as Michael Sandel discussed in his 2010 TED Talk, most debates come down to justice. In the context of baseball and its Hall of Fame, justice means honoring those players who were the greatest at playing the game. By examining the Tim Raines debate through Schiappa's definitional rupture lens, this project was able to identify which abilities were valued before the definitional

rupture occurred as well as those that were added as worthy of recognition when new denotative conformity was reached.

This same process could be applied to many debates in the political and social realms today. For example, when discussing immigration into the United States, many on the left use the term “undocumented immigrant,” while those on the right use the phrase “illegal immigrant” to describe the same group of people that are entering the country. Using Schiappa’s definitional rupture framework to study this debate would help quickly reveal what each side is trying to accomplish through the renaming of this particular group.

This case also confirms Schiappa’s (2003) statement that the advancement of ideas and technology can often be a source of definitional rupture. The definitional rupture researched in this paper is not like the example of the word “sick” discussed in chapter two of this paper. In that example, people began using a word to mean something different than before without any particular reason. In the instance of fame, new ideas and research led to the change in definition. Without the fresh research and quantitative measures from sabermetric pioneers, the definition of fame in the context of baseball may have stayed the same forever and Raines likely never would have been inducted. Because of new statistics and fresh ideas, however, new values were seen as essential in baseball, the definition was changed, and he was allowed in.

It is possible and even likely this would occur in many other contexts, especially with technology advancing as rapidly as it has in the 21st century. The research in this paper shows that people in many contexts (even baseball) should be ready to re-define as technology and ideas evolve. The best example Schiappa (2003) gives of this is in the

definitional rupture for the word death, but advancement of ideas happens in many areas of life and can lead to a definitional rupture.

Finally, this research shows the overall flexibility of Schiappa's (2003) methods for exploring definitional discourse. In his own book, Schiappa uses a number of case studies, but most are in the field of law, and therefore at least have some kind of written definition where the conversation begins or ends. Other researchers who have examined definitional ruptures have also mostly remained in the area of governmental definition instead of branching out to definitions like the one examined in this paper (Carmack, 2014; Vicaro 2011; Walton, 2008).

The biggest jump in this paper from previous studies to this research was the lack of any set definition throughout the entire definitional rupture. There has never been a rule for determining which baseball players belonged in the Hall of Fame and which ones did not. James (1996) and Jaffe (2017) both have written books on the hall and each have made note of players who could or even should be inducted but have been left out as well as some players whose careers do not seem to be on par with the standard Hall of Famer. The definition has never been set. In one way, this was good for Raines because it meant the baseball writers could adjust the definition to include the things he did well informally, without a dramatic change to some Hall of Fame rule or law. On the other side, however, it hurt him because the analysts did not and still do not have to adhere to any specific definition of fame. Even when he was voted in, 14% of the voting body did not think Raines met the definition of fame. In fact, every single one of the voting writers could be working from a slightly different definition, making this case study unique compare to others that have been researched in the field of rhetoric.

The lack of a set definition of fame is also one of the limitations of this research. Although the eventual election of Raines after starting so slowly on the ballot does signify that the definition of fame did change, it is unlikely that every BBWAA voter is working under the same definition now. In Schiappa's (2003) law case studies, the ending usually results in either a new law with a new definition for words like person or obscenity or a decision stating that the old law with the old definition is correct. There is no set law defining fame in baseball. There may be a new definition that recognizes the importance of on-base percentage and other on-field contributions, but it is in no way exact.

Other limitations include the variance of the articles pulled for research as well as the scope of the project. In order to pull the articles, a large number of databases were culled, but it is probable that at least twice as many pieces were written on Raines and his Hall of Fame candidacy. The sheer number of newspapers in the United States made it impossible to find every article related to Raines in the amount of time allotted for this project. Furthermore, the databases of many media agencies have not been updated to include the most recent years, leaving out articles related to Raines and the Hall of Fame.

Focusing only on the case of Raines was necessary for a paper of this length, but also limited the scope of the definitional debate surrounding fame. A larger project could include the candidacies of other hotly debated candidates from recent years like Bert Blyleven, who was mentioned briefly in this project, or Jack Morris or Alan Trammell. All three of these mentioned, as well as others, had Hall of Fame candidacies debated in brand new ways thanks to the introduction of sabermetrics to the conversation.

This project does not claim to be the final word on the definitional rupture of fame in baseball. It is not only possible for some characteristics of the old definition to creep back up

but also possible that the definition need be changed again. Baseball statistics have changed drastically over the last 30 years and have therefore shifted the focus on what abilities are important. It is possible that they change again 30 years from now. In the case of Tim Lincecum though, there was a definitional rupture surrounding the word fame, and the changing of that definition helped him attain baseball's highest honor. There is no proof the importance of non-statistical factors changed while he was on the ballot, but the statistics used to argue for him definitely changed, highlighting and valuing more abilities than just hitting and pushing Lincecum into the Hall of Fame. For that, I'm sure he is thankful.

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