
We conceived this collection of essays as an opportunity to explore various moments in the history of the Olympic Games and through these moments to ponder the larger and profoundly complex struggles over the shifting meanings of masculinity, femininity, ethnicity, race, and the embodiedness associated with the spectacle of athletic nationalism and the everyday life of the Olympics (Schaffer and Smith 15).

*The Olympics at the Millennium: Power Politics and the Games* is a timely intervention into (Sydney) Olympics discourse. Schaffer’s and Smith’s edited collection examines the meeting of two powerful ideological currencies: the millennium and the Olympics*. The weight of interest in the Olympics largely depends upon popular optimism for the future: equality and intercultural harmony conjured by images of fair play and gracious winners and losers. A number of the articles in this collection are concerned with demystifying these particular notions as well as critiquing a number of contemporary sports-related concerns. Perhaps the most obvious criticism that could be made of an anthology of this type is that it is too ambitious a project to fulfill its own vast potential. For each chapter I read, I felt as though an entire book could be devoted to the same issue (a point that the editors raise in their introduction). This text, then, works as an introduction to diverse socio-cultural concerns played out in the sporting arena. Methodologically, the central issues of *The Olympics at the Millennium* are explored through a number of different theoretical bases and narrative styles: autobiographical criticism, journalism, historical analysis, social and scientific research. One very positive effect of this is that the anthology draws on wide, interdisciplinary knowledge and research practice bases. The volume is also quite diverse thematically; the articles are drawn together in four parts: (‘Cultural Difference and Elite’ Sports’, ‘Maculinities/Femininities/Sexualities’, ‘The Olympics: Drama, Spectacle, Media’, ‘Politics at the Games’). However many of the articles could have been located in other sections and still seem appropriately categorised. Despite the specific focus of each chapter, Olympic mythology and its cultural resonance permeates each piece of writing, again asserting the value and currency of the Olympics as a topic of scholarly investigation.

Some of the primary concerns of *The Olympics at the Millennium* are the cultural/ceremonial aspects, terrorism and violence, and the politics of funding (see in particular the chapters of Cynthia Nadalin and Lynn Embrey). Cynthia Nadalin’s auto-critical piece ‘The Olympics in Retrospect: Winners, Losers, Racism and the Olympic Ideal’ and its exploration of the marginality of certain sports, especially experienced by women, provides a fascinating point of comparison to the contemporary commodification of sports and sportspersons. Notions of ‘fair play’, nationalism, nationalistic idealism and racism dominate the book (consider Trace A DeMeyer’s exploration of the experiences of Native American athlete Jim Thorpe; Allen Guttmann, Heather Kestner and George Eisen’s chapter, ‘Jewish Athletes and the Nazi Olympics’; C Keith Harrison’s discussion of the changing representations of African American Athletics; and Darren J Godwell’s work on the relationship of Indigenous Australians to the Sydney 2000 Olympics). Another strength of this anthology is the emphasis on gender and gender discrimination (Donna A Lopiano’s article on the coming of age of women’s sports in particular, but also Toby Miller’s work on masculinity and Australian swimming, Leslie Haywood’s chapter on the commodification of American women athletes at the Atlanta Games and Cheryl Cole’s ‘One Chromosome Too Many?’).
‘The Gay Games’ by Vicki Krane and Jennifer Waldon, one of the most enlightening chapters, explores the ways in which these games better achieve what is (claimed to be) the true spirit of the Olympics: equality, inclusion and participation. This chapter links well with others that unveil the Olympics as sexist, homophobic, racist, nationalist and exclusive. At the centre of many of these discussions is the role of the media in facilitating and perpetuating the ideologies that pervade the modern Olympics. This is the primary concern of Andrea Mitchell’s and Helen Yeates’ chapter ‘Who’s Sorry Now? Drugs, Sports and the Media toward 2000’, which explores the notion of ‘trial by media’ in relation to so-called ‘drug cheats’.

Kay Schaffer is best known for her work in the areas of cultural studies, gender studies and postcoloniality. Sidonie Smith’s main research interests include autobiography, women’s studies, and postcolonial studies. Having read most of Smith’s prior (and consistently groundbreaking) work on autobiography, I approached this edited collection with much enthusiasm. This book provides another encouraging example of the importance of interdisciplinarity, as it reflects a diversity of scholars merging theoretical areas together in one successful text. I am enthusiastic about the possibilities for study that these fields of inquiry promote: sociology of sport, media studies, cultural studies, women’s studies, history, politics and studies in postcoloniality. Though this book will prove valuable for readers interested in these scholarly disciplines, most of the chapters are accessible to a non-academic audience.

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All copyrighters should be schooled in the avoidance of generic labels such as ‘romantic comedy’. It’s enough to ruin an otherwise enjoyable weave through the myriad identities of contemporary New York and Australia in Lee Tulloch’s third novel. Set in the bustling metropolis more known for its ostentatious wealth than its waves, surfer Shane Dekker finds himself drifting through NYC’s subway, rather than riding the ocean he loves. Along comes Finley Rule, dividing her work time between a hipper-than-thou record store, and one of New York’s only surf shops. A relationship buds, an ex is involved and if that were all there was to this novel then I’d rather drink Meg Ryan’s blood than continue reading. Thankfully it’s not.

In a plot that twists and turns a number of times, another Australian, an actor whose name is written as Cheyne, but pronounced the same way, enters the urbane scene and, via a series of misunderstandings, the two are regularly confused, leading to a multiplicity of confrontations that drive the novel to its unexpected climax. Tulloch has cleverly woven into the novel a twenty-first century update of Wilde’s classic The Importance of Being Earnest, and it’s a measure of her skill that this reworking only becomes apparent much later in the text, though hints are dropped throughout.

As a fictional account of the complexities of identity and a subtle critique of the way Australia is sold to the world, Two Shanes makes its points well, without being overwhelmingly obvious. Tulloch’s narrative style is quick and often colloquial, a tool that can mask the depth of questioning inherent to the tale but one that doesn’t distract from the thrust of the plot’s delivery. The novel functions well as both a relaxing and humorous tale of confusion, and something that leaves the door open to further analysis and discussion, something rare and welcome in the cut and thrust world of commercial publishing.

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