

The Universal Singular: Contextualizing the “Other” in Sport Historiography

Vicky Paraschak
University of Windsor

Robert Rinehart
Idaho State University

This paper offers a commentary from the point of view of the so-called “social activist” approach to sport historiography, and employs the concept of the “universal singular” as a means of contextualizing the “other” in sport history. We thus privilege the individual’s account of his/her own identity and actions, rather than start from assumptions of the researcher’s choosing. In this way, historians can try to avoid projecting frameworks for analysis on the past which privilege dominant theoretical categories or existing accounts of human behavior. In order for this approach to work, we thus must understand the “naturalized” ways of viewing the world are thoroughly embedded in both historical methods and historical accounts. This paper argues for specific methodology, and attempts to [re]engage other sport historians in a discussion of methodological practices current in the late twentieth century.