

Animated by Uncertainty

Rugby and the Performance of History in South Africa

A volume in the African Perspectives series

In *Animated by Uncertainty*, Joshua D. Rubin analyzes South African rugby through the lens of aesthetic politics. Building on 18 months of ethnographic research with rugby coaches, players, and administrators, the author argues that rugby is a form of performance and further that the qualities that define rugby shape the political ends to which the sport can be put. In this respect, *Animated by Uncertainty* demonstrates that theories of sporting politics cannot afford to overlook the qualities of the sports themselves, and it provides a theoretical approach to illustrate how these qualities can be studied. The book also analyzes the ways that apartheid and colonialism inhere in South African institutions and practices. Drawing inspiration from the observation that South Africans could always abandon rugby if they chose to do so, Rubin highlights how the continuing significance of rugby as a form of performance brings traces of South Africa's apartheid and colonial past into the country's contemporary political moment.

Joshua D. Rubin is Lecturer in Anthropology at Bates College.

“Animated by Uncertainty is insightful, thought-provoking and beautifully written. It offers a bold, new perspective that is at once engaging and provocative: far more than a history of sport, it offers deep insights into the embodied practices and legacies of Apartheid in white and ‘coloured’ men and communities, as well as diverse fantasies of integration and failures to materialize them.”

– Laura Fair, Michigan State University

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