

the myriad of recent writing on sport and media at all, as they seem to have a very tenuous grasp on the issues of the media and sport relationship. In particular, the authors make scant reference to issues such as race, class and gender, which must be considered in any overview of the sports/media relationship. One scenario discussed was particularly disturbing. When describing the relationships between sports journalists and athletes, the authors referred to the Lisa Olsen incident, one of the only times that women were mentioned in the book at all! The authors write that when Olsen tried to interview a New England Patriot football player 'she encountered an episode of sexual harassment, which had rarely been seen in professional sports'. Recent research in sports sociology has demonstrated that the incidence of sexual harassment in professional sports is commonplace, and such flippant regard to such an important issue must be condemned.

This book lacks a critical dimension, has limited use — even in terms of looking up dates and statistics — and really introduces nothing new. As a result, it cannot be recommended either as a reference or as a text for students, particularly outside of the USA.

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Alan Klein, *Little Big Men: Bodybuilding Subculture and Gender Construction*. State University of New York Press, Albany, 1993. Index. pp. 326. \$US16.95.

Alan Klein's book is a detailed investigation that combines the virtues of ethnographic research with sociological insights. As a participant observer, Klein provided insights into the lives of bodybuilders and theorised his observations in a broader analysis of gender construction. He utilised informal conversations, casual observations and formalised interviews as well as participatory experience to gain his research data over a period of six years. Klein sets the scene well and provides the reader with an understanding of the culture surrounding elite bodybuilders.

The strength of this book, however, is in the contextualisation of bodybuilding in the (re)production of masculinity. Although Klein subtitles his book 'Gender Construction', the book concentrates primarily on masculinity, with only short, passing reference to the construction or debunking of traditional femininity, despite devoting an entire chapter to

female bodybuilders. This is partly a result of the male domination of bodybuilding, and the overt masculine culture of gymnasias as Klein observes:

‘[T]he world of bodybuilding is still very much a male preserve. In fact, I would argue that the very presence of women bodybuilders in elite gyms only serves to heighten issues of masculinity . . . ’ (p. 14). In fact, Klein examines the notion of female bodybuilding as a site of resistance against male dominance, but refutes this approach to some extent. His discussion of the construction of masculinity, complete with a brief historical overview, and the psycho-social analysis of this phenomenon is competently done and provides the reader with excellent insight into the motives as to why men take up bodybuilding. For example, Klein focuses on adolescent youth, who turn to bodybuilding to compensate for some real or perceived physical or intellectual inadequacy. Interestingly, Klein points out that a significant number of the bodybuilders encountered in his study were usually around five feet ten inches (177 cm), a height usually considered short by today’s Hollywood standards. Other issues raised include problems with fathers, low self-esteem and doubts about emerging masculine identity, these also appear to motivate boys to take up bodybuilding. Klein also discusses issues of sexuality examining the discrepancies between the overt masculine heterosexual image portrayed by elite bodybuilders, and their position as objects of homosexual desire.

There are some minor irritations in this book. Despite having spent over six years interviewing and observing participants in four elite gyms, Klein tends to rely on small selection of quotes, repetitively used, to support his thesis. This makes the reader question whether these were the only useful quotes that Klein was able to gather over the six years. In several sections, Klein skips back and forth between serious academic analysis and anecdotal descriptions of people and settings which can also be irritating. However, this seems to be part of his strategy to exoticise a relatively familiar cultural activity, in order to understand it. In general, this is an excellent book that makes a notable contribution to the understanding of the (re)production of hegemonic masculinity amongst bodybuilders. It is a useful analysis of a sporting subculture and is a superb example of successful ethnographic research.

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