

Rodríguez's work documents how managerialist solutions are applied by those in charge of sport in the city to improve the accountability and control of the sport area of the town council. These practitioners of managerialism run the sport area of a town council as an advertising agency or an oil rig, and obviously, as the reader knows perfectly, as a person who practises sport in the city, that's not always the best model, at least in Spain. There is, however, little questioning of this model by the author. While more appropriately addressed in another volume, some reference to these issues could have given the book a more substantive conclusion.

This is an up-to-date account, a thorough study that through analysing Seville, a city analogous to many others of today's Spain, explains to us many of the questions related to sport that we can see daily in our cities, and that, thanks to Rodríguez, we now have the chance to understand better.

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Psychology Gets in the Game: Sport, Mind and Behaviour, 1880–1960, edited by Christopher D. Green and Ludy T. Benjamin Jr., Lincoln, NE, and London, University of Nebraska Press, 2009, 313 pp., contributors list, index, \$30, ISBN 978-0-8032-2226-7

One of the core difficulties with successfully executing any discipline-bound history of ideas relates to the building of a narrative or – as is the case with *Psychology Gets in the Game* – collection of narratives that can be digested with roughly equal satisfaction by both historian of sport and disciplinary specialist. The nine main essays assembled in this volume, exploring a range of themes and events covering the rather erratic early history of sport psychology are charged with providing exactly such narratives and, substantively, do a rather splendid job. The big names and the big events taken to be important in the development of (particularly North American) sport psychology are all here, and are described with verve. There are, however, a few rather particular problems with the construction of histories of *psychology* that may make the reading of the book a little troublesome for some. Psychology as a whole is, and has always been, a peculiar discipline, more concerned with delineating and protecting its own disciplinary borders, and stringently limiting its professional membership, than its social scientific counterparts.¹ Exclusivity of this order is often the marker of a community perceiving itself as in some way 'under threat', and in the case of psychology this is at least in part due to the ancestral concern held by many psychologists that they may not be seen as 'real' scientists.² It is unsurprising, therefore, that narratives on psychology-in-general, and historical narratives in particular, tend to be coloured by this intellectual anxiety. The first (and more common) manner in which this manifests, and the one by which the essays in *Psychology Gets in the Game* are a little too often informed, is through an evident *mission* to defend the psychological project itself. Texts of this order are prone to offset descriptive detail with persistent rationalisation of the position, value and

scientific purity of the discipline – sometimes, indeed, at the expense of producing a balanced narrative on what actually happened. The second type of text, meanwhile, as typified by Kurt Danziger's remarkable *Constructing the Subject*,³ takes psychology's disciplinary insecurities and internal contradictions as *topic*; Danziger himself, for example, works to critically illuminate the complex, historically-situated relationships between the self-image of psychologists, the materials they study and the theories they produce. Although, in the volume at hand, there are indeed some moments in which this more critical, intellectually self-aware, model of historical interrogation comes to the fore, the subject material would certainly have benefited from more of it. Sport psychology is an insecure sub-discipline within an insecure discipline, and a genuinely critical exploration of this matter is long overdue. A concern with the academic legitimisation of both sport *psychology* and *sport* psychology, however, can and – in the case of *Psychology Gets in the Game* – does result in a tone that sometimes appears more bent on 'selling' the value of psychology to sport, and of sport to psychology, than on the clear provision of historical information. Nowhere is this more evident than in the introductory chapter, written by editors Benjamin and Green, which is littered with arguments (some sounding just a little unconvincing) regarding just how important sport is/was to famous psychologist X, even though they may have conducted a single study in the field and then moved on to other issues.

This form of tenuous incorporative territorialism echoes the manner in which the great (and self-avowed) sociologist Erving Goffman is now being 'assimilated' into the sports psychological enterprise. Seventy-third president of the American Sociological Association, and vilified during his life by the psychological establishment for his unscientific and 'slapdash' sociological methods, Goffman had ideas that are today finding favour in psychology departments around the world. Rather than admit to undergraduates that their discipline is being 'polluted' by the work of a woolly sociologist, however, the broad teaching strategy appears to be one of disingenuously claiming that Goffman had been a psychologist all along. It is one thing to employ an authoritative and opinionated narrative voice; few historians or sociologists would have a problem with this, though (by way of an important footnote) it is not a favoured tool in psychology itself, where use of the neutral, passive tones endemic to the natural sciences – what Gilbert and Mulkey⁴ term the 'empiricist repertoire' – is the *modus operandi* in 'truth production'. It is another thing entirely to openly push a readership towards particular modes of interpretation, especially where the evidence for that interpretation does not always stack up. This kind of 'spinning' is, admittedly, characteristic of introductory chapters to such collections, charged as they are with the thorny task of finding an interesting and coherent story among the disjunctive events and ideas documented thereafter. To make this attempt while simultaneously endeavouring to 'bang the drum' for the very right of the discipline to exist, however, is no easy task and lends itself to the kind of overstretch evident herein.

All this said, and in something of a volte-face in critical tone, it would be churlish to condemn this collection for utilising of a mode of writing common throughout an entire discipline, and *Psychology Gets in the Game* has, in fact, been an excellent companion on train journeys for some weeks. Just so long as one can put aside any distaste for the leitmotif (though not ubiquitous) tendency towards anxiously self-justificatory discourse, the topic-specific chapters in this collection are, more often than not, a joy to read. Most of them, happily, make no serious attempt to produce

the kind of historical meta-narrative that Jean-François Lyotard⁵ maintains we are all so incredulous towards these days; in this way they sidestep the trap of trying to tenuously, or over-zealously, situate themselves within a long-wave intellectual frame at the expense of telling a good story. The notable exception to this is Günther Baümler's account of the dawn of sport psychology in Europe, which does endeavour to coherently narrate 50 years of academic achievement, but does so elegantly and sometimes critically, laying an excellent foundation for the chapters to come (though, I would propose, to only dedicate one of the 28 pages to *social* psychology does not really do justice to that sub-discipline's contribution). Moreover, Baümler's writing often displays an energy and enthusiasm that is invigorating, and characteristic of the book as a whole. Much credit is due to the editors for both the selection of materials, and a manner of organisation that facilitates a fun, flowing and uncomplicated (though by no means unchallenging) read.

Of the remaining chapters, I was particularly drawn to Alfred H. Fuchs's marvellous account of 'The Testing of Babe Ruth'. Historically informative and psychologically insightful, it is precisely the kind of writing that can stimulate the historian's interest not only in sport psychology, but in its wider parent discipline, and I would recommend this, and indeed the book as a whole, as fun and scholarly reading for undergraduate students in both. Equally, budding historians of ideas, interested in the evolution of academic disciplines, may find this very useful material. For the more seasoned academic in sport history, sociology or cultural studies, and as I have raised, the tone of some of the essays here may occasionally grate, but this only partially detracts from the overall endeavour. As a volume designed to be both historically and psychologically informative, *Psychology Gets in the Game* hits far more often than it misses.

Notes

1. Danziger, *Constructing The Subject*; Harré and Gillett, *The Discursive Mind*.
2. Billig, *Arguing and Thinking*.
3. Danziger, *Constructing The Subject*.
4. Gilbert and Mulkay, *Opening Pandora's Box*.
5. Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*.

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