

THOMPSON, SHONA M. *Mother's Taxi: Sport and Women's Labor*. SUNY Series on Sport, Culture and Social Relations. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999. Pp.viii +317. Qualitative study, appendices, notes, bibliography, subject index, name index. \$24.95 Pb.

Thompson's work provides a detailed study of how women facilitate and service sports, specifically tennis, played by others. In doing so, the lives of forty-six women are explored through interviews. This qualitative research, combined with a strong feminist perspective, provides a rich account of how "sport is maintained and reproduced by women's work through unequal and usually exploitive gender relations" (p. 10).

The women heard here fall into three categories: mothers of tennis players, domestic partners of adult male players, and self as athlete. These group divisions serve as the structure of the early chapters of *Mother's Taxi*. Here, Thompson explores women's responsibilities for domestic labor and childcare. These responsibilities facilitate the tennis careers of others in several ways. For example, women engage in self-sacrifice and structure their lives around the child's career. Also, some of these women, as primary caregivers and mainly responsible for domestic duties, provide time and space for male partners to pursue their activities. The end result is women contribute to the "careers of others" frequently sacrificing their own pleasures. Examination of women as participants revealed that some women negotiated their activities with their families, sometimes even hiding their playing. This playing also extended to voluntary help at the tennis club and became an extension of "gendered domestic roles" (p. 9). Such volunteering also advanced the play of others.

The final two chapters reflect an attempt to "make sense" of the experiences of these women. From the participants' perspectives, the focus was on "why" they carried out this service and what they expected in return. The responses differed according to their roles. The mothers of players expected to self-sacrifice and found reward in doing what was "best" for their children. Women as partners expected reciprocity and an enhanced relationship. For women as players, compromise was expected while their reward was found in the ability/opportunity to play.

Thompson closes the book by exploring these women's actions and reactions within a broader social context. By examining the significance of overarching structures and ideological influences, Thompson reveals how larger social factors have helped shape her subjects' lives.

*Mother's Taxi* clearly reveals that gendered institutions, such as marriage and family, contribute to the marginalization of women within sport. While some of these women played tennis, all were affected by domestic forces that reflected compulsory heterosexuality while facilitating others' sporting experiences. What Thompson uncovers in this work is that women's sports-related experiences are fundamentally different from those of their children and/or partners. She also shows that women's support of athletic children is an extension of childcare. These findings demonstrate a clear division of labor and that these women's activities prop up notions of femininity and hegemonic masculinity. Furthermore, the efforts the women in *Mother's Taxi* are critical, yet invisible, components of sport.

Methodologically, *Mother's Taxi* is thorough and solid. The appendices clearly illuminate key elements of the research findings, as well as discussions about research assumptions, limitations and delimitations. Thompson also provides a brief, albeit informative, overview of tennis in Australia that helps the reader contextualize the research. While focusing on women, Thompson interviewed the fathers thus giving a more complete and complex account. Finally, brief descriptions of each woman help the reader understand their lives and experiences in more detail.

The immediate significance of *Mother's Taxi* to sport history is not clear as this is a sociological study. However, Thompson's methodology provides useful considerations for exploring women's hidden sporting lives. The use of interviews can shed invaluable light on the backstage aspects of sports while giving women a voice in their experiences. *Mother's Taxi* provides scholars with alternative perspectives on the gendered relations between socio-economic issues, such as divisions of labor, and social institutions, like marriage and compulsory heterosexuality that are played out in the arena of sport. Finally, Thompson gives the historian alternative avenues of exploration/explanations of "doing" sport.

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EARLY, GERALD, ED. *The Muhammad Ali Reader*. Hopewell N.J.: The Ecco Press, 1998. Pp. xx + 300. Introduction, illustrations, copyright acknowledgments. \$26.00 cb.  
MARQUEE, MIKE. *Redemption Song: Muhammad Ali and the Spirit of the Sixties*. London: Verso Books, 1999. Pp. 310. Illustrations, note on sources. \$22.00 cb.

Since Muhammad Ali's torch lighting appearance at the 1996 Olympic Games, the boxer and his chronicled life have enjoyed somewhat of a popular culture renaissance—appearing in a documentary film, the subject of several books and even starring in a Super Bowl Sunday advertisement. Moreover, at the turn of the century, sports fans were inundated with what could be coined "century" awards—athlete of the century, boxer of the century, coach of the century, big play of the century and so on. The selection of "Athlete of the Century" was left to sport scribes and fans across the country and each selection initiated lengthy debates about who had been the choice and why, as well as who should have been selected. Muhammad Ali was always near the top of the lists, cited as one of the seven most significant athletes of all-time by Sports Illustrated and finishing third in ESPN's exhausting Top 100 of the century. Finishing one vote behind Babe Ruth, both Ali and Ruth finished behind Michael Jordan by a significant margin. Mike Marqusee and Gerald Early provide compelling evidence that confirms and supports Ali's placement at the top of these lists, and perhaps even why Ali has more accurately been the most significant sport figure in American history.

Mike Marqusee's *Redemption Song: Muhammad Ali and The Spirit of the Sixties* looks at one decade of Ali's life, the turbulent sixties. During this period, Ali wrested the heavyweight title from Sonny Liston, changed his name from Cassius Clay to Muhammad Ali, converted to the Nation of Islam, defended his title, traveled to Africa, defended his title