

Book Reviews

*Authors like coins, grow dear as they grow old.
It is the rust we value, not the gold.
Alexander Pope*

Higgs, Robert J. and Isaacs, Neil D. (eds.) *The Sporting Spirit: Athletes in Literature and Life*. New York, N.Y.: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1977. Pp. 304. Index. \$5.95.

Robert Higgs and Neil Isaacs have compiled a brief and useful volume for anyone seeking a good introduction to the relationship between sport and culture or an introduction to the rich field of sport and literature. Growing out of their experience teaching "Sports Culture, U.S.A." at the University of Maryland, this volume is ideally suited for classroom use. As in any anthology someone's personal favorite will be missing, but as in all good anthologies what is included more than compensates.

The collection is divided into four parts. Part One presents the athlete in literature; Part Two contains selections written by athletes; Part Three offers social and cultural criticism, both positive and negative; while Part Four is philosophical and historical in approach. Not only is this pattern of organization conducive to a focus on contrasting angles of vision, but the range of materials provides multiple reverberations. There is a wide range of sports represented, a good mix of prose and poetry, and an exploration of the major issues. There are the obligatory—Hemingway, Lardner, Veblen, McLuhan and Huizinga—and there are the less predictable—Randall Jarrell, Robert Frost, Henry Adams and Yukio Mishima (on Samurai). A final section offers "Suggestions for Discussion and Writing" and unlike most, this one provides suggestions which actually could be used in a classroom of semi-literate undergraduates.

The one weakness of the Higgs and Isaacs collection is the absence of extensive editorial comment. The too brief comments in the text are useful in providing the point of focus for each section, but the addition of such comments for each piece and a note on the authors would strengthen this volume as a classroom text. Those using this collection might also consult Wiley Umphlett's *The Sporting Myth and the Ameri-*

can Experience (1975) for more in-depth commentary on sport and literature.

As for personal favorites missing, certainly the absence of Max Apple from the literature section is understandable, but Robert Coover!?

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