

**Title:** Field of Dreams: A Functionalist Story

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This presentation employs a functionalist approach and attempts to expand upon the fieldwork of George Gmelch in illuminating the evolution and function of baseball. Locating its evolutionary origins in projectile launching abilities of our hominin ancestors (Neil Roach), baseball players may represent the latest evolution of human projectile launching ability. The unique rituals of “baseball magic” (George Gmelch) function to aid the evolution of the game in dynamic cultural contexts. This presentation focuses briefly on the contexts of Japan, Trobriand Islanders, and the US to see how baseball, or sports more generally, evolves in different environments. Baseball is taken to be a living organism whose elements allow it to function meaningfully for players and the broader cultural audience, some in common and some particular.

#### References

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- Whiting, Robert. (1977). *The chrysanthemum and the bat : baseball samurai style*. New York: Dodd, Mead.