

**Book Review: Lisa Doris Alexander, *When Baseball Isn't White, Straight and Male: The Media and Difference in the National Pastime*. McFarland & Company, Inc., 2012. ISBN: 978-0786471133 (Paperback). 200 Pages. \$39.95**

**Reviewed by David C. Ogden<sup>1</sup>**

[Article copies available for a fee from The Transformative Studies Institute. E-mail address: [journal@transformativestudies.org](mailto:journal@transformativestudies.org) Website: <http://www.transformativestudies.org> ©2013 by The Transformative Studies Institute. All rights reserved.]

Lisa Doris Alexander's *When Baseball Isn't White, Straight and Male: The Media and Difference in the National Pastime* becomes even more poignant now that the Baseball Writers Association of America failed to elect Barry Bonds to the Hall of Fame in his first year of eligibility. If one follows Alexander's arguments regarding sports journalists' attitude toward Bonds, the results of the 2013 balloting by the BBWAA are no surprise.

In her collection of essays, Alexander takes aim at the news media and the hierarchy of Major League Baseball. One of her prominent themes is that what is now more commonly referred to as *white privilege* still exists, and that racism, though vanquished from the surface of society, flows like an undercurrent through the coverage of athletes and their connections to various issues, in this case, use of performance enhancing drugs, personality portrayals, and respect for the game and fellow players. Alexander uses players, historical baseball figures and the MLB itself as vehicles to explore these issues. Citing black feminist scholar Patricia Collins, Alexander describes white privilege as the advantages whites have over blacks and others of color, although whites attribute those advantages to their "ability, talent, motivation, self-discipline and hard work." (p. 8) As she further contends, seldom do whites or press or the media writ large acknowledge what she identifies as the "unfair advantage emanating from their group classification as whites in a racial formation that privileges whites..." (p. 8)

Alexander argues that white privilege permeates the work of journalists who cover baseball. For one thing, most of those journalists

---

<sup>1</sup> **David C. Ogden** is Professor of Journalism at the University of Nebraska—Omaha.