

# Paradigm Dramas and the Need for Theoretically-Informed Popular History

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Academic legitimacy for sports scholarship has come at a high price. In their rush to embrace the class/gender/race mantra, as well as the "promises" of postmodernism, many sport historians have, effectively, lost their ability to communicate with a broader, public audience. Postmodernists, in particular, defend their incomprehensible jargon as the language of "subversion" and dismiss "plain speech" as "an instrument of oppression." Although sport historians have introduced new voices and points of view into a system too long dominated by white males in the cause of cultural pluralism, they have lost the battle with critics who blast such efforts as signs of academic elitism and intellectual smoke-and-mirrors. Sport historians must create a paradigm that is sensitive to both scholarly debates, but also to the aptitude of the educated, non-specialist reading public.