Students interested in play and games across the Latin American realm prior to the appearance of so-called modern sports—those diffused from Europe and North America after about 1830—have tended to focus on several interrelated questions: What types of games were played among pre-Columbian peoples and in what contexts? To what extent did the European conquest destroy the physical culture of indigenous communities? What new forms of play, games, and recreation were implanted in the Americas by Europeans and Africans and to what degree did the cultures of the various groups interact to produce a new "traditional" games culture? What was the nature of those traditional play and games that were visible down to the early nineteenth century and did any of them resemble modern sports? How much of that pre-modern play-game-sport complex survived beyond the introduction of North Atlantic sports, where, and with what modifications? And, what sources are available for pursuing answers to these questions?

Looking exclusively at continental South America, thereby avoiding consideration of the complications surrounding the ubiquitous Mesoamerican ball games, this short essay represents an important, though uneven, contribution to that pursuit. Its focus is clearly on games and, drawing on Luschen, Guttmann, and others, tends to place them toward the play as opposed to the sport end of the continuum. Thus, it also "includes activities not involving movement. Consequently the numerous dice and board games are taken into account together with games whereby not human beings but animals (bulls, horses) play the major role" (p. 16), though it hardly touches on the latter.

This work's contributions are numerous. Readers not familiar with the field will surely be impressed by the sheer number of Indian groups catalogued and by the vast variety of games they are known to have played; and, from other sources, it is clear that there are many more of both than
cited here, supporting the authors' valid contention that the indigenous and traditional South American play culture is complex and demanding of further research. To bring some order to their data the authors apply a combination of the Roberts-Arth-Bush game typology based on classifications of play patterns of physical strength, strategy, or chance, with that of Renson and Smulders which is based on structural characteristics.

Useful also are hints of the multiple contexts in which traditional games were played: sacred, secular, political, social, intra- or intercommunity-reinforcing the idea that "games," however similar in form, can mean different things to different people. Related is the impression, confirmed elsewhere, that gambling, with or without games of chance, was long a widespread practice among Amerindian peoples.

Last and perhaps most impressive is the richness of the sources, especially ethnographic and travel accounts, the authors cite and mine for their essay. Certainly many such sources remain to be exploited for the study of traditional games, but my own research leads me to conclude that similar materials also exist for the description and analysis of commercial and popular games and sports which have evolved principally in Latin American cities over the last 150-200 years.

At the same time, the book has at least four serious limitations: one definitional, one structural, one analytical, and one philosophical. The first of these is the almost exclusive attention to "Indian groups," a term itself never precisely defined. In addition, although the authors admit that it is virtually impossible "to completely eliminate or neglect the influences that originated outside South America" (p. 14), to label as "traditional" by (let's say) 1810 only those games played in Indian or mostly Indian communities is to deny the importance of recreational forms among mixed-bloods and some whites who often lived in towns and cities and whose character was also different from "the internationally accepted and standardized modern sports" (p. 15) later introduced from outside the continent, recreational forms whose existence would also be challenged by those imports. In short, the Indians were not the only South Americans whose "traditional" culture was ultimately threatened by modernization.

The second problem derives from the authors' stated decision to describe all situations in the past tense, often with no timeframe, whether contemporary or already extinct, except in the section on typologies where they shift to the present tense. Thus, without consulting the content of the cited sources, the reader cannot determine if specific activities were practiced before the conquest, during the colonial period, after independence, perhaps into the present century, or more than one. It is also impossible therefore to