

“The Mirror of All Perfection”: Jesus and the Strongman in America, 1893–1920

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Notes

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1. “Protests from the Sculpture Society,” *New York Herald*, June 11, 1893.
2. “A Sizzard Is Coming,” *World* (New York), June 14, 1893.
3. “Protests from the Sculpture Society,” *New York Herald*, June 11, 1893.
4. “The Strongest Man in the World,” *World* (New York), June 16, 1893; “Sandow Is a Wonder,” *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier* (Maine), June 14, 1893. For a description of the Casino Theater, see “The New Casino Opened,” *New York Tribune*, October 23, 1882, reprinted in *Documents of American Theater History: Volume 1 American Playhouses 1716–1899*, William C. Young, 2 vols. (Chicago: American Library Association, 1973), 1:223–24.
5. Gerard Nisivoccia, *Sandow, The Mighty Monarch of Muscle* (Newark, NJ: G. Nisivoccia, 1947), 9.
6. Eugen Sandow, *Strength and How to Obtain It*, rev. ed. (London: Gale and Polden, 1897), 85.
7. G. Mercer Adam, *Sandow on Physical Training: A Study in the Type of Human Form* (New York: J. Selwin Tait and Sons, 1894), 23.
8. *Ibid.*, 2, 16.
9. T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880–1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983); R. John Williams, *The Buddha in the Machine: Art, Technology, and the Meeting of East and West* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014).
10. The historian Gail Bederman has perhaps most persuasively interrogated the interconnectedness of gender and race in discursive constructions of “manliness.” See *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880–1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), esp. 10–41. See also E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York: BasicBooks, 1993); Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998); Edward J. Blum, *Reforging the White Republic: Race, Religion, and American Nationalism, 1865–1898* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005); Eric L. Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006); Clifford Putney, *Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880–1920* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); and Tony Ladd and James A. Mathisen, *Muscular Christianity: Evangelical Protestants and the Development of American Sport* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999).
11. Paul Harvey and Edward J. Blum, *The Color of Christ: The Son of God and the Saga of Race in America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012). Stephen Prothero and Richard Wightman Fox have also written cultural histories of Jesus in America. See Prothero, *American Jesus: How the Son of God Became a National Icon* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004); and Fox, *American Jesus: Personal Savior, Cultural Hero, National Obsession* (New York: HarperOne, 2005). In brief, muscular Christianity refers to a broad range of practices and institutions that arose after the American Civil War that concerned attracting men into American churches. Putney traces the conceptual origins of muscular Christianity in the United States to the English author Thomas Hughes, whose 1857 novel, *Tom Brown’s School Days*, was based on his own experiences at the Rugby School in the 1830s and that popularized the pedagogy attributed (somewhat incorrectly) to the Rugby educator Thomas Arnold. The American abolitionist and Unitarian minister Thomas Wentworth Higginson is largely credited for articulating the American version of muscular Christianity in his 1858 *Atlantic Monthly* essay, “Saints and Their Bodies.” Over the next several decades, various Protestant denominations sought to reinvigorate American churches, long presumed to be characterized by the “natural” sentimentality of women and ministers, by attracting men into the pews. While attention has been paid to muscular Christianity as a cultural phenomenon, and to Jesus as a cultural and national icon, few studies have endeavored to explore muscular Christianity from the vantage of visual culture, an approach that invites consideration of visual habits that traverse rather than reinscribe cultural arenas. See Putney, *Muscular Christianity*; and Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*. On a limited, but probative, treatment of

muscular Christianity in the context of visual culture analysis, see David Morgan, *The Sacred Gaze: Religious Visual Culture in Theory and Practice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

12. David Morgan, *Visual Piety: A History and Theory of Popular Religious Images* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 124.

13. Martin Jay and Sumathi Ramaswamy, citing Arjun Appadurai and Carol Breckenridge, describe the “interocular field” that “is structured so that each site or setting for the disciplining of the public gaze is to some degree affected by the viewer’s experiences of the other sites.” My attention to visual habits draws on this Bakhtinian paradigm but also works to critique the ubiquity of a “public gaze” that traverses these fields. See Jay and Ramaswamy, eds., *Empires of Vision: A Reader* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), 27.

14. William James Dawson, *The Life of Christ* (Philadelphia: George W. Jacobs, 1901), vi–vii, 7.

15. Sandow, *Strength and How to Obtain It*, 13, 5–6.

16. “The ‘Strong Man’ Appears,” *New York Times*, June 12, 1893.

17. “Strongest Man in the World.” For more on the role of Sandow’s evolving self-narration, see David L. Chapman, *Sandow the Magnificent: Eugen Sandow and the Beginnings of Bodybuilding* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 14–15.

18. “Sandow Is a Wonder.”

19. Maurizia Boscagli, *Eye on the Flesh: Fashions of Masculinity in the Early Twentieth Century* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1996), 106.

20. Henry Dalton, *Evening Amusements and Drawing-Room Plays: A Comprehensive Manual of In-Door Recreation* (New York: Cassell and Company, 1883), 135. Roger Benjamin invites a reading of European tableaux as “among the most popular attractions of the universal and colonial expositions” at the turn of the twentieth century. See Benjamin, “Colonial Panoramania,” in Jay and Ramaswamy, *Empires of Vision*, 111.

21. John F. Kasson, *Houdini, Tarzan, and the Perfect Man: The White Male Body and the Challenge of Modernity in America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001), 24–25. In addition to the ancient drama, the burlesque was no doubt more immediately informed by performances of W. S. Gilbert’s adaptation of the mythological comedy, which he wrote in the early 1870s and published in a collection in 1876, eight years before *Adonis* debuted in the Casino Theater. See “Pygmalion and Galatea,” in *Original Plays by W. S. Gilbert* (New York: Scribner, Armstrong, and Co., 1876), 75–133.

22. “Strongest Man in the World.”

23. “Sandow’s Act Is a Wonder.”; Adam, *Sandow on Physical Training*, 115, citing an article in the *New York Herald*, June 18, 1893; “Amusements,” *New York Herald*, June 12, 1893.

24. “Decline of the Freak,” *Washington Post*, March 4, 1894.

25. “Lightning Photographs,” *Washington Post*, March 11, 1894.

26. “The Souvenir Strip of The Edison Kinetoscope Eugene [i.e., Eugen] Sandow the modern Hercules,”

photographic print on card mount, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2013645430/ (accessed April 9, 2015). Quoting from Antonia and W. K. L. Dickson, *The Life and Inventions of Edison* (Boston, 1894). See also “Souvenir strip of the Edison Kinetoscope, Sandow, the modern Hercules,” Edison Manufacturing Company, W. K. L. Dickson, May 18, 1894, hdl.loc.gov/loc.mbrsmi/edmp.4018.

27. “Lightning Photographs.”

28. Schaefer, *Truly Did My Camera Record Their Faces*, 5; Oliver Mathews, *The Album of Carte-de-Visite and Cabinet Photographs, 1854–1914* (London: Reedminster Publications, 1974), 14; Claudia Brush Kidwell and Nancy Rexford, Introduction to *Dressed for the Photographer: Ordinary Americans and Fashion, 1840–1890*, ed. Joan Severa (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1995), xiii. These conventions also more closely invoked the compositional conventions of daguerreotypes.

29. Mathews, *Album of Carte-de-Visite*, 60. There is also evidence that suggests that turn-of-the-century Americans were increasingly comfortable with disrobing in front of the camera. The historian Roberta J. Frank argues that by the 1890s, in fact, “it was not at all unusual to find photographs of seminude athletes and illustrations of fig-adorned males in a host of books and periodicals” (“Physiology and Anatomy Are Destiny!? Brains, Bodies, and Exercise in Nineteenth Century American Thought,” *Journal of Sport History* 18 [1991]: 55).

30. Chapman, *Sandow the Magnificent*, 64; Paul Bourget, *Outre-Mer: Impressions of America* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1895), 60–61.

31. Boscagli, *Eye on the Flesh*, 108.

32. Harvard University’s archives indicate at least seventy-one separate institutions where Sargent collected his anthropometric data. Significantly, the data specifically exclude Harvard students from the record.

33. Dudley Allen Sargent, *Physical Training: A Full Report of the Papers and Discussions of the Conference Held in Boston in November, 1889*, ed. Isabel C. Barrows (Boston: George H. Ellis, 1890), 62.
34. Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Out-Door Papers* (Boston: Lee and Shepherd, 1886). Originally published as Higginson, "Saints, and Their Bodies," *Atlantic Monthly* 1 (1858): 582–95.
35. Sargent, *Physical Culture*, 65–66.
36. See, for instance, the third-century thinker Plotinus's treatise "On Beauty," in *Plotinus: Porphyry on Plotinus, Ennead I*, trans. A. H. Armstrong (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966), 231–63. The notion of symmetry, as metric of moral, political, and aesthetic philosophy, surfaces throughout Plato's writings. See *Plato: Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997).
37. Jay W. Seaver, *Anthropometry and Physical Examination: A Book for Practical Use in Connection with Gymnastic Work and Physical Education* (New Haven, CT: O. A. Dorman, 1896), 8–11, 133.
38. Josiah C. Nott et al., *Types of Mankind; or, Ethnological Researches Based upon the Ancient Monuments, Paintings, Sculptures, and Crania of Races* (Philadelphia, 1857), lxxviii.
39. See, for instance, Khyati Y. Joshi, *New Roots in America's Sacred Ground: Religion, Race, and Ethnicity in Indian America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2006), 89–117; Jennifer Snow, "The Civilization of White Men: The Race of the Hindu in *United States v. Bhagat Singh Thind*," in *Race, Nation, and Religion in the Americas*, ed. Henry Goldschmidt and Elizabeth McAlister (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 259–82; Snow, *Protestant Missionaries, Asian Immigrants, and Ideologies of Race in America, 1850–1924* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 55–88; Laurie Maffly-Kipp, "Engaging Habits and Besotted Idolatry: Viewing Chinese Religions in the American West," *Material Religion* 1 (2005): 72–96; Goldstein, *Price of Whiteness*; Blum, *Reforging the White Republic*; Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color*, 137–200.
40. Elspeth H. Brown's excellent analysis of Eadweard Muybridge's University of Pennsylvania study in the 1880s persuasively demonstrates another site where race, scientific discourse, and masculinity were generated in tandem through photographic technology and practices of representation. See Brown, "Racialising the Virile Body: Eadweard Muybridge's Locomotion Studies, 1883–1887," *Gender & History* 17 (November 2005): 627–56.
41. Seaver, *Anthropometry and Physical Examination*, 58.
42. Sargent, *Physical Culture*, 66.
43. Bourget, *Outre-Mer*, 61.
44. Seaver, *Anthropometry and Physical Examination*, 58. See, for instance, Shawn Michelle Smith, *American Archives: Gender, Race, and Class in Visual Culture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999).
45. On McFadden and the larger context of "gospels of health," see R. Marie Griffith, *Born Again Bodies: Flesh and Spirit in American Christianity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).
46. Sandow, *Strength and How to Obtain It*, 86.
47. Kohen to Sandow, September 19, 1896, in Sandow, *Strength and How to Obtain It*, 53–54.
48. Curtis, Elliott, and de Montalvo to Sandow, April 7, 1896, in Sandow, *Strength and How to Obtain It*, 55–57; "Finds Curtis Died of Fall," *New York Times*, October 31, 1930; "Dr. John D. Elliott of Philadelphia Dies," *New York Times*, October 9, 1933; "Evaristo V. de Montalvo," *New York Times*, November 3, 1938.
49. See, for instance, Edward Anthony Spitzka, *A Study of the Brains of Six Eminent Scientists and Scholars Belonging to the American Anthropometric Society, Together with a Description of the Skull of Professor E. D. Cope* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1907), 175–77. See also Linda Schiebinger, *Nature's Body: Gender in the Making of Modern Science* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1993), 160–72.
50. Seaver, *Anthropometry and Physical Examination*, 49–70.
51. "Strongest Man Measured," *World* (New York), June 25, 1893.
52. Ibid.
53. "Manly Beauty, How to Secure a Contour Which Will Attract," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 25, 1894; advertisement, *World* (New York), June 13, 1893; "Strongest Man Measured."
54. *Boston Daily Advertiser*, July 4, 1893; "Strongest Man in the World."
55. William Ingalls, quoted in David Morgan, *Protestants and Pictures: Religion, Visual Culture, and the Age of American Mass Production* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 284, 384n34.
56. Theodore C. Knauff, *Athletics for Physical Culture* (New York: J. Selwin Tait and Sons, 1894), 418–19.
57. Carl Delos Case, *The Masculine in Religion* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1906), 115.
58. Higginson, "Saints, and Their Bodies."
59. See, for instance, the advertisement for "Sandow's Great Offer" in *The Congregationalist and Christian World*, September 6, 1902.
60. Robert Warren Conant, *The Virility of Christ: A New View, a Book for Men* (Chicago: Robert Warren Conant, 1915), 11. Large portions of this text were initially published in Conant, *The Manly Christ: A New View* (Chicago:

Robert Warren Conant, 1904). For a brief sketch of Conant's biography, see also "Dr. R. W. Conant, Teacher Many Years, Is Dead," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 11, 1930.

61. Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (1977; rpt. New York: Doubleday, 1988), 99.

62. Fayette L. Thomson, "The Church's Lost Asset: Men," in *The Religion of Modern Manhood; or, Masculine Topics for Men's Bible Classes*, ed. Norman Egbert Richardson (New York: Eaton and Mairs, 1911), 40.

63. Case, *Masculine in Religion*, 77–78, 88.

64. Conant, *Manly Christ*, 8–9.

65. Conant, *Virility of Christ*, 14, 29, 59, 92, 103.

66. Edgar Blake, introduction to *The Religion of Modern Manhood; or, Masculine Topics for Men's Bible Classes*, ed. Norman Egbert Richardson (New York: Eaton and Mairs, 1911), 8.

67. Conant, *Virility of Christ*, 244–45.

68. William Henry Green, "Christian Manliness," in *Princeton Sermons* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1893), 257.

69. *Ibid.*, 259.

70. Conant, *Manly Christ*, 51–57, 237.

71. Jason Noble Pierce, *The Masculine Power of Christ; or, Christ Measured as a Man* (Boston: Pilgrim, 1912), 1, 4, 10–13.

72. Case, *Masculine in Religion*, 119.