

Lucas, John A. *Future of the Olympic Games*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics Books, 1992, Pp. iii. 217. Notes. photographs. index. \$40.00.

There are many ways of expressing and supporting the modern Olympic movement and its Games. On one end of the continuum are those who are ideologically blinded and bound; on the other, those who are critical beyond any semblance of analytical critique. Lucas and this latest offering tend toward the former. He is undoubtedly a champion of the movement and athleticism, for the same reasons that most of us who study physical culture are. However, Lucas tends to be blinded to the harsher realities of what the modern movement is and what its future might be. This book is another well researched and well documented piece of historiography. yet if one is looking for an analysis which seeks to discover and critique from the essential relations of this transnational corporate movement, it is not to be found here. Regardless, this does not detract from the value of the book.

Lucas has a privileged position of having connections within the movement and having attended most (if not all) of the Games since his Olympian days in the 1952 Games, many Olympic congresses, scientific meetings, International and other Olympic Academies, and having conducted insider research in the administrative complex in Lausanne. He fulfills MacAloon's ethnographic imperative in terms of research into the movement. Therefore, he is well positioned and informed as to the movement and its future. Likewise, Lucas's previously published papers and books add to his credentials.

So far, this smacks of ambivalence. As a junior member of the academy, I am awed by the quantity and sympathy of Lucas's work on the movement. This, however, does not leave Lucas free from criticism. It is within this cautious, ambivalent framework that I will attempt to place this book's worth to the academy.

Lucas himself clearly states in the preface that "futurism is not a science" (p. xi). His purpose for the book is "an effort to see the immediate future of the Olympic Games" based on "an accurate picture of the problems facing the Olympic Games organizers" and to then "offer my [his] own suggestions for modification and change" (p. xii). From these comments, one is aware that the book is not analytical in any scientific sense and it is a personal attempt by the author to make informed suggestions based on a life-long study of the movement. It is within this context that the reader must proceed.

One question that stuck in my mind while reading this book concerned how critical, or how deep a critique an "Olympicologist" or "Olympicist" could offer (I have not created these terms for any pejorative criticism). I merely wish to again point to what could be considered glaring weaknesses in the book. In conversations with Dr. Lucas one is instantly swept up in his zealous attitude toward the movement. Conversely, I would/might be considered a pessimist. Rather, we both have an abiding interest and desire to see the Games fulfill their philosophic and athletic potential. On either side of the

critique, one must be careful of making claims which are opinion. I noted several passages in the book for which I asked for evidence or support of the claims Lucas was making. For example: “[ancient] Olympic athletes were motivated more by religious rapture than by secular or material motives” (p. 2. although he quotes Young later); “. . . athletes who did attend [post World War I Games] were from the middle and upper-middle economic classes rather than from the poor. This is no longer true of the Games of the 1990s” (p. 15); “nationalism, or the excessive zeal of any group for its nation-state, is no longer a serious concern on the Olympic agenda” (p. 41); and “Baron de Coubertin, even in his last year of life (1937), was never fully satisfied with the concept of Olympism, and he continued to struggle for a plain and unambiguous Olympic message that he could deliver to the whole world” (p. 173). As the book is well documented, these examples seem to point to Lucas having a lifetime of experience permitting these statements as they are well established in his research findings.

As I am playing devil’s advocate, I would like to make three further criticisms (in the pure sense) before pointing to the book’s strengths. These have to do with Lucas’s view of IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch, much of his reference material, and his chapter which ostensibly deals with the ways cities bid to host the Games.

Lucas’s views on Juan Antonio Samaranch are excessively glowing. Throughout the book, Lucas deifies Samaranch and the agenda the latter is carrying out. This is especially evident in Chapter 13, “Samaranch’s Presidency: A Hard Act to Follow.” I do not wish to enter the debate about the nature of Samaranch’s character nor his agenda for the movement. There is other evidence which might refute many of Lucas’s claims. If, in any area of the book Lucas might be pointedly criticized for zealous narrow-mindedness, this would be the area. At times his praise for Samaranch becomes excessive and capricious.

As I have mentioned, the claims made or points emphasized are well documented. This would be expected with Lucas’s considerable library, research, and contacts in the Olympic movement. As a good deal of the referencing refers to material in the *Olympic Review* and the *Olympic Message*, among other IOC publications, and to newspaper sources, one is hesitant to see objectivity in this documentation. However, as Lucas has stated, this is a futuristic and therefore non-scientific book, so that this concern is not as significant as might be in other types of analysis.

Finally, the chapter dealing with the internal issues that host cities encounter is one-sided and, not wanting to sound anti-American, is chauvinistic (cf. Chapter 17). This follows on Lucas’s extensive documentation of how Atlanta won the 1996 Games in Chapter 3. By any standards, this is a glossing over and disacknowledgment of the severe economic and social problems that become buried by the euphoria of the selection to host. This surely has to be a major concern for the future of the Games (and, in fact, fits

clearly within Lucas's point 9 on page 21 I for a permanent site). How can billions be spent for the splendid, ritualistic party that mainly the wealthy will attend? Surely the socioeconomic ramifications deserve more of a clarification and less description of how ideology comes to operate and quell the resistance to such misdirected spending. This aspect of the book appears overly optimistic, ideological, and nationalistic.

The true strength of this book is its author's breadth and depth of knowledge of Olympic history. Lucas is, as was mentioned, clearly one individual outside of the "Olympic family" to have a long and intimate relationship with the movement. This is important, as the movement is a complex and vast network of sport, business, and cultural entities. To unravel and understand these entities, as well as having close contacts within the various parts, clearly permits Lucas the position of being able to identify the past and future of the broader movement.

Lucas dissects and comments on these elements in brief, well-documented chapters. Although he has a connecting thread throughout the book, one would be able to take any chapter on its own as a topical reference point. The chapters are reasonably short and, as is Lucas's gift, often written with a prosaic style that proves that academics outside of English departments can use the language in its full flavor. Indeed, some sentences and passages are a delight to read in terms of their composition and command of the language.

The true strength of the book is Lucas's commitment to topics less often mentioned and indeed often risky to raise. Three chapters stand out in this regard. The sixth ("The Olympic Games Are for the Athletes"), the eleventh ("The High Tide of Olympic Criticism," although Lucas hedges in completing a full critique of some of the issues raised), and, in particular, the twelfth ("Women in the Olympic Movement: The 52 Percent Solution") chapters are informative and quite to the point. Although the movement is a huge, cumbersome, and often contradictory leviathan of sport organizations, it is often the very producers that are left out of the discussion and focus for change. Lucas, quoting Raymond Gafner, noted that "after all . . . it is the athlete who brings both wealth and prestige to the Olympic movement" (p. 61): which he followed with his own words, "every year, scores of essays in English, German, and French alone discuss the Olympic Movement and the Olympic Games and never mention Olympic athletes, those men and women who are the essence of the enterprise" (p. 61). Yes, "the athletes are what matters" (p. 62)! Yet rarely are their concerns and conditions discussed. Lucas is to be commended for outlining the issues.

Likewise the chapter on women points to another ongoing inequality that exists in sport, and at all levels of sport. The IOC is well aware of this issue and has made several attempts to deal with the inequalities, but there is much more that needs to be done. If nothing else, Lucas gives clear evidence of the facts of this situation. Solutions, of course, are the key and more needs

to be done to deal with true inclusion of women in the movement.

Lucas guardedly opens the discussion of the various criticisms leveled at the movement. Nonetheless, there is some very informed evidence presented from which the reader can begin to make sense of the criticisms, which need to be more fully and deeply explored. This is true of other chapters as well (e.g., those on entrepreneurship, the program, the Games philosophy, Olympic Solidarity, and the drug issue). It must be repeated that Lucas was not attempting a full analysis of the considerable issues of the movement.

Overall, the book offers a wealth of facts. Having an "insider's" position provides Lucas with a wealth of anecdotal, ethnographic, and firsthand insight to the Olympic movement and its Games. Anyone who is a scholar of the Games would do well to read this book. Those seeking an introduction to the various topics elemental to the Olympic movement should also read this offering. The book will help to untangle the mysterious web that is the Olympic movement. Lucas's ability to inform (i.e., describe) is considerable. If one is looking for analysis and theoretical explanation, then one can start here for direction. As the chapters are self-contained and topical, one can originate discussion and research from Lucas's vast store of knowledge embraced by this work. The book is well written and, as mentioned, a treat to read for its command of the English language and for its informed detail.

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