



Mortal Engines: The Science of Performance and Dehumanization of Sport

John Hoberman

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Mortal Engines: The Science of Performance and Dehumanization of Sport John Hoberman In this reprint of a classic originally published in 1992, John Hoberman dissects the modern sports establishments of Europe and America and shows how a community of mutually dependent interest groups combine to promote continued scientific experiments despite futile efforts by Olympic authorities to enforce their sanctions on those who violate the ban on illicit drugs. Hoberman also reflects on the future of sport as we enter a new era of unprecedented developments in genetic engineering and hormonal manipulation, with important implications for the science of human performance. Great sport begins where good health ends. Bertolt Brecht. "John Hoberman has written another magisterial study of sport... [a] brilliantly crafted narrative." "... I heartily recommend Hoberman's book to serious students and enthusiasts of sport alike. It is a highly readable book that treats some of the most salient and delicate problems that have plagued highperformance sport since its inception. It is, to put it quite simply, one of the most intelligent and perceptive analyses of elite sport that I have had the pleasure of reading." -- William J. Morgan, Journal of the Philosophy of Sport 19 (1992): 101, 106 "Two previous books by John Hoberman, Sport and Political Ideology (1984) and The Olympic Crisis (1986), demonstrated his mastery of the European -- and, to a lesser degree, the American -- literature relevant to the history of modern sports. This mastery has enabled him to probe deeply and insightfully into the instrumentalization of the human body in the service of sports performance." "Hoberman's splendidly researched and unusually thoughtful book should be an important contribution to the public debate of this issue. Will it be read by those who have the power to influence events?" -- Allen Guttmann, International Journal of the History of Sport 11 (1994): 516, 517 "Mortal Engines is a horror story. For almost 300 pages John Hoberman presents the reader with evidence that our view of sports and athletes and the attitude athletes have about themselves have become hopelessly and dangerously warped. The lure of money and the determination to establish national prestige have led trainers, scientists and doctors to endanger athletes. Sometimes the athletes have known what was going on, and sometimes they have simply swallowed what they were told was good for them and then kept their mouths shut.... "But the remarkable achievement of Mortal Engines is the extent to which it demonstrates that doped competitors are not so much freaks, cheats or unfortunate victims as they are the logical consequence of a dangerous and destructive set of assumptions which most of us make about our athletes." -- Bill Littlefield on Morning Edition, National Public Radio (NPR), July 27, 1992 "John Hoberman has written a continually fascinating, ingenious and well-narrated book about sport, athletes and the use of science in modern sport from its origins at the end of the nineteenth century. It is a book that should be read by anyone who is interested in sports and physiology or, as one might put it, physiopolitics." -- Mats Gellerfelt, Svenska Dagbladet [Stockholm], February 12, 1994

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