

## Book Reviews

Hargreaves, Jennifer (editor), *Sport, Culture and Ideology*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982, 254 pp., index.

E.H. Carr once argued that the more historical sociology became and the more sociological history became, the better both would serve us to understand humankind. (*What is History?* Penguin Books: Harmondsworth, 1964, p. 66) I am afraid, however, that sport historians who read *Sport, Culture and Ideology* may question Carr's wisdom. I do not mean that this collection of papers from a 1980 conference co-sponsored by the Roehampton Institute of Higher Education and the London and South East Region Sports Council has nothing to offer the historian, but there is a good deal s/he will find frustrating in it.

Jennifer Hargreaves' "Theorizing Sport: An Introduction" adds little to our knowledge of sport except for the fact that the conference organizers used an extremely catholic (and questionable) definition of the term sport. "For convenience" she notes, "it [sport] is used to include older terminologies such as physical training, physical education and movement, as well as those in contemporary use such as physical recreation and outdoor pursuits." (p. 23, n. 1)

John Hargreaves' "Sport, Culture and Ideology," which "provided the theoretical underpinning and starting point for the conference" (p. 18) is even more disappointing. Hargreaves runs through the hackneyed criticisms concerning academic neglect of sport study, the functionalist bias of much research, and an unpersuasive critique of interactionist approaches to sport. (pp. 30-41) All of this is written in apparent ignorance of far superior treatments of these same themes by North American sport analysts well before 1980. Hargreaves does concede gratuitously, in a footnote, that in Canada, "an interesting, if inconclusive [?] attempt at a critical distancing from the predominant paradigm is developing." (p. 59, n. 36) His single reference to *Canadian Sport: Sociological Perspectives* (London: Addison-Wesley, 1976) shows how little Hargreaves knows of critical sport scholarship by historians and sociologists in Canada, the United States and Quebec.

The essence of Hargreaves' paper is supposed to centre on the concepts of culture and ideology but the reader is far better off examining the contributions by Paul Willis—"Women in Sport in Ideology"—and Alan Clarke and John Clarke—"Highlights and Action Replays—Ideology, Sport and the Media"—to see how useful those concepts are for sport study. Both papers demonstrate how a socially constructed and mediated phenomenon—sport—is presented as a natural one. The meanings that have been attached to this mediated construct are then accepted as natural, inevitable ones. Willis, in particular, shows how even though "there are competing forces of definition in all the sub-regions that

make up society, and the individuals and groups inhabiting every area of the culture have their own at least partially independent forms of understanding" (p. 125) the mechanisms of incorporation into the dominant ideology are extremely powerful. Ideology may only be contested if a portion of one's lived experience has not already been incorporated by the dominant belief system; if the discrepancies between ideology and experience are large enough to raise serious questions in the mind of the actor; or if the critique refuses to "take up the issue in the terms within which it is offered." Otherwise, the critique, though hostile on the surface, gives "new life to the underlying definitional power of the ideology" (p. 128, see pp. 124-9) All of these points are well explained with clear, concise examples.

Willis's main focus is on the relationship between women's participation in sport and the ideology of patriarchal society and results in a sophisticated, compelling argument. Clarke and Clarke document how sport is constructed by television and thereby reinforces a number of dominant ideological beliefs about men, sport and society.

Women are also examined by Christine Griffen *et al.* in "Women and Leisure." Here, however, despite the presentation of some interesting data, there are a number of problems with their argument. Their critique of conventional approaches to leisure is centred on a single work and really criticizes Stanley Parker for not thinking about gender issues in the late 1960s as we do now in the 1980s. E.P Thompson is also faulted for not including in his 1967 essay "Time and Industrial Work Discipline" "evidence on the history of women's lives [because] it has been [collected]." (p. 99) The problem is that Griffen *et al.* reference three works written after 1972 and only one from 1966. (p. 115, n. 12) Finally, despite presenting data only on working class girls and women, the authors claim to conclude that "Because leisure for women and men is constructed in different ways through femininity and masculinity, their leisure is experienced through a power relation.

Men's leisure in relation to their work depends on women's position in the family and employment. The family is relaxation for men, but only because of the work women do to create that area of relaxation," (pp. 113-14) Without data on men's leisure, however, there is nothing to substantiate this claim. Errors of conceptualization such as the above detract from an otherwise interesting piece.

The remaining contributions are rather uneven and do not address the book's major contribution—that is, the use of cultural study and ideology to understand sport. David Robins' "Sport and Youth Culture" is purely descriptive; Ian Taylor's "On the Sports Violence Question: Soccer Hooliganism Revisited" is the same as his paper published in *Sport, Culture and the Modern State* (Toronto: U. of T. Press, 1982) and is presumably only included by the editor to reach the British audience; Martyn Lucking's "Sport and Drugs" represents little socio-cultural analysis. Works by Jim Riordan and Peter Hain discuss sports

and politics but not within the cultural study/ideology framework, so despite their useful insights, their contribution is more factual than theoretical.

Queen's University,  
Kingston, Ontario, Canada

Rob Beamish